

# 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

## AT ISSUE

The opening of the new high school in Franklin will change some traffic patterns.

## OUR POINT

The speed limit on U.S. 31 should be reduced in order to cut the risk of serious accidents involving drivers heading to or from school.

## Lower speed limit near school to protect drivers

The Daily Journal

On Branigin Road near the new Franklin Community High School, a culvert is causing part of the roadway to dip.

School officials and at least one school board member worry that the lack of a shoulder there could lead to a vehicle crashing if a wheel runs off the pavement.

The problem is serious and needs to be addressed. But at least Branigin Road won't be the main route students take to the parking lot. The entrance will be off Commerce Drive, the next road south.

A more serious issues remains, though.

The speed limit on U.S. 31 from the entrance to Wal-Mart north is 50 mph. South of there, the limit is 40 mph.

This means that drivers both northbound and southbound on U.S. 31 past the two roads to the high school could be traveling quite fast.

The potential for an accident will be great.

For example, in the morning, students who drive from Knollwood Farms, a subdivision at the north end of the city, will drive south on the highway to reach school.

To park in the lot at the high school, they will turn right onto Commerce Drive. If there are several vehicles heading to the school at the same time, there could be quite a line in the right-hand lane.

An inattentive driver easily could hit the last vehicle in the line.

Many of the district's young drivers likely will arrive at the school by driving north on U.S. 31 and turning left onto Commerce.

There is a turn light at the intersection, which will help move traffic. But a student trying to beat the light runs the risk of getting hit by a southbound vehicle.

To reduce the risk of accidents, the speed limit should be reduced to 40 mph for the stretch from Wal-Mart to at least Commerce Drive on the northbound lanes and at least to Branigin Road for the southbound lanes.

Changing the limit won't be popular among commuters headed to Indianapolis. But the distance is just more than a mile. Even traveling at the speed limit for the entire distance, the reduced speed limit would add only 18 seconds to a commute.

When the speed limits were set more than a decade ago, there was little commercial development north of the Wal-Mart site. Now another major store, several smaller ones and several restaurants have opened, adding significantly to the level of local traffic.

To help reduce the risk of serious accidents after the school opens, we urge school officials, local officials and district engineers from the Indiana Department of Transportation to examine the situation and reduce the speed limit to a safer level.

## Focus: Budget

Can president, Congress keep spending in check?

Scripps Howard News Service

My heavens.

President Bush and the Democrats have begun the new Congress preaching from the same page: restraining spending and balancing the budget.

It is an unfamiliar sermon for them both. Bush did nothing for six years to stop the reckless overspending of his fellow Republicans and the Democrats, who could say anything they liked while in the minority, but now have to make good on their words since they are in the majority.

The president, with an admirably straight face, called on Democrats to "end the dead-of-night process" of packing lawmakers' pet pork projects into bills, not something he vigorously campaigned against before or ever used his veto pen to enforce.

And, Bush piously warned in an op-ed, "If Congress chooses to pass bills that are simply political statements, they will have chosen stalemate." Political statements? Where has he been the past six years? Where was he last summer, for that matter?

When his Republicans abandoned their legislative duties to vote on flag burning and gay marriage just to fire up their supporters?

Both the president and the Democrats are promising to balance the budget in five years.

Balancing the budget would be difficult enough without the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, expected to cost \$170 billion this year.

Democrats are promising to preserve middle-class tax cuts, increase spending on education and homeland security, close the gap in the drug benefit and shrink the deficit to zero by 2012.

Neat trick, if they can pull it off.

Bush could contribute immeasurably to the reality of this debate and prove the seriousness of his intentions by including the costs of the war in the annual federal budget he is to submit Feb. 5.

To date, the war has been funded by emergency supplemental spending that not only escapes normal congressional scrutiny but is not calculated against the deficit or Congress' annual spending caps.

It is a new year and a fresh start in Washington, and we, the long-suffering public, should grant them the sincerity of their intentions.

Miracles do happen, and to balance the budget will take one.

Can the Horseshoes get the golden ringer?

© 2007 *Buller*  
THE DAILY JOURNAL



## Will latest attempt to get rid of nightly leg cramps be a wash?

I always get a smattering of e-mails after I write a column. Newspaper writers know that most of their stuff ends up in the garbage along with the moldy cheese or in the recycle bin, assuming the reader is environmentally friendly.

So it is always a kick to learn that someone has cut out my column and stuck it on the refrigerator next to their first-grader's finger-painting or under a Rachael Ray recipe for chicken fricassee. That's about the most I could ask for.

But the piece I wrote a few weeks ago about my legs cramps resulted in the most e-mails I've ever gotten in response to one of my columns.

I would tell you how many e-mails there were, but I'd rather you had a image of my computer service calling to tell me that I'd overloaded the system and that I can't publish any more humor columns that touch the very fabric and nerve of the reading public.

The story was about my nighttime leg cramps. In the column I complained about this persistent problem and mentioned that I had gotten a great deal of advice from people who also suffered from this malady.

Here were a few of the suggestions, just to refresh your memory: magnesium, zinc, vitamin E, turmeric, potassium, vitamin C, acupuncture, biofeedback, folic



Dick Wolfsie

acid, calcium, quinine, fiber pills, cauliflower extract, yoga and black cherry extract.

After the column appeared, I started getting e-mails that began like this:

"Dick, ever think of using soap?"

"Mr. Wolfsie, do you realize the importance of a bar of soap?"

"Hey, DW, a bar of soap can make a big difference in your life."

At first, I was mortified. I'm not a hygiene fanatic, but I don't think I missed a shower all last year — except that one morning I had to rush the dog to the vet when he swallowed an AAA alkaline battery.

I was a little sweaty in the waiting room, but if people are going to take a whiff of you during a crisis they shouldn't be judgmental.

All the e-mails contained a similar suggestion: to cure leg cramps, sleep with a bar of soap in your bed. I was a bit cautious, of course.

Maybe it was a grand conspiracy

to tantalize me to do something really bizarre; then they could all laugh themselves silly about Dick Wolfsie at the office Christmas party, just at the mere prospect I may have fallen for it.

I showed these e-mails to my doctor that week. He said that he often recommended putting a bar of soap in the bed but hadn't mentioned it to me because he figured I already knew about it. Now, how would I know to put a bar of soap in my bed to cure cramps? Did I go to medical school like he did?

Anyway, that evening I tried it. I was just hoping Mary Ellen wouldn't notice, because she's always accusing me of falling for every wacky idea out there.

"Dick, what's that strong soapy smell?"

"Look, Mary Ellen, please don't think I'm totally nuts. And please don't think I'll believe every off-the-wall suggestion that people e-mail me, but that odor is actually a bar of Dial soap that I placed in between the sheets of the bed."

"Well, I don't know why you'd do something so incredibly weird like that. But look at the bright side: at least it might cure those leg cramps."

Television personality Dick Wolfsie writes this weekly humor column for the Daily Journal. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com

## Discussion of executives' pay level tends to be emotional, not factual

If headlines about high executive pay make your face turn red, you might want to avoid the news for the next few weeks. This is the time of year that the big Wall Street firms award their year-end bonuses, and they will almost certainly be huge.

Of course, the headlines will say they are an all-time record, which is both true and misleading. With inflation and economic growth, almost anything in the economy that is measured in free dollars, from budget deficits to total agent salaries in sports, has a better than ever chance of managing that feat.

But the bonuses being paid on Wall Street this year are in fact so large that even those of us who forecast the economy have had to pay attention.

Since those payouts are recorded as personal income in the aggregate economic accounting that we track, we've had to bump up our forecasts for income in the first quarter of 2007 for the entire economy just to account for the wheelbarrows of cash that will be hauled in by the folks in the financial world in the beginning of next year.

As far as forecasting goes, that's all there is to it. We'll go back to tracking and analyzing the factors that will affect economic growth.

But as human beings, stories of financial success and sky-high pay for a fortunate few have always triggered passion and emotion that can find its way into economic policy.

Those can affect our economic futures as well, both as indivi-



Patrick Barkey

duals and for the economy as a whole.

It's hard to speak dispassionately about people who earn more in a month than the average American makes in a lifetime.

We seem to accept the fact that some people can sing, act or hit a baseball better than we can, but when it comes to inequality in income, it is another matter. That is particularly so when coupled with the populist image of heartless executives in the financial world, far removed from the thousands of honest workers whose lives their decisions affect.

Our economic system gives us plenty of ways to make decisions and career choices that can ultimately affect our own pay, yet most of us have nothing to say about what others make. If the Boston Red Sox owners want to pay \$51 million just to have the right to negotiate with a prospective pitcher, that's their decision.

The biggest exception to this, of course, is in the public sector. We routinely castigate legislators who vote themselves higher pay, to the point where the salaries of judges, mayors and legislators who manage multi-billion dollar

enterprises can earn less than an executive secretary at a Fortune 500 company is paid.

That's a problem, ultimately. But it is a different kind of problem angst over high pay is causing, flourishing most notably in the collective bargaining environment, that has captured my attention of late.

Just about any manufacturer, particularly those operating in Indiana, faces extraordinary competitive pressure these days. That being said, it would appear from public rhetoric that companies and their unionized work force too often can't even seem to agree what the problem is. While managers see a world where costs are escalating and their power to raise prices has vanished, their workers always seem to return to one simple issue: executive pay.

The fact that top executives have six- or seven-figure salaries, they maintain, puts all that is said about tough times to the lie. Companies that can afford high pay, it is said, can also afford to operate plants that are marginal financial propositions.

It's easy to address this contention with facts and figures, but ultimately the issue is about emotion, not data.

And the longer those emotions hold sway in making decisions about the future, the darker that future gets.

Patrick Barkey is director of the Bureau of Business Research at Ball State University's School of Business. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.

## YOUR VIEWS

### Property taxes, budget top priorities for 2007

To the editor:

On Monday, the General Assembly will reconvene for the 2007 legislative session. As we prepare for the upcoming session, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some of the issues that we will be tackling in the coming months.

It is my hope that you will contact me and let me know your views on these important topics.

First and foremost, the 2007 legislative session is a budget-writing year. We will be formulating and voting on the state budget for the 2008 and 2009 fiscal years. Issues such as full-day kindergarten, property taxes and higher education will most certainly be top priorities.

Among my other legislative goals, I have drafted legislation that would permanently repeal property taxes, eliminating the financial burden many Hoosiers face with this hefty bill. This is an issue that has been debated over the years with no resolution. It is my hope that we will finally be able to find a solution to the property tax issue in the upcoming session.

The legislature has been working on ways to make full-day kindergarten a reality. Proposed legislation may provide schools with grants that would allow them, at their discretion, to offer full-day kindergarten or to fund other education opportunities.

I am sure many of you have heard about the Indiana Commerce Connector, an outer loop tollway that would extend from Pendleton to Martinsville in central Indiana.

It is anticipated that the connector will create jobs, ease highway congestion and allow for the construction of a toll-free Interstate 69 extension from Evansville to Indianapolis. I would most certainly like your opinion on this issue.

These are merely a sample of the issues we will be address in the 2007 session. I would like your input on these topics as I head to the Statehouse to begin my legislative work. For this reason, I will be holding four town hall meetings in January, where I will be able to speak with many of you on these topics.

• On Tuesday, I will be at the White River library (1664 Library Blvd., Greenwood) from 6:30 to 8 p.m. with Rep. Dave Frizzell.

• On Thursday, I will be at the Greenwood City Building (2 N. Madison Ave.) with Sen. Patricia Miller from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

• On Jan. 13, the meeting will be conducted at the Whiteland Town Hall (549 Main St.) from 10:30 a.m. to noon with Sen. Greg Walker.

• On Jan. 20, I will be joined by Sen. Greg Walker and Rep. Milo Smith at the Franklin library (401 State St.) from 10:30 a.m. to noon.

If you are unable to attend any of these meetings, please do not hesitate to contact me at the Statehouse with any questions, comments or concerns.

I can be reached by e-mail at h58@in.gov, telephone at (800) 382-9841 or by mail at State Rep. Woody Burton, 200 W. Washington St., Room 401-6, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

State Rep. Woody Burton  
House District 58