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November 07, 2006

Political Junkie -- a parking mistake (9:30 a.m.)**Posted by Matt Tully**

State government is closed for Election Day. Same goes for the city and the county.

It's kind of like a holiday!

So that means you don't have to feed the parking meters. Right?

Apparently, that's wrong.

The staff here at Political Junkie (that's pretty much me) found out the hard way this morning after leaving its car parked Downtown for all of 20 minutes. We were certain -- absolutely certain -- that Election Day was considered a parking meter holiday.

Nope. The \$20 ticket tells a different story. You can't buy booze while the polls are open, but you still have to pay to park.

So consider this a public service announcement. Feed those meters today.

• User comments (0)

Doris Anne's final election (9:15 a.m.)**Posted by Matt Tully**

No surprise here.

Today's elections came with the kind of snafus we have come to

Matt Tully

I am The Star's po columnist, which rr spend an unhealthy time thinking about Daniels, Bart Peter rest of Indiana's pc column began its r 2005, and followec reporting in locales from Gary to Wash I grew up in Gary : Indiana, and gradu (without honors) fr University in 1992. Valerie (who did gr honors), and I live Indianapolis with o In my spare time, Elvis Presley music continue to believe Cubs will win the V - in my lifetime.

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expect in Marion County. According to an IndyStar.com update, "Marion County officials are facing widespread problems bringing new electronic voting machines online this morning. The problem, (officials said), is that poll workers have forgotten how to start and run the machines."

But County Clerk Doris Ann Sadler, the county's lead elections official, is handling the issue with her usual calm.

"There's always something," she said this morning as she prepared for the latest in a series of live TV interviews.

Sadler is leaving office after one term as clerk. Her tenure has seen Election Day problems -- from voters being declared "dead" to precincts running out of ballots -- and she oversaw a very contentious recount process in 2003. Democrats have blasted her at times, often with overheated rhetoric, but Sadler has never sweated. And she leaves office with good notices from Democrats and Republicans, who appreciate the work she has done on a jail crowding panel.

This morning, Sadler arranged for technicians to race to roughly 200 polling places where officials were having trouble hooking up new voting machines.

"I'd like to say I'm enjoying it," she said of her final election as clerk. "But I'm enjoying the fact that it's my last election."

• [User comments \(0\)](#)

Eric Dickerson -- an RV mistake (7:35 a.m.)

Posted by **Matt Tully**

Republican congressional candidate Eric Dickerson looked and sounded great as he voted at a Meridian-Kessler neighborhood church this morning.

"I'm feeling very, very good," he said, before talking much more clearly than his opponent about public safety and jobs. "This is about deeds, not words. For too long our community has suffered from people who talk a good game."

Here's the problem, though: As Dickerson voted and talked with reporters, he left his sprawling campaign RV parked on 46th Street, just east of Washington Boulevard. So as it rained in the morning darkness, drivers were forced to drive into the wrong lane to get around the Republican candidate's campaign vehicle.

As I pulled out of the church parking lot, for instance, a yellow school bus was veering into the wrong lane -- in the dark and in the rain -- to get around Dickerson's RV.

Memo to political candidates: Don't block traffic on Election Day. That really irritates voters.

• [User comments \(0\)](#)

Julia Carson -- where's the drama? (7:25 a.m.)

Posted by **Matt Tully**

• [Murphy stepping](#)

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1.0

I start every Election Day the same way -- by heading to 23rd and Park to watch U.S. Rep. Julia Carson vote. The reason? Something always happens.

Today, though, was slightly disappointing. No confusion over her ID and no problem with the machines, as in past elections. With the exception of a little mistake -- workers had to void her first ballot because she filled in her party's symbol and not the corresponding oval -- Carson's voting experience was smooth.

This time, we in the media caused the problem, swarming around Carson and delaying several other voters while asking the five-term Democrat questions.

"Absolutely," she said when asked if she was ready for the campaign season to end. "I've had some contentious races all of my career. The game is the same, just the name has changed."

In the spring primary, Carson caused a stir by producing her U.S. House ID card. The card caught workers off guard, because it does not have a specific expiration date. Today, Carson came prepared.

"I brought three different IDs," she said just after 6 a.m. "I even brought my birth certificate."

With that, Carson cast her vote and, after a few more interviews and a glazed donut, headed out.

"You didn't have any drama today," she said as she exited.

That's true. But it's still early.

• [User comments \(0\)](#)

November 06, 2006

Political Junkie -- Live on Election Day

Posted by **Matt Tully**

We'll be posting live throughout Election Day. It is, after all, the day of the year for Political Junkies. Please write in with your views of the day, your voting experiences and your general thoughts on the campaign season that was.

And since we had such a good time last week, the second **Live Political Junkie Webchat** will take place Wednesday. We'll be here to talk about the election results, and what happens as we move forward. Time TBA.

• [User comments \(0\)](#)

Put down that drink!

Posted by **Matt Tully**

Here at The Star, the pre-Election Day news releases are arriving at a rapid pace.

In the first two hours after lunch today I received news releases from Common Cause, the Indiana Senate Republican caucus, a pro-immigration group, a small-business group and an exit-polling firm.

Not to mention candidates including Mike Sodrel, Julia Carson, Russell Brown, and Carl Brizzi.

But my favorite news release came from The Indiana Licensed Beverage Association. The group is tackling a very serious Election Day problem: Prohibition.

The group said it "would like to remind all Hoosiers that on Election Day Indiana alcohol retailers are not allowed to sell alcohol until the polls close at 6:00 pm."

"Both the Indiana Licensed Beverage Association and the Restaurant and Hospitality Association of Indiana," the release continued, "will be urging legislators to repeal this prohibition on Election Day alcohol sales."

The law apparently "dates to the days when bars and taverns were the common polling places in many communities." All these years later, the group said, business owners are losing money on Election Day, and the state is "losing a sizeable tax collection that could help balance tight budgets."

The group might have a very good point -- but perhaps for a different and very obvious reason. The reason? After all the negative advertising and political fights this campaign season, many people probably need a drink.

• [User comments \(1\)](#)

Pity the mail carriers

Posted by Matt Tully

Postal carriers must be excited about the end of the campaign season.

For weeks, these folks have trudged through rain and dealt with angry dogs while stuffing thousands of campaign fliers and mailers into our mailboxes. Sure, these pieces are not very heavy. But they sure do add up. And if you think you are sick of seeing these often-negative mailings, imagine how it must feel to the folks who have to stick them in mailbox after mailbox.

This weekend, for instance, roughly 20 pieces campaign mail landed in some Northside mailboxes (including Political Junkie's.) We learned of candidates who had been arrested, candidates who are "too extreme" for Indiana, and those who have allegedly lied about their records! We even heard from candidates whom we previously did not know existed.

Marion County Democratic Chairman Ed Treacy said the amount of campaign mail will only increase as technology allows parties to target exactly the voters they are after -- independents, loyal partisans, women, etc.

For voters tired of all the political junk mail, that's probably a depressing thought. But don't feel bad for yourself. Unlike the poor postal workers, at least you can just toss it all in the garbage can.

• [User comments \(1\)](#)

Five Questions

Posted by Matt Tully

Heading into The Biggest Midterm Election in Memory, there are five questions I am most interested in having answered: (Feel free to add to this list.)

5. Will the state's new voter ID law cause major problems, leaving many voters unable to cast ballots? If so, Republicans should admit they have crafted far too harsh a law and return to the drawing board. But if not, Democrats should acknowledge they have greatly exaggerated the downside of this new law.

4. Will Rep. Julia Carson do what she always does -- win by a decent margin after watching Republicans get overly excited at the prospect of defeating her?

3. Can Carl Brizzi slow what has been a strong trend in favor of Marion County Democrats in recent years? If so, will he stick by his pledge not to run for mayor in 2007?

2. Will Gov. Mitch Daniels' policies (daylight-saving and the Toll Road lease) lead to massive losses for Republicans in northern Indiana? If so, how quickly and with how much sincerity will he reach out to Democratic House leader Pat Bauer.

1. Will voter turnout, as many "experts" predict, be substantially higher than in recent midterm elections?

• [User comments \(0\)](#)

Your predictions

Posted by Matt Tully

Twenty hours or so to go. Most people have stopped listening to the noise, though both parties are continuing to scream about the other side.

Let's not worry about that. Instead, it's time for another **Political Junkie Contest**. Last time, we gave away a lovely Indy Star T-shirt. I'll let you know later what prize we'll be giving away this time. For now, cast your predictions on the following races, and make sure to answer the tie-breaker questions.

Congress:

Rep. Julia Carson v. Republican Eric Dickerson (7th District)
Rep. Chris Chocola v. Democrat Joe Donnelly (2nd District)
Rep. John Hostettler v. Democrat Brad Ellsworth (8th District)
Rep. Mike Sodrel v. Democrat Baron Hill (9th District)

State

Control of Indiana House (Democrats or Republicans)
Rep. David Orentlicher v. Republican Kathryn Densborn (District 86)
Rep. Larry Buell v. Democrat John Barnes (District 89)
Rep. Ed Mahern v. Republican John Elrod

Local

Carl Brizzi v. Melina Kennedy (prosecutor)

Tie Breaker Number 1: Partisan makeup of the Indiana House next year. (Currently 52 Republicans and 48 Democrats.)

Tie Breaker Number 2: What percentage of the vote will Sen. Richard Lugar receive. (He is being challenged by Libertarian Steven Osborn.)

• [User comments \(9\)](#)

November 03, 2006

Murphy stepping aside

Posted by **Matt Tully**

State Rep. Mike Murphy is ending his tenure as Marion County Republican chairman. Murphy said he will not seek re-election when his current term as chairman ends early next year.

Murphy, a Southsider, said he has achieved his goals as chairman. Those goals included diversifying the party and fixing its financial situation. He took over a party that was \$30,000 in debt. After selling its headquarters and leasing offices Downtown, he said he will leave behind roughly \$300,000 for the next chair.

Murphy took over as chairman in January of 2004, as the once dominant Marion County GOP was watching Democrats emerge with a series of election victories.

"I knew what the numbers were when I took over," Murphy said over coffee today. "I love being the underdog."

His chairmanship will be judged at least in part by next week's elections. Democrats are expected to win a group of lower-level county offices, but Republicans are hoping to reelect Prosecutor Carl Brizzi.

As Murphy prepares to leave his post, many are wondering whether County Democratic Chairman Ed Treacy will also step aside at the end of this year. Treacy has not announced his plans, but many believe he will leave the chairmanship after this year's elections.

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