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SOUTH BEND/MISHAWAKA

Tribune Photo/ DENNIS WHITE

Take Back the Night march

Students from the University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College walk on the Notre Dame campus Thursday night in a candlelight march to raise awareness of safety issues.

AAA bid isn't out of city's league: Kernan

By DON PORTER
Tribune Staff Writer

SOUTH BEND — Can South Bend be the mouse that roared in the awarding of any new Triple A baseball franchises?

Mayor Joseph E. Kernan says he thinks it can, and he remains hopeful the South Bend White Sox franchise here has a shot at being boosted to the top minor league baseball category despite being substantially outweighed by the competition.

The local White Sox affiliate now has a Class A status, playing in the Midwest League. The South Bend club is one of 17 vying for a Triple A expansion franchise from the AAA Alliance.

Most of the cities seeking Triple A franchises are much larger than South Bend, and that will weigh against the city's chances, Kernan told members of the Chamber of Commerce of St. Joseph County. Applicants include Birmingham, Ala., and Charlotte, N.C., he noted.

"We remain underdogs in the selection process, but that's not to say we're out of the hunt. We may surprise some people," he commented.

Local officials will present their case for awarding the White Sox a Triple A franchise at a Nov. 13 meeting in Chicago, Kernan said.

"We expect to make the first cut," he said of the whittling expected to follow that meeting.

A drive is now under way to meet the AAA Alliance requirement that applicants sell at least 2,500 season tickets for next year, Kernan noted. It will cost $50 to reserve the right to buy a season ticket, he noted.

That will be refunded if the team is not awarded a franchise, the mayor continued. People wanting to reserve seats can call the White Sox business office at Stanley Coveleski Stadium at 284-8805, he added.

Bids are to be opened Monday for demolition of the Transwestern Building in the Studebaker Corridor, near the stadium, Kernan said.

Demolition of the block-long, four-story brick and concrete building at South Lafayette Boulevard and Brenson Street is expected to get under way early next year, the mayor said. It would be the first former Studebaker Corp. building to be razed.

While much of the building is structurally sound, none of several firms investigating its renovation for new uses could come up with a feasible plan, the mayor continued. The massive size works against conversion to modern uses, he added.

The Transwestern razing will be paid for with a portion of a $4.9 million general obligation bond issue sold earlier this year to finance the first phase of corridor renovation. While opposition arose to the bond issue, the clearance and reuse project was too important to scrap, Kernan said.

"We sent a message that we're not going to stand still," he said. It has been 27 years since the Studebaker Corp. closed its doors, he noted.

Next week also will see the release of the recommendations of a Mayor's Housing Task Force formed last year to investigate ways to boost local housing for low and moderate-income residents, the mayor said.

"It will call for us to dedicate a great portion of our resources for new housing," he commented of the report.

Plans for the Airport 2010 improvement project around Michiana Regional Airport are continuing to advance, with a $7 million tax incremental finance bond issue expected to be sold by year's end, Kernan reported.

The $23 million upgrade project at the city's Wastewater Treatment Plant at 5113 Riverside Drive also should be finished in December, the mayor continued.

"It will be the most modern plant in the state when the work's completed," he said. Many of the improvements being carried out are aimed at meeting stricter state regulations for discharging treated waste in the St. Joseph River.

Kernan also put in a plug for city schools, saying they have been wrongly maligned recently by some people who are not sufficiently informed. He cited a long list of accomplishments by both students and teachers in the South Bend Community School Corp.

For example, three city instructors have been named state teacher of the year in the past six years, Kernan pointed out. No other school system in the state has earned the honor more than once, he said.

Speicher: Ninth grade needs work

By MARILYN HUGHES
Tribune Staff Writer

MISHAWAKA — The road to reorganization has not been completely smooth within the Penn-Harris-Madison School Corp. this year.

With the addition of ninth-graders at Penn High School this year, Superintendent A. Dean Speicher said Thursday that improvements are needed to accommodate the new students.

"We don't believe to date we have found the best structure for ninth-grade students in terms of teacher leadership," he explained.

The superintendent made his comments at a "Meet the Superintendent" meeting, designed for P-H-M patrons to discuss education issues with him.

There will be two similar meetings Dec. 6 in Grissom Middle School and Feb. 21 at Mary Frank Elementary School. The events are sponsored by the P-H-M Parent-Teacher Forum.

After the meeting, Speicher explained that administrators are not satisfied with the current ninth-grade structure. He explained the system is not all bad, but it could be operating more efficiently.

This is the first year in which a modified plan — replacing department heads with interdisciplinary division leaders — took effect at the high school in grades 10 through 12.

Division heads were selected in the areas of humanities, technology, practical arts-vocational education, fine arts and physical development.

Yet the structure is different at the ninth-grade level. Speicher likened the current system to a "school within a school."

Ninth-graders are secluded from the rest of the high school's students as they take all their classes in the building's north end, where their lockers are located as well.

A team of four leaders oversees ninth-grade operations. Since the team approach is similar to that used at the middle schools, it should have helped ninth-graders with the transition into high school, said Administrative Assistant David Tydgat said when the Board of School Trustees approved the current plan last February.

Speicher said Thursday the administration is studying how the ninth grade's place in the division structure and the high school transition.

Alternatives to modifying the current program would include regrouping classes like they are at the middle school — in which teams of five or six instructors teach only one group of students in a particular grade.

However, that could create logistical problems, noted the superintendent, who explained that high school teachers often instruct more than one grade level each semester.

Penn Principal Joseph E. Wayne and Speicher suggested that ninth-graders have the opportunity to take special classes that address developmental issues, such as transitions, improving study habits or even manners.

Since this is the first time in 21 years ninth-graders have attended Penn, Wayne said administrators and teachers have to figure out how to channel the the students' energy, which is a positive force for the school overall.

After consulting with students, teachers, team and division leaders as well as central office administrators, Speicher said the administration probably will present a revised ninth-grade plan to the board this spring.

In regard to other reorganizations at the elementary and middle school levels, Speicher said there are several issues that need to be examined at elementary level.

Within the next three to four months, Speicher said he will present to the board a plan outlining how P-H-M could deal with such issues as a full-day kindergarten, early childhood day care, and before- and after-school programs.

The superintendent said he is examining the possibility of a task force of parents, teachers and administrators to study the issues.

While a formal evaluation has not been conducted, Speicher reported there have been positive results concerning the revised middle school structure.

"We're achieving the objective we wanted to achieve," said the superintendent, who noted sixth-graders have made a smooth transition from elementary to middle school this year.

He said teams of teachers are working well together in serving the education and adolescent needs of students in the middle school environment.

My backers disprove foe's claims: Dvorak

By HOWARD DUKES
Tribune Staff Writer

SOUTH BEND — Incumbent District 8 state Rep. Michael Dvorak said an endorsement by the prosecutor and the local police union should answer criticisms by his opponent that he is soft on crime.

At a news conference Thursday, Dvorak received the endorsements of county Prosecutor Michael P. Barnes, South Bend Fraternal Order of Police president Douglas Radican, and Mayor Joseph E. Kernan.

Meanwhile, Dvorak's opponent, Republican Michael Downey, expressed surprise the incumbent had been endorsed by the FOP.

"I really don't have any specific reaction. I question the endorsement. I have some serious questions regarding Mr. Dvorak's record. He has not been tough on crime," said Downey.

Barnes said as a legislator, Dvorak has been key in passing legislation that aids prosecutors. Barnes said Dvorak supported bills that required suspension of licenses for drivers convicted of driving while intoxicated, and legislation to compensate the families of individuals killed in drunken-driving accidents.

Barnes said he took issue with charges by Downey that Dvorak has been soft on crime and has opposed crime legislation in the General Assembly.

Radican said the local and state FOP organizations support Dvorak because of the stance on crime he has taken in the Legislature.

Dvorak said Downey is distorting his record on such issues as drug testing in the work place and stiffening regulations for work-release programs for prison inmates.

The incumbent, however, expressed anger over a paragraph in Downey's campaign literature that Dvorak says indicates that as a criminal lawyer, he cannot pass laws that would be tough on crime.

"This is simply the latest plea of a desperate man," said Dvorak.

Dvorak said as a lawyer in a criminal case, he often has to face the prosecutor in court because the constitution requires every person an opportunity to be defended in court.

"As a legislator, I work to pass tough criminal laws, then I put those laws to test as an attorney. That is the way our system works," said Dvorak.

Suspect's death will not stop investigation

By CHRIS BOWMAN
Tribune Staff Writer

MISHAWAKA — The 5-year-old investigation into the shooting death of Thomas Rohr at Nunemaker's Coin Shop will continue despite the Tuesday death of the latest suspect.

Charles T. Sinclair, 44, died of an apparent heart attack Tuesday in an Alaska jail, where he was being held in connection with a string of coin shop murders, most of them in western states. Mishawaka investigators had hoped Sinclair also would be the key to solving Rohr's death.

Rohr was shot to death here in August 1985 while working at Nunemaker's. The building now is a beauty salon.

"At some point in time, we had hoped to interview him (Sinclair), and I'm sure other (law enforcement agencies) would have liked to, also," said Detective Capt. Albert Bierbrauck.

Detective Sgt. John Dawson and Bierbrauck joined investigators from law enforcement agencies from five other states and Vancouver, British Columbia, in Billings, Mont., in early October to compare notes on several coin shop murders since 1985.

Sinclair was a suspect in killings of coin-shop workers in Texas, Washington, California, Montana, Missouri, New York and Vancouver. He was arrested Aug. 31 in Alaska on warrants and faced murder charges in Montana.

Sinclair had kept silent about his alleged role in any of the slayings, refusing to answer investigators' questions. "We're not brick-walled by it. If he chose never to talk, it wouldn't make any difference," Bierbrauck said.

With Sinclair dead, investigators may want to talk now more than ever with his wife, Debbie, who was arrested on an outstanding warrant also in Alaska. She was extradited Sept. 24 to Lovington, N.M., where she was wanted on a felony embezzlement charge.

She posted a $10,000 bond and is awaiting a preliminary hearing, according to an official with the Lea County (N.M.) Sheriff's Office. The Sinclairs left New Mexico in 1985 after being accused of embezzling about $20,000 from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses purchased in the gun shop they operated in Hobbs, N.M.

Mishawaka police and other investigators also are interested in talking with Forrest Leon Ethington, Sinclair's alleged accomplice, who is out on bond and awaiting trial on a murder charge in Texas.

T-shirts going great guns

SOUTH BEND — The sales of the commemorative T-shirts from the Miami-Notre Dame football game have topped 23,000.

Joe Cassidy, student activities director, said the profit for the shirt sales is "in six figures." The profits are being given to Zheng-de Wang, the Notre Dame graduate student who has been hospitalized since being struck by a hit-and-run driver on Oct. 20, 1989.

The shirts now are being printed with the final 29-20 score.

Cassidy said the short-sleeve shirts are available on campus and the long-sleeve will be for sale some time next week. The locations on campus are the bookstore, the hockey arena, LaFortune Student Center and the alumni office.

A toll-free number has been in available for phone orders. "They have 11 operators working" to keep pace with the calls. The Monday after the game, "about 1,000 shirts were sold," he said.

The number is (800) 340-2077.

Cassidy said he has received letters and calls from all over, including some members of the British Army stationed in Germany who saw the Air Force-Notre Dame game when the shirt was unveiled. "They just sent us a letter and a Visa number. They just started watching American football and decided to order the shirts."

Coping with obstacles

Power lines and trees growing close to the road along Indiana 23 northeast of Granger slowed the progress of this house being moved from Alexander Drive, Granger, to 329 Gumwood Road, Niles, next to Shady Oak Farm Boarding Kennel. The house, in turn, slowed the progress of traffic. The garage of the house, owned by Dr. Ronald Jurestic, had to be removed because it made the house too wide, according to Dave Fackleman of Lykowski Construction and House Moving Inc. of South Bend. The garage was expected to make the 10-mile trip within a week.

Wildlife center offers print of Horned Owl

The Indiana Wildlife Rehabilitation Center is offering a limited edition print "Among the Pines," depicting the winter setting of a Great Horned Owl.

The print is based on a painting by Bruce Langton. Proceeds of the sale will assist the center in caring for orphaned or injured wildlife. For further information, call the center at 235-4434.

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