

# 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

## Hearts and more hearts

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

• Hearts to Shawn Nash of the Greenwood Meijer store, Eric Wilkerson of the southside Circuit City store and Cathy Fisher of Greenwood Park Mall, who arranged for contributions to the Greenwood Middle School Excellence in Education — ISTEP Success program.

These merchants helped us to celebrate excellent performance and/or improvement on the 2006 ISTEP test.

Hearts also go to middle school teacher Don Wettrick for organizing this program.

**Students and staff of Greenwood Middle School**

• Congratulations to Linda Greenwell, the third-grade students and fifth-grade choir at Creekside Elementary School for their wonderful presentation of "Broadway Santa," not to forget all of the parents and others who gave their time and talents to the production.

What a wonderful way to celebrate the holidays.

P.S. Santa, you were awesome!

**Jane Edwards**  
Franklin

• Hearts to all my friends and family who brought food and visited to help us through the holidays; the many times our sons had to make unexpected trips from North Carolina and Delaware to the hospital while my husband was ill; and the everyday visits from his family, Jean and Joe Brown, Sylvia and Mike McGuire, and Charles and Fran Robbins.

We could never have made it through without all their help. Gerald "Skip" Robbins passed away Nov. 30.

**Ida Robbins**  
New Whiteland

• Hearts to Dale Johnson, owner of Grand Rental Station, for donating the use of his champagne fountain for our lemonade and also to Russ Bechtol, manager of Marsh, for the donation of chocolate brownies.

These donations were for the American Cancer Society relay kickoff event on Jan. 15.

The fountain was a very nice addition to our beverage table, and the brownies were absolutely delicious.

Thank you for supporting such a good cause.

**Debbie Turner**  
ACS committee member

• Hearts to Lincoln Bank and Trust, Greenwood Domino's Pizza, St. Francis Sports Medicine Clinic and Pepsi. These organizations and merchants serve as corporate sponsors for the athletic program at Greenwood Middle School and help us to provide extracurricular programming for our students.

**Students and staff of Greenwood Middle School**

• A special thank you to the Indian Creek FFA, area churches (who went above and beyond their duty this year when they brought food, even in their grief from losing their minister), sponsors, volunteers, family and friends.

Without you, Carrie Clayburn's Memorial Scholarship Dinner would not have been successful. It's helpful to know that Indian Creek High School students will benefit from the scholarship and that Carrie will be remembered.

**John and Sheila Heidenreich and Jenny Clayburn**  
Trafalgar

• The family of Jerry Lasiter would like to give hearts to the whole athletic department of the Clark-Pleasant school system. Thanks for always making Jerry feel so important.

The athletics at the school are his life. You have included him so much he claims part ownership. If you listen to him, it's his school and his teams, and the coaches just couldn't do their jobs if it weren't for him.

He celebrated his 60th birthday last month, and the school presented him with his own school class ring. Anybody who runs into Jerry now has to admire his prized possession.

He has missed one varsity basketball game in 43 years, and that was to be an usher in Lisa Kellar's wedding. He was so torn to be at both places at once that he stewed for weeks.

The way he has been treated speaks volumes of how caring the Clark-Pleasant school system is of all people in the community. We never worry when Jerry is with them.

**The family of Jerry Lasiter**  
Whiteland

• A big heart to all those who participated in the Tree of Caring, held annually in Trafalgar. This helps needy individuals and families in the Morgantown, Nineveh and Trafalgar areas.

Without your help, it would not have been a successful mission. Fourteen families and 61 individuals had a merrier holiday because of your dedicated work and contributions.

It could not have been possible without you. It is wonderful to see the community bond together.

God bless all who came to aid this wonderful service.

**Sandy A. Adams**  
Trafalgar



PHASE 3

YOUR

## VIEWES & COMMENTARY

### Indiana government needs more cooperation

To the editor:

The November election placed the mantle of House leadership on our Democrat colleagues, with Republicans returning to the minority by the slimmest of margins.

While our legislative role has changed, our goals remain the same. We will continue to push the legislative debate away from partisanship and toward our goal of improving the quality of life for every Hoosier.

Our efforts will concentrate on four primary goals: strong taxpayer protection, comprehensive education reform, job opportunity for every Hoosier, and safe neighborhoods for our seniors, children and every family, wherever they may live.

In 2005, Republicans proposed and passed the first honestly balanced budget in a decade, without tax increases or transfer gimmicks, and we did it on time. Republicans also provided the first homeowner property tax freeze in decades.

This legislature must balance the budget again, without tax increases or the balance sheet gimmicks of the past, and with a continuing property tax freeze for Hoosier homeowners.

House Republicans hope to expand the education debate with proposals for greater teacher incentives and accountability, expanded education options for the neediest Hoosier families, advocating that tax dollars follow students directly to the classroom rather than just funding buildings and institutional costs and by empowering local school boards to place full-day kindergarten block grant money where it is needed, rather than where state officials say it must go.

While much has been achieved in the past two years on the job front, much remains to be done. From January 2005 through December 2006, nearly 38,000 new jobs have been announced through plant openings or expansions, with 80,000 more Hoosiers working today than in January 2005.

We have a plan to expand that success by broadening our focus to the small entrepreneur, where 80 percent of the next decade's jobs will be created. Our goal is to create economic opportunity for every Hoosier, with more

WRITE A

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

WHERE TO SEND THE LETTER

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Hoosiers owning successful small businesses than ever before.

There is no more fundamental government function than assuring the safety of our citizens.

House Republicans have proposed a "truth-in-sentencing" law that will require violent offenders serve at least 85 percent of their sentences, not less than 50 percent as Indiana now allows.

We also support a mandatory death penalty or life without parole for anyone found guilty of killing a police officer in the line of duty.

Registries for violent offenders and meth dealers are also a priority so that Indiana residents are aware of potentially dangerous convicted felons who live in their neighborhood. We must take back our streets and provide safe neighborhoods for every Hoosier.

Our pledge for this legislative session is to roll up our sleeves and work in good faith to make Indiana the state we know she can be.

Now is the time for partnership, not partisanship, cooperation rather than conflict, and discussion of policy over politics. House Republicans pledge to bring vision, action and partnership to the debate. Indiana's future depends on it.

**Brian Bosma**  
Republican leader  
Indiana House of Representatives

### Military improvements should be goal for Iraq

To the editor:

I reluctantly approve the president's request for more troops, but if there is not a major improvement by the Iraqi government and its "military" by mid-summer, the United States should pull out of Baghdad.

Our troops should then limit their actions to securing Iraq borders. This should then be followed by a gradual withdrawal of troops from the area.

**Bill Imel**  
Franklin

### Increased tax could reduce tobacco use

To the editor:

This fall a coalition named Hoosiers for a Healthier Indiana came together to advocate for a \$1 increase in the Indiana tobacco tax. The coalition also will advocate for all resulting revenue from this increase to be used to improve the health of Hoosiers.

Indiana has a cigarette tax of 55.5 cents per pack, the lowest in the Midwest. Fifteen years of research indicate that increasing the tobacco tax will encourage some smokers to quit or smoke less. It will also deter others, especially youth, from picking up the deadly habit in the first place.

Smoking kills: 9,800 Hoosier adults die each year as a result of their own smoking. Estimates show that by raising the price of cigarettes by just \$1, you can save 28,700 Indiana kids who are alive today from premature death caused by smoking.

The 2000 U.S. Surgeon General's report "Reducing Tobacco Use" found that increasing the price of tobacco products decreases the prevalence of tobacco use. Particularly among kids and young adults, it also leads to "substantial long-term improvements in health."

Health care is expensive and becoming more so every day. In Indiana alone, smoking costs the Medicaid program \$487 million in taxes each year. Now is the time to increase the tax on tobacco products. It is the right thing to do, not only because it is sound fiscal policy but also because it will improve the quality of life and overall health of all Hoosiers.

**Kelley Murphy**

Hoosiers for a Healthier Indiana

### Seat-belt laws leave loophole for truck plates

To the editor:

Statistics have continued to repeatedly prove that seat belts save

lives. There's absolutely no way to dispute the overwhelming evidence.

So we find ourselves yet again in the midst of another Indiana General Assembly, hoping that Indiana leaders will finally bring statewide safety belt standards on par with the rest of the country.

The sad truth of the matter is that Indiana's primary seat-belt law continues to field a dangerous loophole. That law, which was originally adopted many years ago with farm vehicles in mind, now completely fails to protect drivers of trucks as well as those who drive other vehicles plated as trucks.

In other words, here's the current message to those on Indiana roadways: If you're in the front seat of a car, we care enough about you to require you to wear a seat belt. If you're in a truck or a sport utility vehicle or minivan with a truck plate, please feel free to ride completely unbuckled. The decision is yours.

Does that make sense?

It certainly doesn't to most of the rest of the United States. In fact, Indiana and Georgia are the only two states in the country with primary seat-belt laws that exempt trucks.

What's equally troubling is that any Hoosier, including new, inexperienced teenage drivers, can purchase a truck plate for their SUV or other qualifying vehicle for an additional fee of about \$9.

Nearly one of every four plated vehicles in Indiana is registered as a truck.

Now is the time for Indiana lawmakers to make things right by passing a bill that would require seat-belt use in trucks into law. Doing so will equally protect all motorists on Indiana roadways.

This issue has nothing to do with whether Hoosiers like to wear seat belts, nor does it have anything to do with how people feel about the government telling them what to do. Indiana voted seat-belt usage into law many years ago. The question at hand is what valid reason can possibly be given to justify the protection of only those who drive cars.

The answer is none. That's why only one other state in the country currently has the same dilemma we do.

**Greg Seiter**  
Public affairs manager  
AAA Hoosier Motor Club

# Lottery privatization sending wrong message

Folks I talked to, Democrats and Republicans, liked the governor's State of the State speech. The fault they found was that the speech was scheduled opposite the Indiana University basketball game with Iowa. Isn't that an impeachable offense in Indiana?

The part of the speech that intrigued me most was the idea about leasing the rights to the lottery in order to get money to establish scholarships and endowed chairs at our universities. The idea is to slow or reverse the brain drain.

That's a heap of different thoughts thrown together in one bold initiative.

First, there is the Hoosier Lottery. A lottery advances the proposition that great rewards in life are distributed by chance. Is that what we want to teach our children? Don't we want them to learn that life's rewards are the result of preparation and hard work, not scratching on a piece of paper?

Second, if there is to be a lottery in Indiana, why is it a state-owned monopoly? If we condone lotteries, let them operate like bowling alleys and other forms of recreation. Let the lottery be taxed at the same rate as other forms of recreation. Let competitors come into and exit



Morton  
Marcus

the industry as they will, as long as they don't cheat their customers. Don't we believe in the competitive market place?

Third, and this idea President Bush might like, why not make it easy to put part of Social Security money into lotteries? You would have your regular FICA deduction on your paycheck, but some portion (as you choose) would go toward the Hoosier lottery or a fund of lotteries. That way, those who want to bet on the lottery would have direct payroll deduction without the nuisance of standing in line to buy tickets. That should be a step toward increasing lottery participation, which, for some reason, seems to be an aim of this leasing scheme.

Fourth, why use the one-time and annual money derived from the lease for scholarships and university endowed chairs? Are our universities inferior to those in other states? I have never

heard any university president bemoan the poor quality of his/her faculty. They may want to retain their best, but that could be done by reducing the number of senior administrative positions on campus.

Scholarships always sound like a good idea. We have the notion that there are many potential students who are denied a college education because of its financial burden. However, Indiana's economic problems do not stem from the lack of college degrees. It is the lack of adequate high school education that leaves students unprepared for either college or the work place. If this can be corrected by money, then let's allow school corporations to raise their property taxes.

The lottery was supposed to help support public education. Has it? Or has it been used as a substitute for other funding, particularly the local property tax. (Unfortunately, a band of bright lights in the legislature wants to eliminate the property tax, but that's a subject for another time.)

Fifth, and finally, what's this about a brain drain? You can read about such problems afflicting virtually every community and state in North America. What it means is that our children move away for

greater opportunity; in doing so they gain experience and perspective. If they stay at home, they will know only the limited standards of Indiana.

We want other people's energetic, well-educated children to come to Indiana. Let them bring fresh eyes to Terre Haute and Richmond. Let them offer new ideas for Angola and Anderson. In time, some of our own children will return and we will feel blessed by their energy. It is not the state's job, nor that of any institution, to interfere, by bribery or other inducement, in the free flow of people within the nation.

There is no fundamental difficulty with leasing the lottery. But would leasing generate more money if anyone could have a piece of it? Buy your bank's lottery tickets online or at your ATM; get BK lottery tickets as change from Burger King. Break the lottery into pieces and the initial rights might not garner up-front as much as the lease to a monopoly. But the opportunity for many to prey upon the ignorant and dispirited has always been worth a bundle in the long run.

Morton Marcus is an economist, formerly with the Indiana University Kelley School of Business. Send comments to [letters@thejournalnet.com](mailto:letters@thejournalnet.com).