

Educationally Speaking
October 30, 2006
The Salem Leader
Justin Harter

I've Lost my Nobility

A year ago I wrote a column entitled "I'm so much nobler now". Today I'm writing to tell you that I've lost my nobility because I moved from Noblesville, Indiana to Fishers, Indiana. Now that makes me fishy.

Allow me to setup a timeline for you. In May 2005 I graduated from Salem High School. In August 2005 I moved to the campus of IUPUI in Indianapolis. Then in November 2005 I moved out of my dorm and into an apartment in Noblesville with my friend, Jeremy. For those unfamiliar with the area, Noblesville is the county seat of Hamilton County – Indianapolis' neighbor to the north. The busy north side of Indianapolis has steadily pushed up into Hamilton County for years forming the areas of Carmel, Fishers and Noblesville. I liked living in Noblesville because it was clearly a city on the move. Constantly progressing and moving into new areas with an acceptance of culture and new ideas. Noblesville reminded me of Salem because it was a small community and has quickly grown – something I've always wanted to see Salem do.

Then there were the obvious problems. Noblesville's rapid growth hasn't kept pace with the engineering and commuting was a continuous problem. Plus, I was gaining confidence in my belief that my roommate was border-line retarded. Needless to say, I wanted to be a little closer to work and school and I didn't want to argue with a guy all the time about who should take out the trash.

So now I'm living in Fishers and have spent the week slowly unpacking and getting things in order. I'm closer to Indianapolis – only 10 blocks away from the county line. I'm perched at 116th street just off Interstate 69. Here's my logic for moving to Fishers:

1. It's closer to work and school.
2. Fishers was just listed as one of the best places to live in Indiana.
3. It's pretty.

The town is listed as a town because the residents continually vote down measures to become a full-fledged city. In 1990 Fishers was a town of just under 7,000 residents and now clocks in at just fewer than 60,000. Something happened. Either a lot of people moved into the area or those original 7,000 people were *really* busy. Since it's a town they have fewer elected officials on their town council which means they can probably get stuff done, too.

This made me think about Salem and Washington County in general because of a recent comment in the town crier that drugs and crime were out of control in Washington County. I came out two weeks ago and told Salem Community Schools to hold a bake

sale in order to pay for their \$15,000 soccer field because I thought the idea was retarded. Now I'm rethinking this. Lots of communities outside of Greater Indianapolis have ridiculously low crime rates and extraordinary educational resources in contrast to the number of people living in those areas.

For the sake of my argument, let's look at the numbers. Aside from the obvious factor that Fishers is geographically larger than Salem by roughly 19 square miles, Washington County is massive which is likely why Washington County is the 19th fastest growing county in Indiana. There's plenty of space, plenty of good people and lots of community effort in both areas. What it all comes down to is the educational resources. In 2000, 25% of Washington County lacked a high school diploma ranking Washington County 81 out of 92 counties. Hamilton County is first at 94% of the county with a high school diploma. It's obvious as you look at educational attainment and the resources abundant in the area what makes the difference in crime rates, healthcare, poverty levels and so on.

Here's my solution: SCS should build a stadium instead of a soccer field. They seem to enjoy building things, so why not – then Salem would really stand out. Let's see if Scottsburg can compete with Salem's new stadium! You hire a bunch of unemployed laborers to lower unemployment rates and build your stadium. Then lease it to sporting events, concerts, you name it – to generate more income. The Louisville Cardinals can use it when their stadium is being cleaned or something. Then businesses will locate to the area because they go where people are. As people funnel in the businesses hire more people and your economy is on the rise and unemployment continues to drop. SCS has spent a bunch of money, you have a nice new landmark and residents have someplace to go for various new events each weekend. Everybody's happy.