

GANNETT

Right Alternative: Is Indiana to blame for Chicago violence? Get real

By: [Beth Murphy](#) – April 11, 2013

Today's version of The Right Alternative takes a look at guns, trash, the Masters, the budget, big sodas and, finally, Kevin Bacon, because there really are six degrees of Kevin Bacon.

Also, thanks to Star cartoonist Gary Varvel for his drawing of me. (I'm really 10 pounds lighter.) Varvel's latest cartoon lampoons the Indianapolis Colts' recent gift of \$2 million from the taxpayers.

Blame Indiana for Chicago's violence?

With the gun control/gun violence debate still hot, the idea that Indiana's less restrictive gun laws are to blame for Chicago's murder rate is in the news again. Seems like there are some data missing from such an assumption. Today's IndyStar story about the U.S. Senate bill on background checks says Indiana is the second-largest source of weapons recovered by Chicago police in recent years. Is that a surprise, considering the proximity? If lax laws are to blame, wouldn't Indiana naturally have more gun violence? Is Indiana being scapegoated here? This Fort Wayne News-Sentinel editorial from a couple of months ago thinks this assumption requires more scrutiny.

- Check out this column from IndyStar.com, "Let's not delude ourselves: Gun laws won't stop another Newtown," from Kathleen Parker, a Washington Post columnist who sounds like she knows something about guns. Parker, like all us, wants a solution to gun violence but believes that all our sincerity about doing something via gun control still won't make a difference.

Goodbye to Augusta's cave

In an old "Saturday Night Live" skit, the late Phil Hartman played "Caveman Lawyer," a Cro-Magnon character who wore expensive suits over his hairy body and a nice watch on his thick wrist and drove a sports car, supposedly back to his cave. His courtroom schtick was to lament, despite his fancy accoutrements, that he was "just a cavemen" who didn't understand these modern, newfangled ways.

As the Masters golf tournament starts today, let's remember that it was only a year ago that membership was bestowed upon females, when Augusta National Golf Club said yes to investment banker Darla Moore and former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. The Wall Street Journal's Jason Gay, in "Augusta Opens Its Doors," charges Augusta National with Caveman Lawyer behavior in dragging its heels (and, some would say, knuckles) in allowing women members. Gay says Augusta National really is a big-time, modern, savvy business that should have caught on much sooner to these modern times.

By the way, Rice's golf game apparently wowed lefty pro Phil Mickelson in a round this week at Augusta (What else can Rice do? She's also a classical pianist.)

Trash talking

Last month Ohio Gov. John Kasich basically trashed Indiana by calling us a "one-city" state. Well, the Cincinnati Enquirer says Ohio has its own dirty secret: lots of litter. The Enquirer's editorial writers demand a cleanup. They've got a CrowdMap app that lets residents tell the newspaper the exact locations with the worst litter. They'll put the photos into a gallery, and "we'll make sure state, county and city officials know about the spots so they can clean them up."

It's an economic issue, "costing more than \$11 billion a year nationally to pick up, and trash in an area encourages people to litter more."

Indiana has a terrible litter problem, too. What's the answer? Would conservatives consider higher fines for littering? Mandated recycling? Or just an education campaign?

How about a new motto for Indiana: "We're cleaner than Ohio."

Obama's baby step

In National Review Online, Michael Tanner credits President Obama with taking "a baby step" with the budget released on Wednesday. Tanner is senior fellow at Cato Institute and author of "Leviathan on the Right: How Big Government Conservatism Brought Down the Republican Revolution."

"Overall, this is not a budget designed to reduce spending or the size of government," Tanner writes. "But as they say, the longest journey starts with a single step. President Obama has offered a teeny-tiny stride."

Free speech on campus

It's not dead. An IU student shared her pro-life views in the campus newspaper this week. "Being pro-life, especially in Bloomington, is not an easy thing," writes Indiana University student Emma Wenninger in commentary for the Indiana Daily Student, "Abortion: the definition of life." Wenninger was writing about an event called "Abortion: America's Holocaust" on campus.

More big soda wars

It's Bowdoin professor vs. Bowdoin professor: In a piece called "Zero calories to zero population" on RealClearPolitics.com, professor Jean M. Yarbrough takes on one of her Bowdoin College colleagues for defending New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg's ban on big-sized sodas.

In a New York Times oped, Sarah Conly apparently defended the ban on the grounds that humans can't be trusted to make their own decisions. Yarbrough explains: "Citing the latest social and behavioral science research, from Nobel Prize winners no less, (Conly) argues that individuals suffer from too many 'cognitive biases' to make rational decisions about their long-range goals."

To which, Yarbrough responds: “If we ordinary humans suffer from cognitive biases that undermine our judgment, don’t these supposed experts as well?”

It's raining taxes

A reader sends this news about a new tax from the state of Maryland, with the question: What won’t they tax?

Tweet leak

Kevin Bacon says mea culpa. The star of the TV show “The Following” apologized for putting out a plot twist via Twitter before international viewers saw the episode. View his two-word apology on Vine. For Vine newbies, don’t adjust your computer screen. It really is just a 6-second blip of a video, over and over.