

# CARROLL COUNTY COMET

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## Look for candidates who respect the Congress

By Lee Hamilton

You might not have noticed, given the media's fascination with the presidential campaign, but there are 435 U.S. House contests and 35 U.S. Senate races taking place this year. These are important elections, for even more reasons than you might be hearing about. Indeed, unless I miss my guess, the candidates and press in those many contests are barely talking about one of the most important issues we face: the role of Congress itself.

The litany of matters worrying Americans and absorbing the attention of congressional candidates is, of course, long and complex: the economy, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the challenges posed by Iran, the state of American public education, climate change, a long-term energy policy, immigration.... Not surprisingly, many voters want to hear how Congress can protect them from financial ruin or how candidates propose to keep America strong. They're less interested in how Congress functions.

Yet unless Congress learns how to reassert its constitutional responsibility to be the President's equal in policy-making, the progress voters yearn to see on all those issues will be much harder to come by. This is why, as you listen to the various House and Senate candidates campaigning for your vote, I hope you'll pay attention not only to what they say about the economy or Iraq, but also to how they talk about Congress itself.

It's been the habit both of incumbents and their challengers in recent years to run for Congress by running against the Congress. They criticize its profligate spending or its do-nothing ways or its shoddy ethics or the undue influence of money and lobbyists. These are all choice targets, and they have their place in the campaign debate, but you have to wonder how long this denigration of Congress can continue before Americans lose their faith in representative democracy.

There's another path, and that's to recognize that Congress is flawed but that, as an institution, it needs upholding and shoring up, not stigmatizing. A robust, functional, and assertive Congress is crucial to making our system work.

It needs to be able to keep an eye on the executive branch, advance an agenda based on its members' understanding of what the country needs, police its members' behavior, be the place where the cross-currents roiling the American community meet in constructive debate, and in general play the muscular role our Founders envisioned for it in policy-making.

It cannot do any of these things if it is filled with politicians who are adept at making themselves look good and the Congress look bad, or who care little about its institutional powers.

I've noticed something interesting as I have moved around the country in recent months: a lot of people seem to have caught on to this. They express disappointment that Congress for decades has allowed the White House to dominate it. They fret that the expansion of presidential power sought by the Bush administration has gone too far, and are bewildered by Congress' timidity in pushing its own powers. This is an extremely promising development - if it translates into an electorate willing to look carefully at how congressional candidates propose to set Congress back on track, and it begins to wake up Congress as a whole.

For make no mistake, this is not just a matter of political theory or a topic for a good speech on the importance of constitutional checks and balances. It has to be practiced in the day-to-day workings of Capitol Hill.

If you ask candidates whether they are in favor of reasserting congressional authority, the answer will almost certainly be yes. But that's not enough. What you want to know is whether they'll be aggressive in shaping the federal budget; whether they believe Congress has a strong voice, along with the President's, in declaring war or pursuing military intervention overseas; whether they'll work with their colleagues to develop and fight for Congress's own agenda, and not simply respond to the President's; whether they see that getting Congress's ethical house in order is crucial to building its institutional strength, not just a matter of political expediency; whether they understand that Congress must be a truly deliberative and consensus-building body, not a place where the majority ramrods its wishes through without debate; and whether they understand that violating longstanding and fair procedure - by passing sprawling, multi-topic omnibus bills, for instance - merely hands the President more power.

If they get all this, even if you disagree on a few policy issues, I hope you'll consider voting for them. If they're oblivious and seem unconcerned about Congress' loss of power, then it's worth asking whether they really understand our constitutional system of separate and co-equal branches of government and the need to revive Congress's vigor and dynamism.

Lee Hamilton is director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

That was me rummaging around in the cooler section at the grocery store last week. I was looking for a little container of chicken salad for my lunch. These days my usual routine for lunch is chicken or tuna salad, the newspaper and maybe a candy bar to top it off.

My hunt was successful, and there was a bonus. In addition to the chicken salad, I happened upon a small container of chocolate pudding. "Homemade," the container said. It was a pleasant surprise, like running into an old friend one hasn't seen for ages.

"Oh, chocolate pudding," the cashier said, "I know what I'm going to have for lunch." "Nothing better," I added.

As pudding goes, this serving was somewhere between fair to fine. I suppose if the sign said "homemade" then that was the case - but I've personally stirred up better.

Chocolate pudding was a staple in our house while I was growing up. We had a pantry off the kitchen and the boxes of pudding and Jell-O mixes were stored in a built-in drawer situated under a row of shelves. The offering in that drawer was pretty standard fare. Vanilla and chocolate pudding mixes lined up with the occasional butterscotch. Jell-O was red or green for the most part and

## Midwest Memo

by Alan Shultz



### Pudding

those little familiar boxes completed the row. The tapoca was too tall for the drawer so it had its place up on one of the shelves. I think its neighbors were syrup and honey.

The pantry was its own odd little domain with a big window set high above the long shuttered opening where the ice man had once made his delivery. A lone light bulb on a twisted electrical wire hung from the ceiling down to where one could click it on with a pull chain.

Everything in the pantry had its own familiar, time-tested spot and the pudding drawer was no exception. It was kept well stocked and visited often.

In the household of my childhood, the maker of the pudding got to scrape the cooking pot clean. That's how I remember it anyway. I often volunteered for pudding duty.

Looking back, I think making pudding is a combination of the teaching of patience, and the wonder of transformation. Even as I type these words I can conjure up the ritual of stirring, stirring, stir-

ring until you thought your arm would fall off. We had an electric stove that added a little bit to the task. Lessons learned of burnt pudding on the bottom of the pan spurred me on to stir, stir, stir.

And then, as if from nowhere, the sudden change, the thickening, the voila moment: pudding. It fascinates me even to this day.

We would pour the pudding in equal amounts in cereal bowls lined up neatly on the kitchen table. The number of bowls would match the number of people stirring about in the household. Levels were checked for equal portions, a spatula whisked once around the cooking pot could make things even, next the bowls were placed in the refrigerator. Finally, the spatula and I had a date to clean the pan before it wound up in the sink.

As a true chocolate pudding connoisseur, I can argue the merits of eating pudding warm with cream on the top or chilled cold with a rather thick top layer formed. I cannot speak to day-old pudding since none has ever been allowed to age that long in my presence. If whipped cream is available, by all means!

Meanwhile, as my grandmother used to say, "I've got a taste," and only home made, home-stirred chocolate pudding will do.

## Letters to the Editor

The Comet welcomes letters to the editor responding to articles and events in the news. They must include the author's name, address and telephone number. The letter writer's name and city/town will appear in the paper - no exceptions. Letters must be 400 words or less in length. Please send your letters to editor@carrollcountycomet.com; Letters to the Editor, Comet, P.O. Box 26, Flora, IN 46929 or P.O. Box 179, Delphi, IN 46923; or fax 574-967-3384 or 765-564-2010. By submitting a letter or opinion article, the author grants the Comet the right to publish, distribute, archive or use the work in print, electronic, on-line or other format.

### Reliable help is available

We're a pair of Tippecanoe River flood victims that has had to deal with bad insurance companies and adjusters. After the January flood, we were terribly overwhelmed with the destruction of our home; we didn't know where to start. I was able to make a phone call to Heartland, Inc. in Lafayette, and within an hour they had a couple of staff members at my door, giving us much-needed advice and direction.

The very next day, in sub-zero weather, they had a full crew out to help us begin the process of sorting, saving, and pitching. The company's owner, Bane, has walked us through each step with the insurance company, and Eddie and the staff have gone out of their way to assist us with county permit issues and the rounding up of reliable subcontractors.

We can't recommend a better bunch of people. So, fellow flood victims, if you are still in need or overwhelmed with flood damage recovery, Heartland is the company to call. They're first-rate.

Mike and Barb Young  
Tecumseh Bend

### Concerned about cuts in public safety

I am a paramedic who works in a surrounding county and I also try to help out in my own county to cover for sick days and vacation. I know that the county budget for this year is going to be tight and there are some pretty great cuts that need to be made. My question is, why does it always seem that public safety gets the greatest amount of cuts?

My family resides here in Carroll County and I care a great deal about their safety. I believe that we have one of the best EMS systems around and I also believe that our county sheriff's department does a good job. I believe that there are only two county officers on duty at a time and for a county this size, sometimes I do not think it is enough, but I understand that is what this county can afford to do.

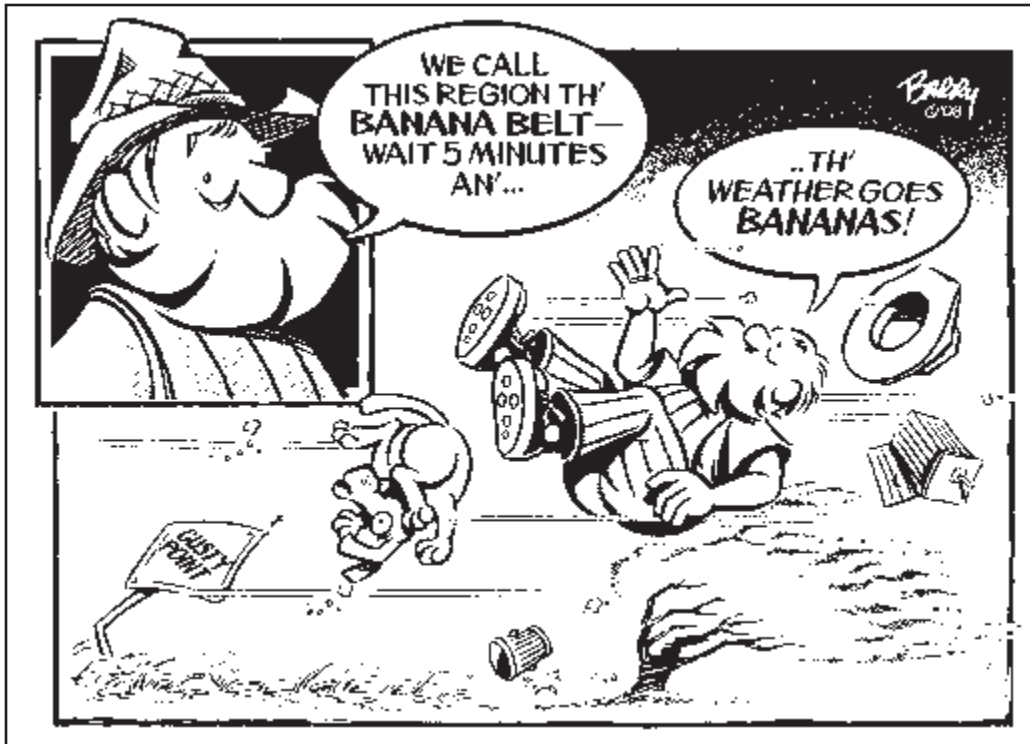
With no hospital in this county, the EMS has saved the lives of a number of people. The issue that I have is that everyone in the county has the potential to use this service. In the June 13, 2007, issue of the Comet I read that there is \$455,000 budgeted by the county for Carroll Manor, so it obviously does not pay for itself. Martha Lewis, who manages the facility, stated in the Nov. 7, 2007, issue that there are only 19 other facilities that are like this one. According to www.stats.indiana.edu our population in 2006 was 20,556, which is 73rd out of 92 counties. Does this mean that the 19 counties that are smaller than us have already abandoned these county homes? How many of the 20-25 residents who reside at Carroll Manor are from Carroll County? Is this \$455,000 including the salaries for the people who work there?

If we would stop funding a facility that we probably do not need, we would put a great dent in the \$1.8 million that we have to cut from the budget.

I know that the county received a grant for an elevator that was recently installed in Carroll Manor and we would have to pay back the matching part of the grant if the grant requirements are not met. Cutting this amount out of the budget would pay for itself in a year or two. And there is the possibility that IPC would purchase the land and that would help out with the debt.

I understand that all departments in the county will see cuts, but do the public safety ones have to be cut so much? I rest easy at night or when I am away from home knowing that we have the quality of sheriff's department and EMS that we do in this county.

Derek Jackson  
Flora



## Circuit Court Judge Donald Currie

New filings are from public records available in the Carroll County Clerk's office on the second floor of the courthouse, Delphi. Other information regarding judgments and marriage dissolutions is gathered from public records found in the clerk's office.

The estate of the late Mary Ellen Campbell was admitted, probate will only.

Rosemarie S. Treece was named executor of the estate of the late Guy Bowen.

Robert Potts and Marjorie Potts vs. J&K Watson Enterprises Inc. was dismissed.

## Marriage Licenses

Tony Lee VanDyke, 34, and Rachel Elaine Carmack, 28, both of Delphi.

Jacob Alen Warf, 22, and Amanda Nicole Lazarus, 23, both of Delphi.

### Because the public has a right to know...

In an effort to help our readers understand what government meetings are happening when and where, the Comet will now print upcoming meetings on a weekly basis.

- Wednesday, March 12**  
√ Flora Town Council special meeting: 5:30 p.m.
- Thursday, March 13**  
√ Camden Town Council: 7 p.m.
- Monday, March 17**  
√ Carroll County Commissioners: 9 a.m.  
√ County Council: 1:30 p.m.  
√ Delphi Board of Works: 4:30 p.m.  
√ Flora Town Council: 6 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 18**  
√ Carroll School Board: 1 p.m.
- Thursday, March 20**  
√ Area Plan Commission: 7 p.m.

**Public Notices appearing in this issue of the Comet:**

Sheriff Sale-Burge .....	3B
Ross. Vol. Fire Dept.-Chrgs..	3B
TLS-C-Inv to Bid .....	3B
CCSC-Bids .....	3B
Duke Energy .....	3B
IDEM-Mears .....	3B
Comcast .....	3B
Bowmen Estate .....	3B

Questions concerning Indiana's Open Door and Public Access Laws may be directed to the state's public access office, at 1-800-228-6013.

## Web poll

Tell us starting Wednesday at our web site, carrollcountycomet.com Each week the Comet polls its readers on a different topic. Vote online at carrollcountycomet.com starting each Thursday, and then click the Comments link to send us an email voicing your opinion. The best responses will be printed the following week.

### Should school administrators live in the school corporation where they are employed? (Reader submitted question.)

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

### Last Weeks results

**Flora town official wants to know what should be done with the old Flora School. What do you think?**  
19% Wait on a grant for senior housing which may never materialize  
73% Tear it down and be done with it  
8% Other - give alternative by e-mailing editor with poll comment  
Total responses: 106

**Reader's comments:**  
The school could be an assortment of several things - a day-care center, made in conference centers, small mall, etc. The possibilities are endless. You could even turn it into a bed and breakfast with a restaurant and sell goods made from Carroll County residents. Create offices.  
\* \* \*

It is always an emotional loss for many people when historic and, perhaps, personally familiar buildings pass from our presence, but life does go on. Things change. Buildings, businesses, and other aspects of our lives come and go.

The next best thing to spending untold amounts of money to preserving a building that ultimately cannot be saved any longer is to preserve it in other ways aside from its physical presence. Here are some ideas that might appease those who have attachments to it:

- Develop and publish a small booklet documenting the building and its history.
- Salvage important pieces of the building such as scoreboards, desks, trophy cases, flooring, lockers, etc. and offer them for sale to interested former students.
- Make a memorial walkway with the bricks where the former students can memorialize whoever they wish while honoring their alma mater.
- Make and offer a video on DVD of the school, its hallways and classrooms, and other related amenities.
- Put up a historical marker with salient facts on it.
- The sales of the above items needn't be a profit making venture, but simply cover the cost of their existence. In the end, they are there to savor the memories for those who were attached to the school in a personal way. The building can then be torn down and make way for something new and more useful for the citizens of Flora.  
\* \* \*

Just like everything else in Carroll County, just because we are in a budget crunch should we see this building torn down. The adage of getting rid of something because it is old is not always true. The need for Senior Citizen Apartments is very important, but maybe there are some other uses. A lot of older buildings are built better than what is being built today. You go to a lot of small towns throughout the country and it is really inspiring to see that they have found uses for their older buildings instead of tearing down and leaving an eyesore or a potential parking lot. There is something to be said about preserving certain buildings, heirlooms and culture.

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