

## THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR

A GANNETT NEWSPAPER

EUGENE C. PULLIAM 1889-1975, Publisher 1944-1975  
EUGENE S. PULLIAM 1914-1999, Publisher 1975-1999

**Barbara A. Henry**  
President and Publisher  
barbara.henry@indystar.com  
(317) 444-8131

**Tim Swarens**  
Editor of the Editorial Pages  
tim.swarens@indystar.com  
(317) 444-6176

**Dennis R. Ryerson**  
Editor and Vice President  
dennis.ryerson@indystar.com  
(317) 444-6169

**Pamela B. Fine**  
Managing Editor  
pam.fine@indystar.com  
(317) 444-6168

### EDITORIALS

## Township tricks prove merger need

### Our position:

Wayne Township's move exemplifies why township government should be abolished.

**W**hy did Wayne Township's advisory board hand over its fire training center to the local school district? This questionable move, and the political machinations behind it, provides another example of why the archaic, inefficient township government system should be eliminated.

As part of their opposition to the Indy Works plan for consolidating fire departments, officials such as outgoing Wayne Township Trustee Dan Gammon contend that their governments are more efficient and more accountable to citizens than a consolidated system. The evidence from last week undermines both of those arguments.

Wayne Township's 55-acre fire training center has long been an expensive burden on taxpayers. Efforts to make the center pay for itself, including a legislative push by state Sen. Mike Young to require all of Marion County's fire departments to train there, haven't worked.

Given the center's inefficiency, the decision to hand it over to the school district, which will team with Vincennes University to offer dual-credit fire science classes, could make sense.

Yet, the same set of taxpayers pick up the costs

of the training center and the school district. So the expected \$200,000 in savings could prove illusionary.

The bigger problem is in how the decision was handled. If Gammon was convinced of the value of the deal, why not conduct public hearings before rushing the issue before the board? The answer can be found in the politics of consolidation.

Decades of Republican control in Wayne Township will end in January when board member David King Baird succeeds Gammon as trustee. That change in power makes it more likely that Mayor Bart Peterson will find support for consolidation in Wayne Township. Shifting the training center to the school district's control will keep it out of Democratic hands – and IFD's if consolidation occurs.

Faced with a loss of power, Gammon and a majority of board members decided to keep the training center in the Wayne Township "family" by suddenly giving it to the schools. That sort of cynical, inbred play isn't new. Gammon, as chairman of the nonprofit that oversees the center, even hired his wife to run the facility.

Taxpayers in Wayne Township have every right to be outraged. The trustee and the board weren't looking out for residents' best interests last week. They were indulging their own political biases instead.

## Still learning about school diversity

### Our position:

Courts need to seek balance in cases involving racial diversity in schools.

**T**he nation's courts, which once sanctioned racial discrimination before swinging too far the other way with formulas for desegregating schools, haven't fared well in dealing with a multi-racial society.

Here's hoping the U.S. Supreme Court can strike a better balance. It is reviewing two cases pitting efforts by officials in Louisville and Seattle to diversify the racial makeup of schools against parents and students who say that preferences used to achieve those ends are discriminatory.

As Indianapolis learned from decades of desegregation orders, there are limits to using mandatory school assignments to overcome racial separation. Even careful efforts by the late U.S. District Judge S. Hugh Dillin to adjust busing formulas to avoid white flight proved little match for human nature and demographic shifts.

Dillin's rulings, however, did give a generation of students in Marion County exposure to people of differing races and backgrounds. That exposure undoubtedly helps them work and live together as adults.

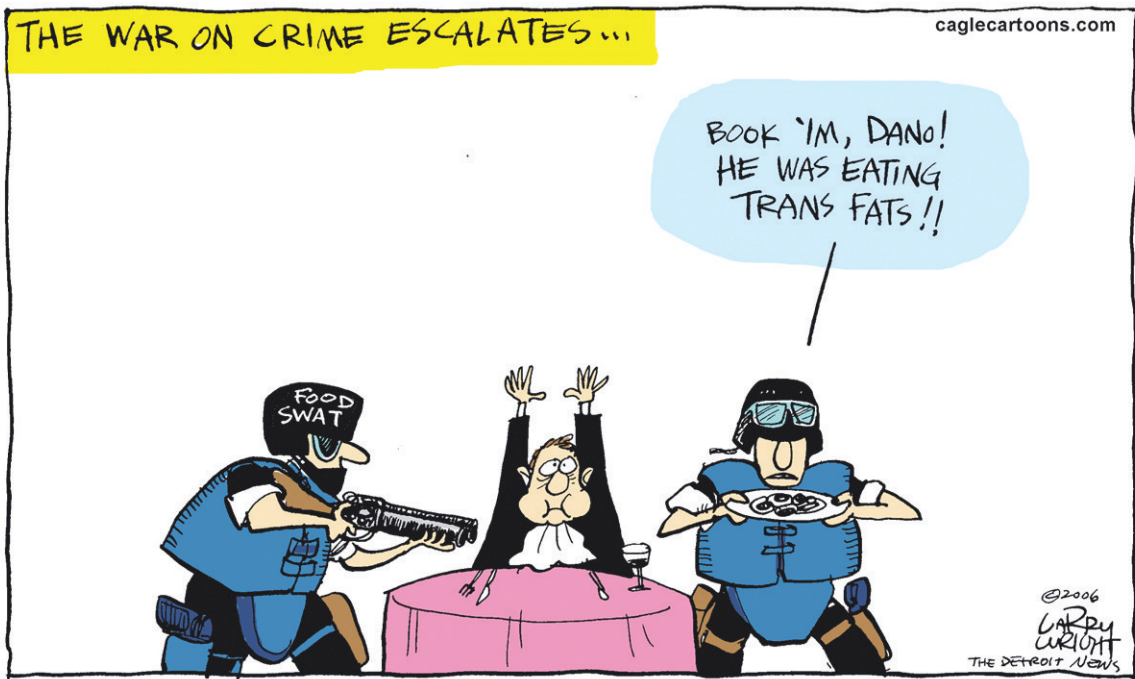
The Supreme Court needs to reject discrimination, fixed quotas and overzealous efforts to force integration, while giving educators and communities latitude in assigning students to achieve diversity.

Judges also must recognize that schools' primary purpose is to educate students. They can't be the sole vehicles for achieving a color-blind society.



**BLOGS:** Check out IndyStar.com/opinion for The Star's Web logs: **Expresso**, by Star Editorial Board members and local columnists; **VarvBlog**, sketches and notes by cartoonist Gary Varvel; **IN Touch**, by local panel members; and **Fresh Thoughts**, by college and high school students. Also read **My Indiana**, short articles by readers about life in the Hoosier state. Online comments about each blog item are welcome.

## OPINION&COMMENTARY



## Set fixed date to leave, then buy some leverage



THOMAS FRIEDMAN

**T**he brutally honest Baker-Hamilton assessment of the Iraq morass implies that we need to leave

Iraq if the factions there don't get their act together, but it also urges a last-ditch effort to enlist the help of Syria and Iran to salvage something decent. Both are good suggestions, but they will only have a chance of being effective if we go one notch further and set a fixed date – now – for America to leave Iraq.

The only hope of moving the factions inside Iraq, not to mention Syria and Iran, toward reconciliation is if we have leverage over them, which we now lack. The currency of Middle East politics is pain. And right now, all the pain is being inflicted on us and on Iraqi civilians. Only if we tell all the players that we are leaving might we create a different balance of pain and therefore some hope for a diplomatic deal. Trying to do diplomacy without the threat of pain is like trying to play baseball without a bat.

Yes, yes, I know, the conventional wisdom is that if the U.S. sets a date to leave Iraq the whole Middle East will explode in a Shiite-Sunni war. Maybe, but maybe not.

Let's play this out. What happens if we set a date to leave? The war in Iraq will get worse, but for how long? Right now our troops are providing a floor under the civil war that allows some parties to behave outrageously or make impossible demands – because they know that we won't let things spin totally out of control. Would they behave more cautiously if they knew they had to pay retail for their madness? I'd like to find out.

Moreover, while our presence in Iraq helps control the situation, it also aggravates it. For many Sunnis, and a growing number of Shiites, we've become "occupiers" to be resisted. Our leaving will both unleash violence and eliminate violence.

As for the neighbors, well, right now Iran, Syria and some other Arab states look at Iraq and clearly believe that the controlled chaos there is their friend. For Arab autocrats, chaos is their friend because a burning Iraq on Al Jazeera sends a message to their own people: "This is what happens to those who try democracy." And for Iran and Syria, anything that frustrates the U.S. in Iraq and keeps America bleeding weakens its ability to confront Tehran.

The minute we leave, chaos in Iraq is not their friend anymore. First of all, if there is a full-fledged civil war, Syria, a largely Sunni country, will have to support the Iraqi Sunnis. Shiite Iran will have to support the Iraqi Shiites. That would mean Iran and Syria, now allies, will be on opposite sides of the Iraqi civil war. That will leave them with the choice of either indirectly fighting each other or working to settle the war.

Moreover, right now we are "Mr. Big" in Iraq, soaking up all the popular anger. But the minute

we're gone, Iran becomes "Mr. Big" and the age-old tensions between Iraqi Arab Shiites and Iranian Persian Shiites will surface. Iran and Muqtada al-Sadr will be at each other's throats.

Also, as long as our troops are in Iraq, we are pinned down and an easy target for Iran to hit, should we ever want to strike its nuclear facilities. Once we are out, we will have much more room to maneuver. I'm not saying we should attack Iran, but I am saying Iran will be much more worried that we will.

As for the Arab states, they've done little to promote peace in Iraq. They've basically said to America: "You can't leave and we won't help." OK, we're leaving. You still don't want to help? The only thing the Arab regimes fear more than democracy is fragmentation.

As long as we're in Iraq, Iraq implodes, and we absorb a lot of the pain. The minute we leave, Iraq explodes – or at least no one can be sure it won't – and that is a real threat to the Iraqi factions and neighbors. Even facing that reality might not knock enough sense into them to compromise, but at least then they'll have their medieval religious war without us.

Only that threat will give us leverage. Yes, it would be a sad end to our involvement there. But everything Iraq's leaders have done so far suggests that a united, democratic and pluralistic Iraq is their second choice. Tribal politics is still their first choice. We can't go on having our first-choice kids dying for their second choice.

★ Friedman is a foreign affairs columnist for the New York Times. Contact him via e-mail at letters@nytimes.com.

## Treating hunger's symptoms



ANNA QUINDLEN

**A**lex Toro threads his big white truck through traffic, making the kind of pilgrimage New York City foodies live for. No stop at Le Bernardin today, the French fish restaurant that is routinely named one of the city's best, or Whole Foods, the Tiffany of supermarkets, although Toro has been to both. Instead he pulls up to the Sullivan Street Bakery as the smell of freshly baked bread spills out onto the pavement, then moves on to Hale and Hearty Soups, where today there's Italian lentil and pasta e fagiolle. Then it's up to Balducci's for big bags of rolls.

That's one part of his daily route. The second is the eaters, not the eateries. A small church with a shelter, a large one with a food pantry in the basement. At Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen the line snakes down the block, and the people on it look like the cast of one of those movies in which every variation of humanity is assembled in one place: young bike messengers, old alcoholics and a woman with silver hair and a good leather purse whose posture bespeaks fierce pride. Nearly 25 years ago, a simple and elegant Robin Hood of an idea took root in a fledgling organization called City Harvest. Take the overflow from New York's restaurants, hotels, wholesalers and markets, and pass it on to the soup kitchens, shelters and food pantries. This year the group expects to distribute more than 21 million pounds of food. Sad to say, New Yorkers need it.

The Department of Agriculture

released the figures just before most of us dug into our turkey and yams: 35 million people don't have enough food, 12 million of them children. America's Second Harvest, a consortium of emergency food organizations, says 25 million people sought help from it last year.

The resources exist: "There's food that we can pick up this hour that can be feeding people in the next hour, or be in the garbage by the end of the day," says Jennifer McLean, City Harvest's vice president of program operations. And Americans know real need exists, too; one survey showed that a majority of those polled believe hunger is as bad or worse here as in other developed countries.

Many companies have contributed manpower and money to the effort. Food banks have sprung up throughout the country. And some of the newest initiatives are plenty smart, like the school program that sends kids home for the weekend with a backpack full of food. Smart, and sad: The idea came in part because teachers who oversaw meal programs noticed how many kids gorged themselves on Fridays, preparing for two days of bare cupboards.

Even government can't take all the blame for some of the holes in this terribly porous safety net. A fraction of the students who eat subsidized school lunches also take part in breakfast programs, in part because schools have struggled with the logistics. That shortfall has left billions in federal subsidies unspent. And food banks report that only about a third of their patrons receive food stamps, although many more are eligible.

Sometimes advocates complain that organizations like City Harvest are treating only the symptoms, not the underlying root causes. And some of those root causes are clear. It should be possible to apply for food stamps online and at off-hours. More schools should offer breakfast. And working people, who account for about a third of those who use emergency food programs, should be paid a living wage. The current minimum wage is a joke if you look at the cost of a loaf of bread.

But in the short term, treating symptoms works just fine for someone who has an empty stomach and an empty fridge. Jilly Stephens, the executive director of City Harvest, has seen what happens after the Alex Toro's truck arrives when she goes out in the field: the bowls, the spoons, the open mouths, the sated looks. Recently at one shelter she saw a brace of high chairs, neatly stacked, waiting for their tiny occupants. That's not food insecurity; that's unconscionable.

★ Quindlen writes a biweekly column for Newsweek.



DEROY MURDOCK

## Rich target of liberal anger

**"H**owie Rich from New York City" has become the Left's latest whipping boy. The wealthy Gotham real-estate investor and long-time free-market activist has generated liberal ire through his personal donations and support of Americans for Limited Government, U.S. Term Limits, and other groups that sponsor state ballot measures to curb eminent-domain abuse, cap state spending, and curtail careerism among elected officials.

"Who is Howie Rich from New York City?" asked the on-line newsletter of SEIU Local 503, a Salem, Ore.-based union. "And why is he spending millions to push dangerous policy gimmicks in numerous states thousands of miles from his front door?"

"As Governor," Oregon Democrat Ted Kulongoski wrote Rich, "I feel it is my obligation to stand up to the special interest groups you fund and protect the most vulnerable in our population – kids and seniors – who depend on services you are proposing to cut."

AFL-CIO News called Rich's pro-market, small-government groups a "tangled extremist Web." HowieRichExposed.com dubbed him "the financial muscle behind the drive to mislead voters in many states into degrading state government services."

All this makes Howie howl. "I don't think anybody has anything to fear from my involvement in the initiative process or anything else," he laughs. "I have been fortunate enough to have been successful in business, and I want to do something in this life to advance liberty."

Rich rarely grants interviews, preferring instead to campaign quietly.

"All I have done here, for the most part, is provide seed money," Rich says. "All of these initiatives are left up to the voters. That's what these people, who consider money evil, are not willing to address. It's the voters in these states who ultimately make the decisions."

Rich is worth unspecified millions. He poured his initial plumbing-contracting revenues into real-estate ventures that have grown handsomely. For November's election, Rich and groups he runs or advises reportedly spent \$15 million promoting state initiatives. While all three of Rich's budget-trimming Taxpayer Bill of Rights, or TABOR, proposals failed, nine of 12 eminent-domain-relief questions passed overwhelmingly.

These eminent-domain initiatives quietly swept the nation, even as Republicans had a rotten night. Americans recoiled against the U.S. Supreme Court's Kelo V. New London decision. It freed cities to use eminent domain to snatch private property, not for public, but for private purposes.

Some of Rich's foes claim he is shielding his portfolio from sticky-fingered local bureaucrats.

"It's a crock," he replies. "I own no real estate in any of the 12 states where we had property rights initiatives on the ballot."

Atop these political activities, which he plans to conduct in more states in 2008, Rich remains a trustee of the libertarian Cato Institute and the Club for Growth. His wife, Andrea, former owner of Laissez-Faire Books, is a trustee of the free-market Atlas Economic Research Foundation (with which I am a senior fellow).

"What we do is designed to advance individual freedom and create an atmosphere where we restore the Founders' concepts of property rights and free markets," says Rich, a not-so-tall bald man who is fond of patterned sport jackets. He taunts his critics.

"People think you can come in, win a few, and go away," Howie Rich smiles. "You're in the ring. You've got to keep punching."

★ Murdock is a columnist with Scripps Howard News Service and an adviser to the Cato Institute on Social Security Choice.