

The Indiana Gazette

Established in 1890
Published by The Indiana Printing & Publishing Company

MICHAEL J. DONNELLY
President and Publisher

HASTIE D. KINTER
Secretary and
Assistant Treasurer

STACIE D. GOTTFREDSON
Treasurer and
Assistant Secretary

JOSEPH L. GEARY
Vice President
and General Manager

R. Hastie Ray
Publisher, 1913-70

Lucy R. Donnelly
Publisher, 1970-93

Joe Donnelly
Publisher, 1970-2000

"The Gazette wants to be the friend of every man, the promulgator of all that's right, a welcome guest in the home. We want to build up, not tear down, to help, not to hinder; and to assist every worthy person in the community without reference to race, religion or politics. Our cause will be the broadening and bettering of the county's interests."

Solzhenitsyn had it right about U.S.

Back in the 1970s, Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, one of the giants of the 20th century, gave a commencement address at Harvard. It was, I believe, the last public address he gave in America. His criticism was so dead-on that he quickly became persona non grata.

I've always thought that it is a permanent disgrace that this great man, whom many Russians credit with bringing down the Soviet Union, was never invited to the White House, while all sorts of two-bit communists and other poltroons have been feted and dined there.

At any rate, apropos of the current headlines, one of the criticisms he levied was that we as a country had become cowards. He made it clear that he did not mean the American people; he meant the American government and the American Establishment. He said they bullied small and weak countries and appeased the powerful. That was true then, and it's true today.

Look, for example, at the contrast between George Bush's rhetoric directed at North Korea and his rhetoric directed at Saddam Hussein. Saddam, he said, had been given enough chances. He had run out of time. There was no point in any more talk. Blah, blah, etc. Saddam, of course, didn't have nuclear weapons, or even chemical or biological weapons.

With North Korea, the president says we must seek a diplomatic solution, and diplomacy, of course, takes a lot of time, etc. and so forth. Gosh, we hate to see North Korea so isolated.

What's the difference? Saddam was weak, his regime was a toothless old hag, and Bush and his war hawks knew it. We could bully and invade him without fear. North Korea, however, is a regime with very sharp teeth. It has a fully equipped standing army of more than 1 million men. It has artillery wheel to wheel along the demilitarized zone. Even without its missiles, nuclear or conventional, war with North Korea would produce casualties in the tens of thousands, and would do it in a matter of days.

So you're darn right Bush wants to use diplomacy, though his diplomacy is so

CHARLEY REESE



Charley Reese's column is distributed by King Features Syndicate.

inept that it is not likely to work. We are not going to attack North Korea or even try a "surgical strike," and North Korea knows this. It has a deterrent sufficiently strong to persuade us to let the sleeping dog lie.

You will notice, too, that all the tough rhetoric about Iran has suddenly quieted down. I think both the U.S. and Israel have finally realized that we have no military option with Iran. Iran is in a position to cause us unimaginable problems all over the Middle East. Our failure in Iraq and the Israelis' failure to cower the Palestinians have reminded both countries that the Middle East is not a good place to cause trouble. It is a place where conventional forces can win tactical victories, but not strategic ones.

T.E. Lawrence, or Lawrence of Arabia if you prefer, noted a characteristic of the Arabs: They can be suddenly seized with an idea so passionately, he said, that they will willingly lose everything for it. That's all the explanation you need for suicide bombers. There is a line in their psyche that Westerners would do well not to cross.

At any rate, our government and our Establishment remain as cowardly as they were in the 1970s. Look at the great military "triumphs" in recent years — invading Panama and Grenada, bombing Libya and Serbia, fighting two wars with Iraq. Any general who wanted a triumphal procession in Rome after victories that petty would have been limited to a single cart pulled by a donkey.

Probably, we don't have a real peace movement in this country because one isn't needed. We're not going to fight anybody who has half a chance of drawing real blood. We are never going to launch a preventative war against North Korea or Iran, and God knows not against China or Russia.

Perhaps, if Bush ever extricates himself from Iraq and Afghanistan, we might have another go at Somalia.

We are, just as Solzhenitsyn said, the bully of weak countries and an appeaser of strong ones.

Write to Charley Reese at P.O. Box 2446, Orlando, FL 32802.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Band should have gotten chance to perform full set

I have had the professional pleasure of working with one of this region's premier country bands. They began as the Country Knights and have evolved into Brian Miller and Tanoma Road.

Collectively, these professionals have given this region countless shows, charity and/or fundraising benefits. They've opened for national recording artists and musicians during previous FOP concerts in Indiana County and in major venues throughout western Pennsylvania.

The Brian Miller Band no doubt has its roots in Western Pennsylvania. All the members live here and in some cases raise their families here as well. ...

This brings me to my point. I got the chance to check out this year's edition of the FOP concert at Mack Park on Sunday. Brian Miller and Tanoma Road were on the bill.

By the time I got settled in my seat, they were on the last song. They only played about four songs. What's up with that?

Brian Miller and Tanoma Road should have been given the opportunity to play at least one set. That's what opens usually do.

In previous years they had been granted as much. To give them less shows a lack of respect!

The band also didn't get the chance to play their new tribute-to-the-troops song, "We are Country," at either of the two shows.

As a promoter of local and regional music in this area, I would encourage the organizers to take this into consideration the next time local and/or regional talent is invited to open for "big events."

Anthony Frazier
Indiana



POLITICS IN THE PRE-MONEY AGE

As Lieberman goes, so go Democrats

The Democrats' position on the Iraq War has been a muddle. Many top Democrats supported it, although it's hard to believe all of them had their hearts in it. Of course, the party's core supporters were passionately opposed from the beginning. This has led to the Democrats' pull-out, no-don't-pull-out, please-don't-ask-us-what-we-think pile of contradictions and evasions on the war.

The muddle is moving toward a resolution, and the vehicle for it is next month's Democratic Senate primary race in Connecticut. Sen. Joe Lieberman has been a stalwart supporter of the war, and the left-wing blogosphere — representing the party's mad-as-hell anti-war base — has resolved to make him pay. Anti-war challenger Ned Lamont is such a threat to Lieberman that the three-term incumbent and former vice-presidential candidate is preparing to run as an independent in the general election, should he lose the primary.

A Lieberman loss could signal a turning point as significant, in its way, as the rise in the GOP of the Goldwaterites, who vanquished the liberal Rockefeller Republicans, or the ascendancy of the McGovernites, who sent the old hawkish Scoop Jackson Democrats packing. Unfortunately, there aren't many Lieberman-style hawks left in the party to begin with, which is Lieberman's problem.

RICH LOWRY



Rich Lowry's column is distributed by King Features Syndicate.

and lurched left since his 2004 vice-presidential run. He leads in presidential polls in Iowa. John Kerry regrets his prior support of the war and wants a deadline, any deadline, for exiting Iraq. Even the cautious Hillary Clinton just turned her back on Lieberman by saying she would support Lamont if he wins the primary.

If Lieberman does lose, it will be a sign that Clinton herself is vulnerable to a challenge from the left in the 2008 presidential primaries. Then, she will be under enormous pressure to walk away from her support of the war, too.

After the 2004 election, then-New Republic editor Peter Beinart wrote an influential article calling on liberal hawks basically to purge the anti-war zealots from the party. Instead, the anti-war zealots are conducting a purge of the liberal hawks, and why not? They are a majority within the party, and events have done more to vindicate than to discredit their opposition to the Iraq War — so much so that even erstwhile purger Beinart has called his support for it a mistake.

As the poet once said, you don't have to be a weatherman to tell which way the wind is blowing. You only have to be a weather-vane politician sticking his (or her) finger in the wind. John Edwards has repudiated the war

The biggest winner is Howard Dean, left for dead after his infamous 2004 Iowa "scream." Lamont is a straight Deaniac, not just in his opposition to the war, but in his demographic profile: white, well-off and highly educated. These are the same people who backed the successful peacenik insurrection of George McGovern in 1972, and now they are bidding to make their control of their party all the more complete. Democratic commentator Marshall Wittmann calls the left-wing bloggers "McGovernites with modems."

Their main issue is the war, but they also represent a general repudiation of the one hiccup in the post-1972 McGovernite dominance of the party, the Clinton administration circa 1994-1998. Clinton was pro-growth, pro-free trade, tonally moderate and willing to use force abroad. Al Gore spurned this winning centrist formula in 2000, but he felt compelled to make a bow to it by picking the moderate Lieberman as his running mate. Now, the Democratic Party is on the verge of saying a Lieberman-style hawkish-centrism is utterly anathema.

Lieberman could still win the primary. Even if he loses, he could win the general election as an independent, showing that the party's left wing doesn't have wider appeal. But if Lieberman is ousted from his seat, it will be a decisive victory for the party's haters and anti-war bloggers. The Democrats' muddle on Iraq will finally have ended, and the party will be the poorer for it.

Rich Lowry can be reached via e-mail at comments.lowry@nationalreview.com.

Historic showdown brewing with Congress

Once again, George W. Bush appears to have thumbed his nose at legislation he doesn't like without having to resort to a veto. His extensive use of memorandums to thwart provisions of bills he regards as unconstitutional, a threat to national security or impair foreign relations has a mixed bag of congressional leaders up in arms, particularly in the Senate, where his action is seen as an extension of White House efforts to increase the power of the presidency at the expense of Congress.

At least that's the way even some members of his own party regard his unprecedented reliance on a device that has allowed him to ignore or change an estimated 750 bills.

The Republican chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, who has been at odds with the White House on several occasions of late, reportedly stated that he viewed the president's use of signing statements as clear evidence that Bush believes he can do as he pleases. There has been growing uneasiness among lawmakers about the president's decision to ignore certain actions rather than use his veto power. He has not vetoed one bill in his nearly six years in office. The president has inserted statements into 110 bills as compared to 30 by Jimmy Carter.

In defense of this action, the Justice Department has said that the president has an obligation to make certain the Constitution is upheld and that signing letters protect legislation that might be found unconstitutional at some future time.

DAN THOMASSON



Dan K. Thomasson is former editor of the Scripps Howard News Service.

Afghanistan and Iraq to take back some of the authority eroded by Congress during the Bill Clinton years.

Riding the crest of the 2001 terrorist attacks on America, Bush managed to win approval of one controversial measure after another, including a resolution authorizing the invasion of Iraq. The Patriot Act extended his reach so far into the touchy area of civil liberty that it drew the opposition of influential groups from across the ideological spectrum.

Among the bills the president has reserved the right to ignore as constitutionally iffy are provisions protecting corporate whistleblowers, governing affirmative-action programs, establishing qualifications for execu-

Every president struggles to gain leverage over Congress, and the balance of power seems to swing with the forcefulness of the chief executive and the size of his election victory. Following Carter, who was seen as often weak and vacillating, Ronald Reagan became a popular powerful presence even though Democrats controlled both houses most of his two terms in office. His end to the air traffic controllers' strike immediately after taking office established the perception that he was a strong leader.

War-time presidents particularly have held the power balance. Bush, despite his poor overall performance ratings and two election victories that were hardly mandates, has used the terrorist threat and the wars in

Executive appointees and requiring executive agencies to gather certain statistics, all of which are seen by the White House as encroaching on presidential authority.

But some Republicans as well as Democrats have complained bitterly that Bush has ignored restrictions on the Patriot Act, particularly as they pertain to congressional oversight. His decision to ignore aspects of a bill banning torture adopted overwhelmingly by Congress has raised ire on both sides on Capitol Hill.

All this appears headed for a historic showdown between the executive and legislative branches following this fall's midterm elections, especially if Democrats regain control of one or both houses. Democratic leaders in the House already have announced they would conduct a series of investigations on controversial issues if they win back control. They have even unwisely hinted of potential impeachment hearings, depending on where their investigations lead.

The power struggle between these two branches began with George Washington and has ebbed and flowed since. The Senate has been the site of most of the friction. Lyndon Johnson used to say that the first thing any president should learn is that there are at least 99 members of the Senate who believe they can do the job better than he can. As one of the most powerful majority leaders in Senate history before becoming president, he knew better than anyone else the clash of egos and personalities between the two branches.

Yet even LBJ, beset by an unpopular war, had monumental problems despite all his Capitol Hill ties.

Bush's next two years could be the same.

Guidelines for letter writers

All letters to the editor should be signed and include the writer's full address and telephone number so the authenticity of the letter can be confirmed. No letters will be published anonymously.

Letters must be factual and discuss issues rather than personalities.

Writers should avoid name-calling. Form letters and automated "canned" e-mail will not be accepted.

Overall, short letters are more effective than long ones. Generally, letters should be limited to 350 words in length. All letters are subject to editing.

To allow for wide participation, letter writers will be limited to no more than one submission a month.

Send letters to Mike Petersen, editorial page editor, The Indiana Gazette, 899 Water St., Indiana, PA 15701. Letters may also be e-mailed to mepetersen@indianagazette.net.

COMING UP

FRIDAY

Maureen Dowd:
He let
the dogs out.

Jay Ambrose:
Head butt felt
'round the world.

SATURDAY

Martin Schram:
All the news that
can fit in print.