

Opinion

Editorial Round-up

Excerpt from a recent Indiana editorial
The Associated Press
Herald-Republican
May 10, 2010

Indiana's pre-K spending shameful

A new report released last week shows that state spending on publicly supported preschool slipping across the country due to budget cuts forced by the Great Recession.

In Indiana, that's not the case because our state is one of 12 that doesn't provide any public money for preschool programs.

"With more families facing economic hardship, publicly supported preschool is more important than ever," said W. Steven Barnett, co-director of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at Rutgers University and author of the report, *The State of Preschool 2009*.

He cited new research published in the journal *Child Development* showing that low family income has disproportionately more negative effects on preschool-age children than on older children and adolescents. Those effects include higher school dropout rates, lower income as adults, and greater adult health problems.

"We need to get the recession babies on a progression path so they don't carry the scars for a lifetime," Barnett said.

"The worst economic decline since the Great Depression has sharply reduced the ability of parents to provide for their young children," said Barnett. "As family incomes fall, more children become eligible for and in need of state preschool programs. Yet, at the same time, state pre-K budgets are being squeezed, making it nearly impossible for them to meet the need."

Fortunately, in northeast Indiana, we have local agencies provide programs that help children get off to a good start before they hit kindergarten. The ABC program in Steuben County, numerous programs from Children First and the Before 5 program offered by the Dekko Foundation are just some examples of what is happening in our area. ...

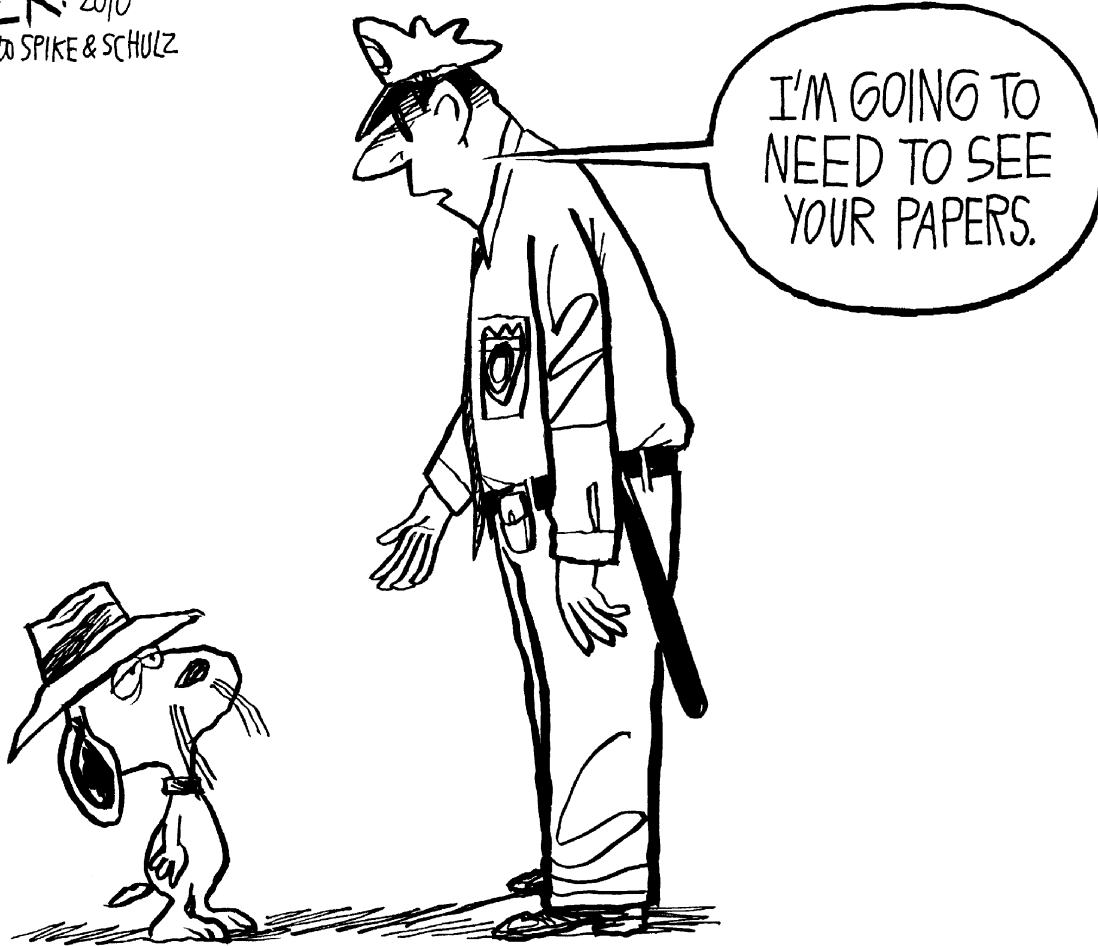
Over the years, we have seen success in our children in school because of the help they get before they head to kindergarten. Studies have shown this and we have heard anecdotal evidence from elementary school teachers.

These programs work. We hold that if we reach children with quality education programs before they enter school, they will turn out to be much better prepared to be educated. We feel they will succeed in school. Success in school, in turn, should lead to fewer social problems as our students mature and, hopefully, become productive members of our society.

"As pure economic stimulus it is hard to beat pre-K programs," Barnett said. "Pre-K is a high-return investment in our children's future that will help pay for the deficits we run now. In the meantime it generates jobs in local communities, with virtually none of the money spent on imported goods or services.

There are some who would argue that Indiana can ill afford pre-kindergarten education programs. We believe that if we don't spend the money on these humans when they are young, we will be more apt to spend it when they age in the form of any number of social services, including prisons.

STAHLER, 2010
WITH APOLOGIES TO SPIKE & SCHULZ



Picasso fiasco The Village Idiot

I was trying to keep it a secret, but it's hard with all the nieces and nephews Twittering, Facebooking and blogging, so I guess it was going to come out sooner or later. I was the guy who bought that Picasso for \$106.5 million. I don't know what I was thinking, I was just caught up in the moment, I guess. I was going to stop at \$50 million but some fool on the phone kept bidding it up. He didn't even have the courtesy to show up at the auction! I was there, and that should count for something. It's like if the clerk down at the department store were taking an order from a phone customer as I stood in the store, tapping my foot. It's just rude.

So I decided that I was going to buy it, even though it's not really my taste. It's kind of blue and gray and green. I'm more of a yellow, red and brown kind of guy. And it's a picture of a big naked woman. My mother-in-law won't like that, which was another reason I wanted it.

"I don't care who painted it," she'll say, "It's pornography. Why don't you just hang a portrait of Satan on the wall, since you're so fond of his works. And you with small children in the house."

Since it was, like, \$106.49 million over my credit card limit, I never really thought they'd give it to me, because I knew it would be declined and that would be the end of that. It was just my bad luck that the computers were down right when I went to pay. So they hand me this thing, and it's really big, like 5 feet by 4 feet, and do they wrap it up or put it in a bag? No, they just hand it to me and walk away. I guess my servants were supposed to take it from there. Luckily, I had some bungee cords in the trunk of my car, so I strapped it to the roof and went home. It was embarrassing, here I am with a \$106.5-million-dollar painting on the roof of my car and people are looking at me like I'm Jed Clampett pulling into Beverly Hills for the first time.

So I get the thing into the house and I figure I'll surprise Sue with it. It's just the right size to cover up that big crack on the wall in the laundry room that she's been after me to fix for the last two years. A hammer and a couple of nails and voila! Crack fixed. The next day she says, "That's not what I call fixing a crack. I could have hung a



By Jim Mullen

picture there."

"Not that picture," I said.

"Yeah, thanks. It doesn't even have a frame. Where did you find this thing, in the half-off bin?"

It was about then that the auction gallery people showed up and wanted their painting back.

"Take it," I said, "It doesn't go with the sofa. Next time, I'll remember to bring a fabric swatch."

"Next time," said the auctioneer said, "You'd better bring bail."

Jim Mullen is the author of "It Takes a Village Idiot: Complicating the Simple Life" and "Baby's First Tattoo." You can reach him at jim_mullen@myway.com Copyright 2010, United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

Conservation Corner

If you planted trees this spring . . .

If you planted trees this spring, then you have increased prosperity in Jasper County.

Here are a few tips to care for those trees in the first couple years.

Mulching - Mulch is a good way to help trees maintain moisture, especially during the hot summer months. It moderates temperature of the soil and helps suppress weeds - saving you time and effort. A variety of different mulches can be good for trees, including straw, wood chips, shredded bark and peat moss. I just read about a product created out of sheep wool for mulching purposes. Make sure to spread the mulch in a 4 inch layer to ensure weed suppression, but keep the mulch away from the trunk of the tree. If mulch is in contact with the trunk, it can keep the bark too moist, promoting fungi growth and parasites.

Watering - Trees in the first year should be watered right at planting and for that first year. Keep the soil moist, but not too wet. Check under the mulch, and if it is dry, then water. In drought, water once a week (about 5 gallons every week). In the fall, you can water less frequently. By its second year, the tree should be fine without watering.

Fertilizing - Should trees be fer-

tilized? In many cases no. Trees in their first year of planting should not be fertilized; they still have high levels of nutrients from the nursery and over fertilizing them can cause damage and stunt their growth.

If you planted bare root stock then the extra compost you added should be adequate in the first year. It always best to take a soil sample and use the results to select the most appropriate fertilizer if needed. Trees do not need to be fertilized like a vegetable garden or corn.

Pruning - Newly planted trees should be pruned sparingly; just to take off any branches damaged before or during planting. Wait until the tree has had a full season to grow before doing any corrective pruning. When you do prune, make sure you do it in a way that will help, not hurt, the tree. Small branches can be pruned with pruning shears. Cut just outside the branch collar, or, on a branch, at a lateral branch or bud.

With large branches you must take extra care to prune properly so that the bark below the branch collar does not get ripped off. This will invite disease and pests. Make the first cut from below, outside of

the branch collar, and only halfway up through the branch. The second cut is further out, cutting the whole way through. Then, with the main weight of the branch gone, you can safely cut just outside the branch collar.

Look for the Jasper County SWCD 2011 pre-sale tree flyers this fall and contact us if you are not on our mailing list for our annual tree sale flyer.

Call Jody at 219-866-8008 ext. 3. We offer bulk prices, in five tree units.



By Dan Perkins

If you have questions or concerns contact your SWCD office.
211 East Drexel Parkway
Rensselaer, IN 47978
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(219) 866-5507 Fax

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Letters to the editor policy:

Letter guidelines for the *Rensselaer Republican*:

1. Letters on topics of general public interest are welcomed.

2. All letters to be considered for publication must include the name and address of the writer and a daytime telephone number where the writer may be reached during normal business hours.

3. All letters must be signed. The name and town of the writer will be published.

4. Letters on topics of general public interest must be 250 words or less.

5. Letters may be mailed, faxed or e-mailed. The mailing address is, Rensselaer

Republican, 117 N. Van Rensselaer St, Rensselaer, IN, 47978. The fax number is 219-866-3775. The e-mail address is editor@rensselaer republican.com

6. Only one letter of general public interest each month from writers who submit more than one letter a month will be considered for publication.

7. Regarding letters about candidates: All letters of endorsement of, or opposition to candidates will be published as Paid Election Letters and are subject to a fee of \$25 for up to 150 words, plus an additional 50 cents per word beyond 150. To ensure publication, Paid Election Letters must be received by 5 p.m. Monday one week before an election. Paid Election Letters are to be paid for by the letter writer. If paid by another entity, that information must be stated properly according to election laws. Payment for the appropriate amount must be received before a Paid Election Letter will be published.

8. Letters regarding ballot issues other than candidates are subject to the same guidelines as letters on topics of general public interest. The deadline for ballot-issue letters is 5 p.m. Monday one week before an election.

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