

# OPINION

DAILY JOURNAL

JEFFREY W. OWEN

PUBLISHER  
E-mail address:  
jowen@thejournalnet.com

SCARLETT SYSE

EDITOR  
E-mail address:  
syse@thejournalnet.com

"The Daily Journal is dedicated to community service, to defense of individual rights and to providing those checks upon government which no constitution can ensure."

SCOTT ALEXANDER  
founding editor, 1963

## Hearts and Darts

The Daily Journal

**EDITOR'S NOTE** — *Hearts and Darts* is published as space is available and each Monday in the *Daily Journal*.

To submit an item, please e-mail Editorial Assistant Kelly Boggs at [kboggs@thejournalnet.com](mailto:kboggs@thejournalnet.com). Items can also be submitted by fax to 736-2766, by phone to 736-2712 or by mail to *Hearts and Darts*, P.O. Box 699, Franklin, IN 46131.

Items should include the writer's full name, street address and telephone number and the full names of all people mentioned in the item. Readers are asked to name no more than 10 individuals and/or five businesses in hearts and to not name specific individuals in darts.

### Hearts

• Greenwood city employees scored an impressive touchdown followed by a 2-point winning conversion with their Colts party at Fire Station 1 on Feb. 2. Through a team effort, local businesses were contacted for donations of food and beverages.

The street department clutched the win by scoring a safety with its rendition of a professional-looking Colts logo on the snowplow blades.

The music offered by Greenwood Community High School was a nice touch. We were fortunate to have a true community effort of everyone pitching together, displaying not only their pride in the Colts but their genuine community pride as well.

Thanks not only to the local merchants for their participation but also to the city employees for being able to put this together in a couple of days. What a great community effort.

**John and Linda Gibson**  
Greenwood

• I would like to give heartfelt thanks for the people who helped me during, before and after my surgeries. Thank you to my sister, Vicki Coryell, for all she has done for me in the past year. She opened her home to me for recuperation for six months so I could get well and be on my own again. She has done so many nice things for me.

Thank you to my daughter, Tiffany Reed, for all her help in my recovery. She helped me get on my machine three times a day for three weeks. She made sure I had my morning meals and all the things I needed.

Thank you to my niece, Trinity Coryell, for all her help. She has been an angel. She is so good to me.

Thank you to my sister and brother-in-law, Janine and Paul Ross. They were there to cheer me up, call and visit. They cheered me up a lot.

Thank you to my best friend, Claudia Isley, for all her help and friendship. She is the best.

There are so many people to thank; Friendship Baptist Church pastor Fred Brown for being there for my last surgery.

There's other people also, but I'm only allowed so much space, so family and friends, medical, therapy, you all were great. Thanks so much.

**Sharon Day**  
Franklin

• A big thank-you to our neighbors, Susie and Scott Johnson and their sons, for clearing the snow all the way up to our door after the recent snows. We really appreciate it.

**Bobby and Frances Carter**  
Franklin

• Hearts to Helen Clem and all her aides in Special Services at Northwood Elementary School for the wonderful work they do.

**Rhonda Brown**  
Bargersville

• Hearts to Bob Daniels, our son's neighbor, who came over and plowed our driveway so we could get out. He did this after both of the recent snows. Thank you.

**Jack and Marilyn McGrath**  
Greenwood

• Hearts and thanks to the kind person who plowed my driveway and shoveled my sidewalk on Old Trail Drive before I returned home from work Tuesday afternoon. I'm not sure who you are, but I wanted to say thank you.

**Kelly Boggs**  
Bargersville

### Darts

• Darts to the NFL, who had me seeing red in a sea of blue the week before the Super Bowl.

Shame on them and their response to local churches who were trying to present a family atmosphere for the showing of the Super Bowl. They're not a family-oriented organization.

They charge exorbitant ticket prices for their games, as well as their sports paraphernalia, and we won't even talk about their past choices of entertainment for Super Bowl halftime, except to say it was lewd.

They say money is the root of all evil. The NFL is the perfect example. They have shown their true colors.

**Kathleen Steuer**  
Greenwood

• Darts to the person who stole the cookie money my son was taking to Northwood Elementary School.

**Rhonda Brown**  
Bargersville

• Darts to Superintendent William Patterson for not dismissing Franklin schools early Feb. 6. The roads were hazardous and children shouldn't have been on them.

Not having a two-hour delay, like everyone else, on Wednesday was also absurd. Icy roads, cold temperatures, what does it take, having a school bus accident? Oh, wait, there was one.

If our superintendent doesn't care about the safety of our children, it's time to replace the superintendent.

**Irwin Prochnow**  
Franklin



YOUR

## VIEWS & COMMENTARY

### Eliminating outdated tax method for state's success

**To the editor:**

When Indiana became a state in 1816, the first General Assembly was charged with developing a tax code. At that time, property taxes were the fairest and most efficient method of taxation.

More than 90 percent of Hoosiers were farmers in 1816, and land was the primary indicator of wealth. A family who owned 500 acres of farmland probably grew about twice as many crops as someone who owned 250 acres. Assessing property taxes at that time had the same effect as an income tax.

Times have changed, but our tax code has not. Indiana still has a 19th century tax code in a 21st century economy. Less than 10 percent of Hoosiers are farmers today, and land is no longer the primary means of wealth creation in Indiana.

Property taxes continue to be a major financial burden on Indiana taxpayers and remain the single largest source of government funding. Although 60 percent of the money raised by property taxes goes to local government (mostly public schools), it is the responsibility of state government to develop Indiana's tax policy for local government. Clearly, reform is needed.

One of the lasting memories I have of the 2004 campaign is listening to the thousands of citizens I spoke with — most of them at their front door. I heard about the challenges many of them faced in providing for themselves and their families. I remember one retired couple near Madison Avenue telling me how rising property taxes were threatening their ability to afford the home they'd lived in for 40 years.

The husband was an 81-year-old Korean War veteran, and he had wanted to spend his life with his wife in the home that held so many of their precious memories.

However, the property taxes on their home had tripled over the past few years and they had to cut their prescription drug purchases in half in order to pay their tax bill.

Politicians have traditionally been hesitant to significantly change our tax code. History shows that while most elected officials make statements supporting the reduction or elimination of property taxes, very little reform has been made for decades.

It seems the standard practice has been to raise other taxes in order to allegedly "lower property taxes." We all know these plans have failed to keep property taxes under control.

Back in 1933, the Indiana legislature established income tax for citizens and businesses in order to "lower property taxes." Property taxes continued to go higher.

In 1963 and 1973, politicians first created — and then raised — sales tax in Indiana to "lower property taxes."

Property taxes continued to go higher. In 2002 Indiana raised its sales tax from 5 percent to 6 percent with the promise it would "lower property taxes."

We all know what happened next. Taxpayers have every right to be suspicious about any changes to the tax code proposed by the General Assembly.

Frankly, legislators must go the extra mile to prove to citizens we are serious about tax reform. There is currently a proposal in the Indiana Senate that would eliminate property taxes once and for all, and give local government greater control over their own destiny.

The bill, authored by Sen. Tom Weatherwax and co-authored by Sen. Patricia Miller and myself, will totally and permanently end property taxes by replacing the existing system with a brand new structure.

The plan requires three significant faith-building steps that will ultimately end in a better and fairer tax structure for 21st Century Hoosiers.

WRITE A

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Daily Journal invites readers to submit letters, opinion columns and e-mail comments for the opinion page.

**WHERE TO SEND THE LETTER**

**Mail**

Letters to the editor  
The Daily Journal  
P. O. Box 699  
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Franklin

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736-2766

#### 1. Approve a constitutional amendment to forever ban property taxes.

The only guarantee that politicians won't reinstitute property taxes in the future will be to prohibit property taxes in the highest law of our state: the Indiana Constitution. This will require passage of the amendment in two legislatures over a four-year period as well as a referendum by the voters of Indiana. The sooner we get started on this amending process, the faster we can provide permanent property tax relief.

#### 2. Establish a "trust fund" to replace property taxes during the transition.

Indiana will need to build a financial reserve of about \$5 billion in order to fund the seamless transition to other types of taxes for local government. There are several methods to grow this fund, and it will require a few years for it to reach the necessary amount. Fortunately, a constitutional amendment started this year would take a few years to reach this amount, which gives us plenty of time.

3. Repeal property taxes. Since local governments are largely funded through property taxes, it seems reasonable for these entities to have greater control over how they pay for their operations. Great care should be taken to make absolutely sure the net amount paid by taxpayers is the same.

Additionally, the legislature must not allow local government to raise taxes as much as they might sometimes like. If we pass this bill, Indiana will find itself with a tax system that is more fair and more reasonable to its citizens.

Options available to local governments include sales tax, corporate income tax and personal income tax. It's important to remember that some parts of the state may find one or more of these as better sources of revenue than the others.

Like many aspects of life, the property tax crisis was not created in a single day. Two hundred years of political and bureaucratic drudgery has brought us to a point in Indiana's history where property taxes threaten the financial security of hundreds of thousands of Hoosiers.

I am convinced that real reform is necessary if Indiana is going to be successful in the decades ahead.

**State Sen. Brent Waltz**  
R-Greenwood

### Interstate won't help areas that need it most

**To the editor:**

We are "tolled" again that Indiana Department of Transportation has too little money to build roads Hoosiers need.

Before granting Gov. Mitch Daniels leasing authority, are his projects worth these 75 or 100 years privatization schemes by eminent domain?

Ninety-five percent opposed last year's road privatizations. A recent \$810,000 INDOT study concluded the commerce corridor beltway a non-starter, not worth further study.

Ninety-four percent of Hoosiers commenting on Interstate 69 oppose the state's new terrain route as excessive.

Tolling was forced from the Interstate 69 project. There is too little traffic. It would create negative economic benefit and increased local congestion.

Three studies, including INDOT's 2006 "re-evaluation," agree.

I-69 is little-needed Evansville pork.

Don't fix what's not broken. Indiana Department of Workforce Development statistics prove the INDOT's I-69 route would serve the regions of the state with consistently the highest income per capita.

Conversely, the citizens' preferred route, existing four-lane U.S. 41 and Interstate 70 through Terre Haute, would bring economic development potential (if there is any) to ethnically diverse Vigo County, Indiana's lowest income per capita region. And \$1 billion would be saved by this compromise.

The problem is not the amount of money that INDOT has, it is the reckless way they are planning and conniving.

Remember the 75-year privatization of the Indiana Toll Road last year that will allow annual toll increases for the final 71 years of the international trade agreement?

That was supposed to fix INDOT's shortages, but it instead sits in banks drawing interest, we are "tolled."

There is something screwy in Hoosierland.

**John Smith**  
Solsberry

### Stem cell research doesn't have to take human life

**To the editor:**

The controversy surrounding embryonic stem cell research has been enormous as those who desire to protect human life have lobbied for Congress to fund only those methods that don't endanger human life.

Now, science is showing that these ethical methods are the techniques producing results.

New research from the Wake Forest University School of Medicine makes the answer to the question of whether to continue funding embryonic stem cell research even more evident.

According to reports, scientists there have discovered an alternative to embryonic stem cell research that increases the promise of treatment without destroying human life. Stem cells found in the rich amniotic fluid that sustains a baby in the womb have the ability to grow into brain, muscle, and other tissues to fight and treat disease.

Considering that the Declaration of Independence calls us to protect the unalienable right of every human being to life, the decision to cut government funding of embryonic stem cell research should be simple.

If the government desires to fund anything, fund the new research, which offers broader possibilities without destroying human lives in the process. Early this month, the new House leadership discussed ethics in depth.

If they truly want to uphold solid moral values, then they should abandon their quest to subsidize unethical experimentation and focus on research that cures without killing.

**Abigail Snyder**  
Indiana Generation Joshua Network

### Petition local leaders to improve railroad crossings

**To the editor:**

We are writing this letter to let the representatives of our community and those involved in railroad safety know that we are concerned about the railroad crossings in Johnson County.

Unfortunately, it has taken the severe tragedy involving the death of Travis and Jake Findley, ages 9 and 12, to give this issue the attention that it deserves.

The lack of necessary safety warnings at one of our Johnson County railroad crossings was the cause of these deaths, and we are concerned that if the necessary changes are not made it could lead to further incidents.

We, the citizens of Johnson County, want attention given, plans made, funding available and projects completed to install the proper railroad safety crossing at all railroad crossings that currently have only stop signs.

We want crossing arms, bells, signs, lights and all necessary safety warnings described in the Federal Railroad-Highway Grade Crossing Handbook.

Citizens: Please make copies of this letter, sign them, and send them to the following addresses:

Johnson County Highway Department, 1051 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN 46131. 736-6444.

Mitch Ripley, County Commissioner, Courthouse Annex, 86 W. Court St., Franklin, IN 46131. 736-3700.

The Indiana Rail Road Co., 101 W. Ohio St., Suite 1600, Indianapolis, IN 46204. 262-5140, (888) 596-2121.

**Andrea Pawlik**  
Greenwood (White River Township)

### Upgrades useless if drivers don't pay attention

**To the editor:**

I agree that something needs to be done to all the railroad crossings to make them safer. But lights and crossing bars are not the total answer to fixing the problem. People need to change also.

Everyone needs to be held accountable for the way they are driving.

Every day you put your life in danger because other drivers feel the road is theirs and that the laws don't apply to them.

For example: Does a yellow light mean speed up and enter an intersection?

Has the meaning of stop changed to "slow down and keep going?"

Does 30 mph mean 45 mph? Are turn signals now optional?

And is talking on a cell phone, taking a drink and eating while driving a requirement to get your driver's license?

Until something is done to change the way people are allowed to drive, then more tragic accidents will continue to happen.

Accidents are accidents, but almost every accident could be avoided if the rules were followed and people would just pay attention.

**Gregg Roberson**  
Greenwood

### God wants us to spread love, joy to everyone

**To the editor:**

On this year's St. Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, God's blessings of love and affection are especially shown to those who lost their lives and those suffering from the war on terrorism throughout the world.

With all the freezing cold and snow, only love can warm the heart and get us through.

Love makes the world go 'round; it is something we all need and want.

Love is all around us, particularly on this day, for it is an affirmation of love and life with its many exchanges of cards, flowers, toys and candy.

There are many forms of love, but the truest forms of love are kindness, friendships and thoughtfulness.

A true friend is a Valentine whom God sends to show how much he loves us.

In my reading, I came across the following, which has remained with me, "Only love can change the world — or a person's outlook on life."

Love is what life is all about. It's the true human vocation, for God is love.

Happy St. Valentine's Day.  
**Mary C. Vinci**  
Indianapolis