

NOTRE DAME PREVIEW

First-year-coach Charlie Weis is working to return the Fighting Irish to top form.



Moved by the Spirit

Indianapolis-area churches reflect a growing national trend of faith dancing.



THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty" II Cor. 3:17

TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2005

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CITY FINAL ■ 50 CENTS

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Daniels spares mentally ill killer

■ Man who was to die this week will spend life in prison; debate on issue likely to grow.

By Kevin Corcoran

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Gov. Mitch Daniels on Monday spared the life of convicted killer Arthur P. Baird II, adding fuel to a national debate over whether people with severe mental illnesses are fit to be executed.

"This appropriateness of executing the mentally ill is the issue of the moment," said Larry Landis, executive director of the Indiana Public Defender Council.

Baird was to be executed early Wednesday in the Indiana State Prison at Michigan City for the Sept. 6, 1985, stabbing deaths of his parents, Kathryn and Arthur Baird.

He also was sentenced to 60 years in prison for strangling his pregnant wife, Nadine, and eight years for killing his unborn child the day before his parents' slayings in Montgomery County.

Baird, who had never before been in legal trouble, has maintained that a "big, burly man" controlled his actions during the slayings. Mental health professionals who examined him recently agreed he was psychotic, or out of touch with reality.

Landis said his group, which helps coordinate death penalty appeals, is preparing legislation for the 2006 session that would make it illegal to execute severely mentally ill inmates. The difficulty for the General Assembly, Landis said, will be determining where to draw the line.

House Speaker Brian Bosma, R-Indianapolis, said whether mentally ill killers should be executed is a "quickly evolving" area of law that deserves the legislature's attention.

"This wasn't even an issue

See Killer, Page A8

IN TODAY'S STAR

Clout behind Riley name seen as key to expansion

Observers say the Clarian hospital system is leveraging the reputation of Riley Hospital for Children as the state's top pediatric facility in its efforts to carry out the \$500 million expansion announced Monday. **C1**

Foes see no hope of halting Iraq constitution

The highest-ranking Sunni Muslim in Iraq's leadership says his constituency should look to December's parliamentary elections as a means to help shape the nascent government. **A8**

KATRINA'S TOLL

Scores die in hurricane

• At least 55 dead, most in Mississippi in a single county

• Damage could top \$9 billion, making storm 1 of the costliest

• More than a million are without power along the Gulf Coast



Rescued: Henry Rhodes was ferried to safety Monday in a New Orleans Police Department boat.

Gary Coronado / Associated Press

KATRINA WEAKENS

Katrina was downgraded to a tropical storm as it passed through eastern Mississippi.

As of 10 p.m. EST



Sources: NOAA; Accuweather; USGS (map data)
The Star

WHAT'S NEXT

Katrina struck the Mississippi Coast as a Category 4 storm with 145 mph winds. Monday night, it was downgraded to a tropical storm with 65 mph winds.

As the storm moves north over the next few days, it may spawn tornadoes over the Southeast, swamp the Gulf Coast and the Tennessee Valley with as much as 15 inches of rain, and dump up to 8 inches in the drought-stricken Ohio Valley and eastern Great Lakes.

Go to IndyStar.com for the latest news from the Gulf Coast and Katrina's path north.

For us: rain, pricier gas, the possibility of disrupted air travel — and lots of chances to help those worse off.

■ **Rain coming:** Light rain is expected in the Indianapolis area this morning and likely will develop into heavier rain and storms later in the day. Up to 2 inches are possible, but flooding won't be a problem because it's so dry, said Dave Tucek of the National Weather Service in Indianapolis. **Forecast, B6**

■ **Higher gas prices:** Katrina shut down about one-fourth of U.S. oil production and nearly half of its gas refining capacity. "Our bet is that the impact, if there is a lot of damage, will get us \$3-per-gallon gas in three weeks," said John Silvia, chief economist for Wachovia Securities. Gas prices last hit \$3 — in current dollars — in March 1981.

In Indy, the average price for unleaded fuel Monday was \$2.61, just below the highest recorded price here: \$2.63 on Aug. 19. **Story, A4**

■ **Ready to help:** Indiana is braced to help with a Red Cross hot line based in Indy, a rescue team skilled at finding survivors and utility companies awaiting a call to help restore power. **Story, plus how you can help, A5**

■ **Travel:** The storm closed airports in New Orleans; Mobile, Ala.; and Baton Rouge, La.; Pensacola, Fla.; and Gulfport-Biloxi, Miss. Some airlines will allow fliers to rebook or receive refunds. Check with your carrier.



John Bazemore / Associated Press

Saving a treasure: Garron Lenaz recovers an American flag from the rubble in front of his home in Gulfport, Miss. Gulfport took the full brunt of Katrina.

THE HARDEST HIT

Hurricane Katrina struck a fearsome blow across 270 miles of the Gulf Coast on Monday, killing at least 55 people, flooding tens of thousands of homes in three states and displacing millions of survivors. Officials in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama were bracing for the death count to go higher. Insurance companies said damage could top \$9 billion.

MISSISSIPPI

At least 53 people were killed in the state, including 50 in a single county — Harrison — which includes Gulfport and Biloxi. Most of the deaths were in a Biloxi apartment complex. Elsewhere in the state, falling trees killed three. Katrina's total death toll, including 11 in Florida since the hurricane struck there Thursday and three who died during an evacuation Sunday in New Orleans, stands at 69.

A 22-foot storm surge — Katrina's highest — was recorded in Bay St. Louis. Rescuers pulled stranded residents from roofs or attics. More than 200,000 customers from one utility lost power. **The scene in Gulfport, A4**

"Let me tell you something, folks: I've been out there. It's complete devastation."

— Gulfport Fire Chief Pat Sullivan

LOUISIANA

Katrina banked slightly east and weakened, sparing New Orleans the catastrophic hit that had been feared but still inundating parts of the city. Deaths were expected, but there were none reported Monday.

Most of the levees held but floodwaters rose to rooftops in a neighborhood near Lake Pontchartrain. Howling winds stripped chunks off the roof of the Superdome, where as many as 10,000 evacuees were sheltered.

Water pooled in New Orleans' French Quarter, but damage appeared to be minimal in the historic area. Two huge trees toppled on Jackson Square.

About 370,000 were without power.

"I'm holding off on breaking through the roof until the last minute. Tell someone to come get me please. I want to live."

— Chris Robinson, via cell phone from his home east of downtown New Orleans

ALABAMA

Two people died in a wreck attributed to heavy rains from the storm.

Katrina's arrival was marked by the flash and crackle of exploding transformers, and at least 400,000 homes and businesses were left without power.

An oil-drilling platform broke apart, and a piece of it slammed into a major bridge that carries U.S. 98 over the Mobile River.

Muddy 6-foot waves crashed into the eastern shore of Mobile Bay, flooding stately antebellum mansions.

"There are lots of homes through here worth a million dollars. At least they were yesterday."

— Fred Wright, Mobile

More details from all 3 states, **A5**

— Star news services



WEATHER
Low 65 High 77

Windy with a 70 percent chance of thunderstorms.
Details, B6

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