

Educationally Speaking
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The Salem Leader
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Fixing Washington County – Again

I have to admit I don't get around to reading the newspaper in a very timely fashion. My magazine rack had copies of the Leader and Democrat from before September 11th. This weekend I sat down and read all of the papers in my stack and all of the Town Crier comments, too. Here is what I gather from my reading:

1. Hospital employees should be perfect.
2. Soccer is a very expensive sport.
3. Baron Hill is not gay.

This is all very interesting to me and I really (seriously) started to contemplate some things about Washington County. I even did a little research without being told. I will tackle these three items separately and attempt to fix Washington County.

Issue the first: a smoking ban on hospital property. Hospital employees are evidently colossal failures if they smoke. I bet some of the doctors that work there might even have a drink every-so-often, too. The issue here seems to be a health issue, not a moral issue of what those working in healthcare should or should not do.

I am informed enough on this topic to tell you my experiences with smoking bans. My university, IUPUI, has had a smoking ban on the entire medical campus for a few years now. This includes a campus of five hospitals, including Riley Children's Hospital and the IU Cancer Hospital. Effective at the beginning of this semester IUPUI instituted a smoking ban campus wide replacing the old policy of no smoking 30 feet from any university owned building or vehicle. My office at the Indiana Government Center is now smoke-free as well. Now, everyone congregates outside next to the door where I walk by and smokes in my face. At IUPUI everyone congregates on the side of the road to smoke. This is because the university does not own the road. Needless to say, this is a relatively silly issue because people will fight it; the best way I can think of is to provide smoking areas away from the entrances to the hospital.

Issue the second: a proposed soccer team and field to be built at a cost of \$15,000 at Salem Community Schools. It's my understanding that the funds used to maintain athletic programs are also funds that can be used for technology, desks and books within the district. If I'm wrong I'm sure someone will correct me. I propose SCS holds a bake sale to pay for the field. Everyone likes cookies.

This is an excellent example of SCS's desire to think big and go big. I think it's great. Noblesville's neighboring town, Fishers, Indiana, just rejected a plan for a water park and mall because it "wasn't classy enough". Salem is sitting in a vast area ready for

development. Salem and Washington County both deserve to have nice, high-quality everything. Salem is going to grow. Albeit slowly, it will grow in size and population – everyone should demand highly innovative and classy projects and move forward with them. Ginger Morris was right in saving Main Street. There are lots of other streets in Salem with just as much volume. I have ideas how to achieve new development but you have to elect me mayor before I'll tell you; there's always a method to achieve anything.

The last issue is Baron Hill's Letter to the Editor to say, basically, that he's not gay. This is good to know. I didn't know many not-gay people before Hill. Hill's letter was to really claim that he and his opponent, Mike Sodrel, do not support gay marriage. I have to wonder what sets these guys apart when you're writing about what you agree with. Either way, it's a sign of bigotry and ignorance on both parties that is staggering in this day and age.

Sodrel and Hill are both in a tight race but it is really lousy politics when you have to resort to reminding "moral people" that you can discriminate with the best of them. I suggest both Sodrel and Hill hold a good old-fashioned Coot-Off so we can determine which candidate is the bigger hater of entire demographics of people. Then we'll be fully informed on the big issues.