

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 Greenwood Public Library turns 90 next week.

OUR POINT

As the library grows older, it becomes ever more active with expanded services.

Greenwood library melds mission with technology

The Daily Journal

For many youngsters, a rite of passage occurs when they receive their first library card.

The card is a passport, opening up a world of information and entertainment.

It also represents empowerment, as the young library patrons can check out materials on their own.

Years ago, the library's materials were nearly all books. Magazines and a few newspapers could be read at the library.

Now, though, the menu is much broader. Patrons can check out not only books but also videos, audio books and recorded music. They also can use computers for a variety of purposes and access the Internet from public terminals.

The Greenwood Public Library represents this change. Next week, the library will turn 90. The anniversary will be celebrated with a birthday party Tuesday. Three times that day, visitors can sing "Happy Birthday" while candles burn on a large birthday cake. Then they can share in the cake and sign a large birthday card.

Other activities are planned throughout the year. This month there is a photography contest. The theme is "Life in Greenwood."

Greenwood's first public library was established in the Cook building on Feb. 6, 1917. Later, the library was located in the Polk Community House.

The library's big jump came when a permanent, dedicated home for the library was built. It has been expanded since then, and planning is under way for more changes.

Its mission, though, remains unchanged. But changing technology has required adjustments.

Margaret L. Hamilton, library director, says on the library's Web site: "The library strives to fairly balance the growing materials collection between print (books, magazines and newspapers) and technology (CD software, video and audio cassettes and Internet use). Both computer and print resources will continue to fill a vital role in information service at the library into the 21st century."

The library soldiers on, offering vital services to the community but keeping its information role squarely in view.

And one other thing won't change.

Youngsters will still relish the independence that comes with that first library card.

Focus: Iraq war

New type of fanatic changing face of conflict

Scrrips Howard News Service

As if Shiites, Sunnis, al-Qaida, Islamic zealots, freelance jihadis and fanatics who just hate the West aren't enough, our military planners may now have to contend with messianics and end-of-the-worlders.

In what raises disturbing questions about the Iraqi government's awareness of what goes on in its own country, hundreds of heavily armed "pilgrims" pitched camp 10 miles outside the holy city of Najaf.

Calling themselves "Soldiers of Heaven," they hauled in heavy machine guns and truck-mounted anti-aircraft weapons and proceeded to dig a network of bunkers, trenches and tunnels. Apparently, no one in authority thought to drive out and ask, "Say, what brings you boys to this neck of the woods?"

When an Iraqi patrol finally did go out, it was attacked and the fight escalated into a daylong battle that drew in an elite Iraqi army unit, U.S. troops and armor and air support.

The fighters proved to be suspiciously well-trained for pilgrims.

When the fighting was finally over, more than 300 militants were dead and some 650 were prisoners at a cost of 11 Iraqi and two U.S. soldiers dead. The Americans were killed in a helicopter crash.

The leaders of the Soldiers of Heaven, a Shiite cleric who called himself the Judge of Heaven, was killed in the fighting.

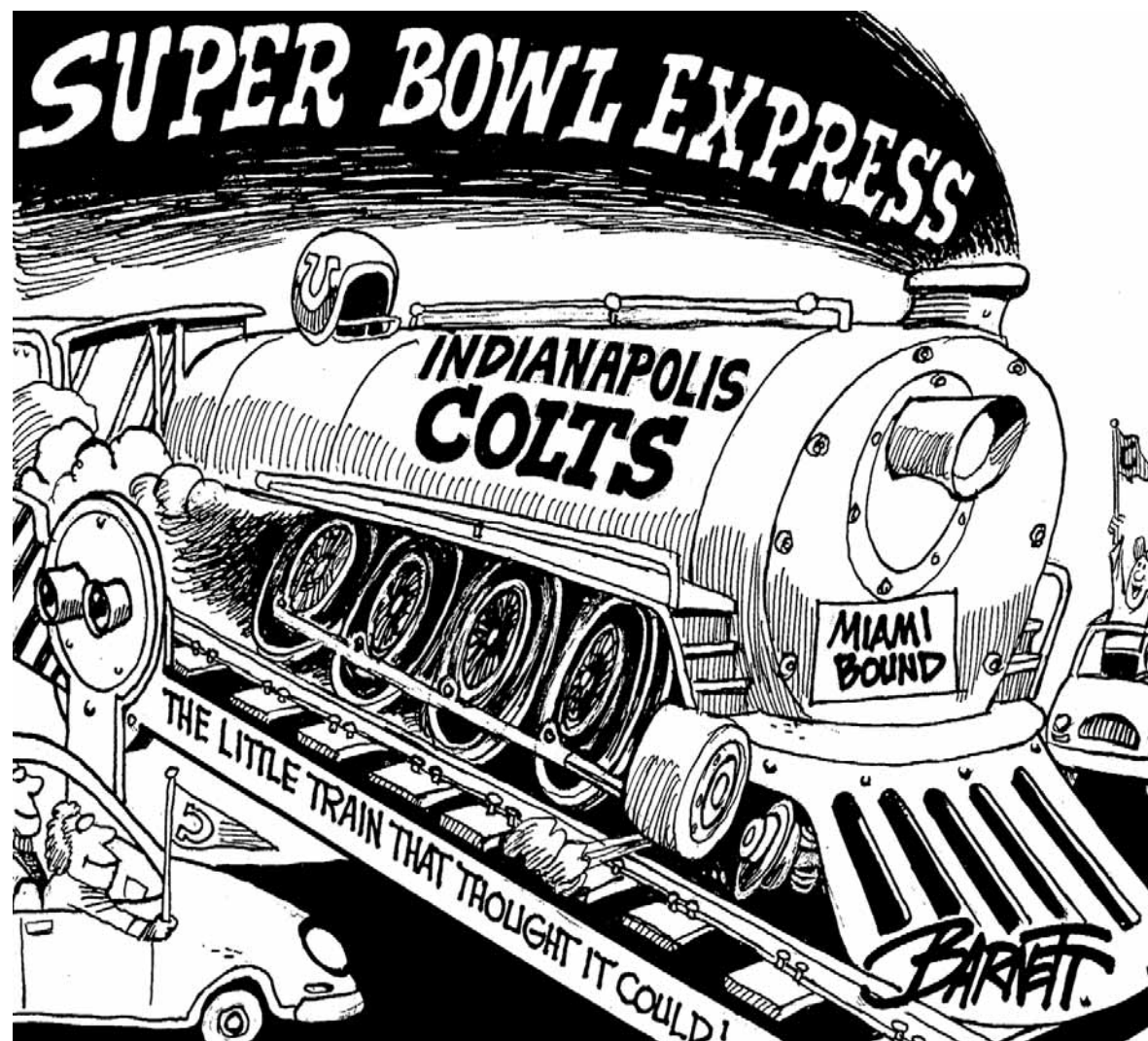
His plan, apparently, was to attack Najaf on the occasion of the observance of Ashura, when the city would be filled with legitimate pilgrims; assassinate the religious hierarchy, including the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani; and destroy the venerated Imam Ali mosque.

It is unclear whether the leader believed he was actually the 12th, or Hidden, Imam, who disappeared in the 10th century, or whether he and his followers believed the attack would prompt the return of the 12th Imam, whose reappearance, it is said, will herald the Day of Judgment.

This is not a real positive development. U.S. troops turned responsibility for Najaf over to Iraqi forces just a month ago.

Yet, the province's deputy governor said, "This group had more capabilities than the government."

And it came chillingly close to achieving what it set out to do.



State economic performance mediocre vs. U.S. average

Where is the best place to work if all you consider is money? Where are the wages and salaries plus benefits paid by employers the highest? We have data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis that help us answer the question.

The data refer to 2005, the most recent year available, and do not include self-employment; thus only jobs working for someone else are counted. And remember, these data are by place of work not place of residence.

Where are the best-paying jobs? The answer is, as it has been for some time, the District of Columbia. Yes, go east young man and young woman. Become an attorney, lobbyist or association executive in our nation's capital if you want the big bucks.

In 2005, the latest year for which we have data, the average job in Washington, D.C., paid \$84,120, or 69 percent more than the national average of \$49,775. But we can all agree that Washington is a special place, so let's leave it out of our considerations from here on.

In 2005, the highest paying jobs were in the northeastern part of the nation. Connecticut ranked first among the states at \$62,379, followed by New York, Massachusetts and New Jersey. Indiana was down in 28th place at \$44,095, or 11.4 percent below the national average.

Indiana's rate of growth did exceed the nation's pace.

We grew by an average annual rate of 3.96 percent (32nd among the states) compared to the nation's 3.88 percent. That paltry difference is not enough reason to throw a party or let the kids off from school for a day.

Yes, we know the story about the



Morton Marcus

auto industry, manufacturing, outsourcing, and a host of other legitimate reasons for our lagging performance. However, this mediocre or worse growth has been going on since the late 1970s and there seems to be no end to it.

Patience, we are told. It takes time to turn around a big ship on the open seas. But clichés and metaphors do not offset our continued distress as a state.

Where are the highest paying jobs in Indiana? Surprise, they are in Martin County.

Yes, in south-central Indiana, where Crane is located, are the best compensated jobs, averaging \$70,645, 60 percent above the state level.

Part of the reason is that Loogootee, Shoals and Oden have few jobs to drag down the average for the high paying engineering and technical workers at Crane.

Does the fact that Martin County leads the state in average compensation negate the argument for a better road (Interstate 69) to that remote area? I think not. Similarly, the fact that Howard County (Kokomo) ranks second in compensation per job does not invalidate the need for an improved U.S. 31.

Gibson County, home to Toyota, had the fastest rate of growth in

BY THE NUMBERS

Here's a look at average yearly compensation in Johnson County and surrounding counties in 2005 and how the wages rank against the rest of the state (out of 92 counties).

	Salary	Rank
Johnson	\$36,430	58
Bartholomew	\$48,038	7
Brown	\$27,104	92
Marion	\$52,295	5
Morgan	\$36,056	63
Shelby	\$39,782	31
Indiana	\$44,095	—

SOURCE: Bureau of Economic Analysis

compensation per job between 2001 and 2005, advancing by an average of 8.8 percent a year.

Old industrial centers east of Indianapolis (Henry, Fayette and Madison counties) were at the bottom of the growth list.

Fast growth and high wages do not necessarily go together. For example, Hamilton County ranked fourth in level of compensation per job in 2001 but came in with a growth rate of just 2 percent (89th of the 92 counties) and fell to sixth place by 2005.

All this probably seems like the same old story: Indiana's economic performance is mediocre relative to the nation.

For all our self-promotion and self-congratulation for seeing our Colts battle the Bears, our economy is still not a source of pride.

Morton Marcus is an economist, formerly with the Indiana University Kelley School of Business. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.

Myths about U.S. health care mask truth about costs, quality, results

Reforming the American health-care system will be difficult as long as certain myths about it continue to flourish.

Some of these myths include: In America, health care is provided by the market, rather than by the government. In countries where the government pays for health care, people don't have the freedom to choose their own doctor. American health care is expensive because it's of such high quality.

And, by the way, we have "the best health-care system in the world."

Let's look at these myths.

• The government doesn't pay for health care.

In fact, in America the government pays more for health care, per person, than any other government in the world, including the governments of countries that provide comprehensive cradle-to-grave health care for all their citizens. Yet despite this high level of government spending, nearly one out of six Americans has no health-care coverage of any kind.

• Unlike in nations with "socialized medicine," Americans have the freedom to choose their own doctors.

It's a tribute to the power of ideology that people who haven't had the freedom to choose their own doctor in decades don't notice that this claim is flatly untrue. The vast majority of Americans younger than 65 who have health insurance at all are enrolled in group health plans that severely restrict their health-



Paul Campos

care choices at every turn.

• American health care is expensive because it's of such high quality.

Well it's certainly expensive: the United States spends about twice as much, per person, on health care as other developed nations. Indeed, despite being the richest nation in the world, we spend a higher percentage of our gross domestic product on health care than anybody else.

And what do we get in return for having what is by far the world's most expensive system? Lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality rates, and fewer physicians and nurses per capita than the average developed nation.

The U.S. health-care system is the equivalent of a carmaker that produces Buicks, charges twice as much for them as it costs to buy a Mercedes, and then has the temerity to claim that it makes "the best cars in the world." Needless to say, such a carmaker would go out of business in about two weeks.

In one sense, the United States clearly does have the best health care in the world: If you're rich, America is a great place to get sick. We do, in fact, have the best

doctors and hospitals in the world. So why do we have below average health, as compared to other developed nations?

The answer is simple: If you're poor, America is a much worse place to get sick than any of dozens of other countries that, despite being far less wealthy than the United States, find a way to provide good medical care for all their residents.

No country has a perfect health-care system, of course, but the U.S. system, with its combination of extraordinarily high costs and mediocre overall results, is as clear an example of market failure as one could hope to find.

Fortunately, we have many examples of systems that are both much more efficient and far fairer.

For example, the French system features both public and private funding, but the great majority of health-care costs are covered by the government.

Per capita, the French have more doctors, more than twice as many hospital beds, twice as many physician visits, vastly more consumer choice, and better overall health than Americans — and they get all this for roughly half of what we spend on health care.

On top of all that, the French smoke much more, drink a lot more alcohol and eat 50 percent more fat than we do. Pass the freedom fries.

Paul C. Campos is a law professor at the University of Colorado. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.

YOUR VIEWS

'Big-boss politics' hurts public role in governing

To the editor:

I read with interest the story of the Greenwood Park Board's decision to dissolve all volunteer citizens' advisory groups, and I've noted the public outcry. I've had enough of big-boss politics. Enough is enough; it is time for a change.

Mayor Charles Henderson's response to the outcry was: "It is not a public issue." This response seems typical of this mayor's treatment of its citizens, the very people who voted him into office. Since when are the activities of our mayor and his appointees not a public issue?

The four advisory groups were created to give the citizens of Greenwood a voice in local government. However, when their voices were heard, the mayor and park board silenced them with less than democratic tactics.

The citizens of Greenwood deserve good government. Unfortunately, the current mayor's autocratic administration seems uninterested in providing good government. Democracy works when government is accessible, transparent and accountable to the citizens.

With very few exceptions, everything in local government is a public issue that should be open to debate/discussion by all citizens, not just the ruling elite. Being accessible means operating the city to accommodate the citizens' schedules and should include using the Web site to provide 24/7 access to information and government services.

Transparency means making sure citizens can view and participate in all the meetings, documents and deliberations involved in governing their affairs. Accountability means having the courage to let the public compare results to words and actions.

According to the Daily Journal's front-page article on Sept. 15, the controversy centered on the fact that a trails advocate with whom the (park board) members were angry refused to resign when they demanded it. Mayor Henderson was quoted as saying, "It not a public issue." How can that be?

We have a mayor who seems to think that local government is not open to public scrutiny, and that the actions of the park board are nobody's business but the park board. One park board member said the dismissal of the advisory groups happened because the park board members had grown tired of reading about proposed policies in the newspaper. (Article published Sept. 15.)

What is the board afraid of? Why shouldn't proposed activities be made public?

It seems that the board wants to operate in relative secrecy (note that agendas of and minutes from park board meetings are scarce and not readily accessible on the city's Web site). It is time for a change.

Even an editorial in the Daily Journal suggested it would be best for the mayor to either reinstate the advisory groups or replace the park board. One after another, letters to the editor show an amazed and shocked citizenry upset at our mayor's misguided attempt to silence the people who elected him.

When I am elected mayor, I will have an administration that is transparent. I will establish guidelines and opportunities that will allow Greenwood's citizens open access to the governing process.

My administration will actively seek and value their input. I've had enough of big-boss politics. Enough is enough; it is time for a change.

Mike Campbell
Candidate for
mayor of Greenwood

WRITE A LETTER

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

GUIDELINES

- Letters published in the Daily Journal must contain the writer's name and city or town.
- Letters sent to the Daily Journal must be signed and must include a daytime telephone number for verification to be considered for publication.
- Letters should be kept as brief as possible.
- Make sure the e-mail letter includes the writer's name, mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address for verification.
- Because of space and legal considerations, the Daily Journal reserves the right to edit any letters or articles and to limit comments.

SEND IT

E-mail
letters@thejournalnet.com

Drop-off

2575 N. Morton St. (U.S. 31), Franklin