

OPINION

DAILY JOURNAL

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"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

Opinion roundup

EDITOR'S NOTE — Today the Daily Journal presents a sampling of editorials from around the state and nation:

State's nursing homes need smoke detectors

The Journal Gazette, Fort Wayne

Is the staff caring and competent? How convenient is it to get to the nursing home from where we live?

A family asks those questions when looking for a long-term health-care center for an aging or infirmed loved one. One question probably not on the list: Does Grandma's room have a smoke detector?

It would seem safe to assume that such basic safety equipment is required in nursing homes, given the vulnerable population they serve. But Indiana law does not require nursing-care centers to have smoke detectors and sprinkler systems.

State lawmakers have the opportunity to address this grave oversight as they consider legislation that would require both fire safety devices in all Indiana nursing homes.

Bills in the House and Senate would require health facilities to have automatic fire-sprinkler systems and either a battery-operated or hard-wired smoke detector in each resident's room by July 2012.

Requiring smoke detectors should be a no-brainer. Giving nursing homes five years to meet the requirement is more than generous.

Retrofitting older buildings with sprinkler systems is much more expensive. Given the importance of protecting residents' safety, it is a necessary investment that nursing home administrators need to make.

Charging for rescues contrary to U.S. values

Kokomo Tribune

The three climbers rescued from Mount Hood on Monday received a lot of attention and, we suspect, little sympathy. Though its 11,239-foot peak is considered quite accessible by experienced climbers, it can be dangerous, particularly in winter.

In December, three mountaineers died on Oregon's tallest peak after getting trapped by a snowstorm. In the past 25 years, more than 35 have died on Mount Hood.

Rescues of stranded climbers can be dangerous, as well. In May 2002, the safest time to scale the mountain, a rescue helicopter crashed trying to reach six mountaineers.

Many folks are suggesting climbers be charged for their rescues. It's unseemly, even un-American, to weigh costs before running to the aid of a person in peril.

Many historians say this country was founded on Judeo-Christian values. We can't think of a more Christian value than to offer assistance to someone who probably doesn't deserve such assistance.

Indiana's gun safety program protects kids

South Bend Tribune

Children often encounter guns, usually in their own homes or in the homes of their friends. One needn't think back too far to recall tragedies that have occurred when children got their hands on guns. It happens. And it's heartbreaking.

In a nation in which 60 million people own more than 200 million firearms, it is important that children understand how dangerous guns are.

A gun-safety course conducted by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources has been taught annually or biannually at many middle and high schools.

No guns are present in the classes. Children are not taught to fire guns, only to unload them and store the guns and ammunition safely. DNR publications on gun-handling, conservation and hunting are used in the course.

In addition to being taught to be familiar with firearms, children are taught the legal and personal consequences of misusing them. That surely is a worthwhile lesson.

Pushing dollar coins doesn't make sense

The (Lorain, Ohio) Morning Journal

The shiny new gold-colored \$1 George Washington dollar coin made its debut recently at banks around the nation. It is Uncle Sam's third attempt since 1979 at rolling out a dollar coin the American public will pocket.

For the government, the lure of the coin is its decades-long usable lifetime, which makes it much less-expensive over the long haul than the common paper dollar bill, which has a lifespan of less than two years.

But this is the age of plastic and virtual money. Who wants to walk around with a loud-clinking load of dollar coins wearing holes in your pockets when you can use a feather-light debit or credit card or paper bills.

Pay doesn't reflect esteem for federal judges

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

The U.S. Constitution reserved a special role for the federal judiciary. Justices of the Supreme Court, judges of the courts of appeals and the district courts, and judges of the Court of International Trade were given lifetime appointments under Article III.

The founders would be mortified by what the country pays its judges. The chief justice is paid \$212,100 a year, and the other eight justices get \$203,000. Federal appeals court judges make \$175,100, and trial judges are paid \$165,200 annually.

These numbers look OK — until you compare them to what a recent graduate of a top-tier law school earns. First-year associates at private law firms on the East Coast can be paid as much as \$160,000; an associate in Seattle starts at more than \$100,000.

This is not only a money issue. It's also about judicial independence because of the lure of a significant pay increase by giving up judicial tenure.



U.S. has to trust North Korea won't create nuclear bombs

Last Tuesday, there was breaking news that the six-party talks with North Korea finally resulted in an agreement.

Under this agreement, North Korea has promised that within 60 days, it will shut down and close the nuclear facility that produces the plutonium used for its bombs. North Korea also agreed to provide a list of all nuclear programs and to permit international inspectors to monitor this closure.

In exchange, the United States and other countries will provide 50,000 tons of energy resources to North Korea over the next two months. The second phase of nuclear disarmament will require North Korea to disable all of its nuclear facilities in exchange for 950,000 tons of oil.

Just like any controversial issue, we have two opposing views with respect to North Korea. The supporting side applauds the agreement and labels it as a diplomatic breakthrough. The agreement comes at a critical time, just like a pressure cooker releasing pressure.

The side opposed to the agreement suggests that we caved in to nuclear blackmail by North Korea. In a way, it is believed that we are rewarding bad behavior for other nations to follow. Furthermore, this side strongly emphasizes that North Korea did not live up to the previous agreement and may be just as reluctant now. Both sides seem to possess sufficient evidence to support their stance.

Once again, many Americans are confused by this development. In my long experience of teaching international relations, I would like to address this issue and clear up some points.

First, I would like to illustrate the nature of international agreements. In principle, international agreements are much like domestic contracts between various parties.



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Ling

However, the difference between domestic and international agreements is the ability to enforce compliance. In a domestic contract, if one party breaches the contract with no legitimate reason, the other party can bring a lawsuit against the party that breached the agreement.

The judicial system will then try the case and render a judgment. Once a judgment is rendered, all parties are forced to comply with it.

In international agreements, rather than relying on legal settlements, countries must rely on good-faith actions of the parties. This means that any country that enters into an international agreement should carry out its treaty obligations in good faith.

In one sense, international agreements are a game of chance: Will the other party comply? Interestingly, based on history, most countries have fulfilled their treaty obligations.

With respect to the North Korean agreement, the agreement concluded is not a bilateral agreement (between just the United States and North Korea) but is a multilateral agreement including China, Japan, South Korea and Russia. If North Korea violates this treaty, it will lose substantial credibility and good relations with its neighbors.

Second, we must look at this from an international politics perspective. All countries fundamentally pursue their own national interests.

Times, conditions and leaders all change, and there is always a

chance for future development. No one can guarantee that this agreement will completely resolve the conflict among North Korea, the United States and other countries.

From the U.S. perspective, North Korea is in a bad position. Its economic system is dismal, and the political system is shaky. North Korea should know that this agreement is the last chance for it to make improvements in its policies.

If the leaders can wisely utilize the resources provided by other countries in this multilateral agreement, then North Korea can significantly improve its domestic situation.

What we need to understand is that everything accomplished in the international arena by any nation is temporary; nothing is permanent. This agreement with North Korea is no exception. International politics is an endless game.

All nations must continue to look for ways to achieve its own national interest. Sure, we can relax a little, but we need to be ready for the next round and the next round.

Overall, by signing this agreement, tensions are substantially reduced between North Korea and its international neighbors.

But if we look at the current state of the Bush administration, the war in Iraq is deteriorating, tensions with Iran are rising, and the war on terrorism in Afghanistan isn't making much progress.

So this new development with North Korea is an accomplishment for the troubled Bush administration.

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Ever-expanding options for vehicles mean jobs in industry aren't stable

On the same day Borg Warner announced it would close its Muncie manufacturing facility in 2009, the price of its stock surged by 6 percent.

Are the traders on Wall Street heartless or prejudiced against Muncie, or do they simply like bad news?

In truth, none of these answers is probably correct, although we really have no way of knowing.

Stockholders and workers and their families had divergent reactions to the news that nearly a century of Warner Gear history in east-central Indiana will soon be coming to an end.

The way they responded reminds us that there are many sides to the larger story of manufacturing's evolution in the industrial Midwest.

When you mention sides in any story about manufacturing, one immediately thinks of management and workers, and in many shops, company and union. If anything is familiar to lifelong residents of the Midwest, it is the ebb and flow of labor and management relations, sometimes harmonious, sometimes acrimonious and always, seemingly, adversarial.

That is the side of the story most of us are familiar with. Should the union have negotiated? Was the company telling the truth? These kinds of questions have been asked and answered, often speculatively, since the day factory floors were first organized.

But there is a completely



Patrick
Barkey

different story — a much larger story — that has been slowly unfolding about U.S. manufacturing at the same time. Its main actors are more difficult to photograph or interview. But they are extremely powerful, and their influence has greatly affected the course of events.

Let's start with investors and other providers of capital. Every minute the stock market is open, these faceless, nameless individuals and funds collectively vote on the future prospects of the companies that they own, with the stock prices reflecting the result. At the end of the day, money and capital are channeled to successful enterprises and effectively taken away from those that are not.

On that Thursday morning, those investors saw a company shedding an underperforming asset, and as a result they voted, with their dollars, to upgrade the prospects for returns on investment.

It is a harsh, cruel, disruptive turn of events for workers and the communities. But in a larger sense, redirecting investment to its most profitable use lies at the

heart of what makes the American economy remain competitive.

That story is not new. But the environment in which the story is taking place, the motor vehicle manufacturing industry, has changed greatly. That's because the biggest actor of them all, the customer, has new options, and is making different choices than before.

Ten years ago, Big Three automakers' nameplates were on three out of every four new vehicles sold. Today that share is just more than 50 percent. That change, more than anything else, is reverberating through communities like Muncie, Anderson, Connersville and Kokomo today.

Every segment of the vehicle market, from luxury cars, to full-size pickups, to minivans, has five or six companies vying for market share today, keeping prices in check while mandating expensive research and development to keep products fresh.

That's been a good news story for the customer and even for the industry as a whole. Today there are more motor vehicles registered in the United States than there are licensed drivers.

But it has been an enormous challenge for companies, workers and communities, one that cannot be solved with a handshake at the negotiating table.

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YOUR VIEWS

Leasing lottery good move for all Hoosiers

To the editor:

It's become a familiar picture. Every summer, thousands of Indiana college students graduate, saddled with student loan debt and misconceptions about career opportunities close to home. They say their goodbyes to family and friends and leave the state in search of greener pastures.

In all, more than one out of every three Hoosier collegians leave Indiana after earning their degrees. This "brain drain" means a lot of tearful farewells and also significant damage to our economy.

Traditionally, economic success has depended on a number of factors: location, access to natural resources, cost of doing business. Today, all of these have been trumped by the most valuable asset of all: a skilled work force.

Human capital is king, and good jobs go where the skilled people are, not the other way around. As Ross DeVol of the Milken Institute has commented, "You attract these (educated) people, and you attract the industries that employ them and the investors who put money into the companies."

Viewed from this perspective, Indiana's brain drain problem is a potential disaster. And it has taken its toll: Indiana ranks a dismal 44th among states in the percentage of college graduates in our adult work force. It's a tremendous growth barrier for a state that's focusing on fields such as advanced manufacturing and the life sciences.

Even worse, 66 percent of Indiana college students in science, engineering and technology majors leave after graduation.

Besides sacrificing economic opportunities tomorrow, our failings in educational attainment hit Hoosier pocketbooks today.

The typical Indiana worker earns just 91 cents for every dollar earned by the average American, and educational attainment is a major reason. Annual wages for college graduates between the ages of 25 and 34 were \$13,900 higher than high school graduates; between the ages of 45 and 54, the difference grew to \$22,900. This income gap also costs the state millions of dollars in tax revenue every year.

The brain drain is a problem that must be solved. And during this session of the Indiana General Assembly, legislators will have the opportunity to take a significant step toward doing so. A proposal before the legislature would provide Hoosier Hope Scholarships for outstanding high school graduates who attend an in-state college or university and agree to live and work in Indiana for at least three years after graduation.

The scholarships would take the form of forgivable loans that would not have to be repaid if the student stays here. Under the current plan, students attending four-year institutions would receive \$5,000 annually for tuition and other expenses; those pursuing two-year degrees would receive \$2,500.

Hoosier Hope Scholarships would help the state's best and brightest begin their professional lives here, free of debt. And as they put down roots in Indiana, our educational attainment rankings will begin to move in the right direction, making the state more attractive to high-growth, high-wage business opportunities.

The Hoosier Hope Scholarship program is an idea whose time has come. Unfortunately, the benefits have been overshadowed by the plan for funding it, entering into a management contract with a private operator for the Hoosier Lottery.

In a nutshell, the state would allow a private company to manage the lottery, in exchange for an up-front payment as well as annual payments roughly equal to current lottery revenues (around \$200 million a year). The up-front payment would be placed in an endowment to fund the Hoosier Hope Scholarships, while the annual income would continue to meet current needs (like public pensions).

The lottery deal would be a good one for Indiana. It doesn't expand gambling. The private operator would wager that better marketing and management of the existing lottery would allow it to make a return on its investment. And the state would gain new revenues to focus on the brain drain.

Difficult problems require bold solutions. An old Chinese proverb tells us, "If you don't change your direction, you'll end up exactly where you're headed."

We know the brain drain is sapping our economic strength, and we have a golden opportunity to do something about it. If we fail to act, we're simply giving up on Indiana, just like the thousands of college grads who flee our borders every summer.

Hank Dunn, Chancellor
Ivy Tech Community
College — Central Indiana