

They Ignore The Problem...But It Won't Vanish

The time has come for Plymouth Township Supervisor John McEwen and his cohorts on the Township Board to stop looking the other way and hope that things will just vanish and be forgotten.

The point at hand is that involving residents in the Arbor Village subdivision and the officials of the Spartan Warehouse, located on Hagerty Road near Joy Road but adjacent to a group of more than 50 homes in the middle to high price range.

The homeowners have complained about the warehouse since the moment the warehouse opened for operations, about the noise of the trucks in the wet hours of the morning.

The blare of air horns, radios and the clatter of steel ramps being dropped across the ends of the docks and into the trucks has disturbed the slumber of the residents for the past several months.

Appeals to the Township Supervisor brought promises but little action. An appeal to the Township Attorney brought only a rather curt reply that "if you consider the noise a nuisance, then take the matter to court."

That hardly seems like the kind of a reply the residents should get from the Township representatives, even though it might be true.

It is our opinion that this matter was belittled from the very start and that the Township officials, particularly the supervisor, should have taken a more firm stand and assured the by then bitter homeowners of an effort to quiet the noise.

Instead of the residents almost getting involved in fistfights with the drivers and the dock workers over the noise, it seems that a better solution would have been for the Township officials to have arranged a meeting with all parties and tried to resolve the matter.

No Decorum In Judge Race

It probably will be a long time before voters in Northville Township, Plymouth and Canton Townships, the City of Northville and the City of Plymouth will forget the 1968 primary for selection of candidates for the new district judgeship.

Angel Can Lose Magic

Time is one of the greatest healers of anything good or bad. But even time hasn't erased memories of Plymouth's Fourth of July celebration which went off in excellent style despite the poor judgment of the sponsoring Plymouth Jaycees.

It will be remembered as the year in which the candidate who couldn't appear for the preliminary judging, as all other entrants did, was selected Queen.

It will be remembered as the year in which the Jaycees just didn't get around to securing a permit for a fire for the fireworks display in the Plymouth Community and finally had to settle for a spot in Northville Township adjacent to Livonia.

It resulted in one of the greatest traffic jams along Five Mile Road in recent history. It did not have adequate parking facilities or space for spectators. It resulted in complaints from residents of the area over parking on their grounds and even in their gardens.

Perhaps in another year the Jaycees will get around to doing their homework well in advance and not depend on a guardian angel to take care of their shortcomings. There may not be a guardian angel available in future years as there was this time.

Spartan officials didn't make any effort to install a green belt along the side of the property skirting the homes until late May. Then it consisted of a series of small evergreens that may quiet the noise several years from now, but offer little if any buffer at the immediate moment. Rather than arouse the residents to the point of tempers flaring to the boiling point and even higher, the simpler thing would have been to reach an agreement. It could have been done but the Township officials didn't choose that route—they seemed to adopt the attitude of closing their eyes and hoping the trouble would leave.

There are many other problems coming up in the not too distant future that the Supervisor and Trustees will have to answer and they'll have to change their current attitude or face more trouble.

The matter of police protection which Supervisor McEwen persistently ducks; the question of garbage and refuse disposal which is becoming more acute with little action even though the present Township dump on Eckles Road is rapidly nearing saturation point; and finally the matter of unification which the Supervisor has consistently avoided.

Perhaps his feeling was best expressed recently when unification was brought before the Trustees and the Supervisor asked, "Just what are the boundaries of the Plymouth Community?" This from the administrative chief of Plymouth Township.

That is probably one of the reasons why the Arbor Village complaints were allowed to become so bitter. The Supervisor isn't aware of the boundaries of the community, and apparently of the problems of his constituents.

—R. T. Thompson

So the primary election is over. Now we can look forward to a long spell of campaigning before the general election on Nov. 5.

If nothing else, the primary eliminated part of the enormous wad of candidates who emerged to run for the vast number of offices up for grabs in Observer-

land. Some of those rejected by the voters were well known; others were entirely new faces.

To the former, we offer condolences; we expect you'll be back soon in another race. To the latter group, more important because representing new people, we urge a sense of perspective; your loss isn't the end of the

world, and we hope you'll keep your interest in politics and run again in the near future.

THE PRIMARY PROVED one interesting thing about politics in suburbia.

The central problem for a politician out here is communication. How to get his name across

to the thousands of people, many newly moved in to the area, scattered across large lots in a confusing tangle of subdivisions. People like this are hard to get at. It isn't the same thing as walking down the main street in a typical small American town and shaking all the hands you come across. Used to that if a politician did that, he'd be pretty sure of hitting just about everybody in town.

No longer. Livonia doesn't have a main street, unless it's either of the two big shopping centers. Plymouth and Farmington have town centers but the townships around the cities are so big that a politician concentrating on his old haunts will have blown a lot of votes. Westland and Garden City seem to start and stop in a crazy-quilt pattern, and I'd like to meet the politician who has the guts to do a hand shaking tour on Plymouth Road in Redford Township. All this means that the politicians have had to turn to various techniques to get their name across, if not their message.

SIGNS FOR A start. Red. Blue. Chartreuse. Green. Day glo. Orange. Pink. An odd kind of cerise. Even basic black. Rarely white.

Cardboard, silk-screened. Wood, painted. Paper, printed more or less well. Metal.

Posted on trees, telephone poles, wooden frames. On top of cars, on the back of trunks, on lawns and in the doors of houses. Everywhere.

For a while, it looked as though some Santa Claus with a sense of humor had decided Observerland was just one big Christmas tree in need of decorations.

THE SIGNS CAUSED certain problems, of course.

Consent of property owners has to be secured before a sign can be stuck on their property. Suburban politicians carry lists of property owners like old-time ward heelers fondled lists of old widows with many deceased relatives.

"I've got Six Mile and Middlebelt," says one boastful politician. "Yeah, but I've got Schoolcraft at Hagerty," ripostes the other.

Then there's the problem of the size of signs. Plymouth, at least, is familiar with this one.

The City Commission went from a policy of no signs, to one allowing signs of 24 square feet, to one authorizing 32 square feet. This produced a lot of confusion, particularly in the race for district judge, and had the interesting effect of concentrating all attention away from any issue germane to the abilities of the candidates to do the judge's job.

THEN THERE'S the direct mail route. It's expensive, but it's supposed to be effective.

Usually it takes the form of a postcard, more or less neatly addressed, with a message to vote for Joe Zilly written on the other side. In truth, there are supposed to be sent by people to their friends, in hopes that friendship and the thrill of hearing from good Edna next door on a subject other than the deprecations your kids have caused her lawn will induce you to vote for Joe. I got a card to "Dear Phil" from someone I had never met. The message referred to the fact that all this gal's friends were voting for Sam Glop, and she hoped I'd do so too. The card didn't say anything about Sam's qualifications or points of view. He lost my vote.

Direct mail is also used to push endorsements from various groups.

The Redford Township Democratic Club did a lot of endorsing (as an officially constituted body in the 19th District, until the 19th District Executive Committee withdrew recognition. That action, I presume, turned the Club's endorsements from official to unofficial (and feeble)).

No one knows whether this change had any effect on the votes at all.

THE ONE BIG thing lacking in this campaign was a reluctance, by almost all candidates to talk about the issues.

Name identification seemed to be the key thing, and perhaps that's a reasonable strategy in a large and confusing primary election.

But there's at least one voter in Observerland who would like to see the candidates in the final election talk, at least for a moment, about their qualifications and their view of the issues.

It might not get votes, but it could just help the candidates feel they were doing something constructive.

From the Publisher's Desk OBSERVATION POINT

By Philip H. Power

NOW IS THE TIME FOR ALL GOOD MEN...
TO GRAB A SHOVEL!



Miami--It's Neat...But Will It Stay That Way?

By TIM RICHARD
MIAMI BEACH—An impression that overwhelms one at this Republican National Convention—or at nearly every Republican function—is one of neatness and of administrative efficiency.

There is an almost tangible Republican passion for neatness, for having things come off on schedule, or orderliness.

The chartered flight leaves on schedule. Governor Romney and Senator Bob Griffin are there at the airport to greet everyone warmly but in a minimal amount of time so that they can get to the hotel.

The Nixon forces are there with a couple of bands to welcome Michigan, and so is the smaller Rockefeller contingent, and the young people passing out the buttons are clean cut and good looking.

There will be fights, but the surface impression is of restrained voices and gentlemanly legal arguments.

The shuttlebus tickets are there, the credentials are there, the Michigan GOP State Central Committee's darkroom is set up, there are telephones placed in neat rows in the pressroom.

It's too early at this point in the week to tell if the convention's sessions will run smoothly, but the odds are that they will.

This observer recalls a county committee in Michigan which used to tape record its Lincoln Day banquets in order to plan the schedule for the next year. Every introduction, every announcement, every song and speech was timed to the half minute. The dinner was timed to end at 9:23 and actually ended at 9:21.

There's a tightness among the Democrats, a passion, a wearing of the heart on the shirt-sleeve that is missing among Republicans.

Democrats aren't happy unless all the prearrangements are scrapped and the affair, be it a committee meeting or a national convocation, is in chaos.

Perhaps this points to a psy-

chological rather than ideological difference between the parties. Philosophical purists often like to say that a John Lindsay as a Republican congressman voted closer to the Democrats and a Democrat like Senator Frank Lausche votes closer to the Republicans.

But, the lining up of the parties is not ideological. Republicans are Republicans because of personal behavioral patterns. Novelist Norman Mailer took a look around the GOP Convention and pronounced the Republicans a gang of bankers and undertakers—in effect, self-controlled, bourgeois, unimaginative.

His description was deprecating, and it was apparent he didn't

care for people of that sort. That's a negative way of looking at Republicans. If you are a Republican, you consider that a good way to live; or rather, if you consider that a good way to live, you are a Republican.

The corollary, embarrassing to Republicans to contemplate, is that their efficiency and neatness puts them out of contact with a society that is decreasingly puritan and increasingly cussing.

Can a party that can run such a massive convention so efficiently really "capture the imagination" if you'll pardon the Democratic cliché, of the young, the disadvantaged, the ethnic minorities?

It's a beautiful convention.

THIS IS THE WEEK THAT...

by DON HOENSHILL

Secretary of State James M. Hare is getting belted around in the precincts for playing the game like it was invented.

He fired a couple of gentils for mauling off in another political direction while the general and the rest of the troops were doing pushups in the barracks.

Jim McClure, a deputy, and James Palmer, a legislative liaison man, were discharged, and we've heard only one side of the story—from McClure and Palmer.

They were created in government by Hare and they were dismantled by Hare.

It was a kind of replay of the mass firings of Secretary of State branch managers after the 1966 election—including Livonia's Ron Mardiros—for failing to work hard enough in the Democratic campaign.

UNDER THE SYSTEM. Hare could fire 'em for the part in their hair or if they were spats. Patronage knows no rules except those drawn by the guy at the top, whether they be formally drafted regulations or an overnight whim.

So don't knock Hare until the facts are in.

McClure called a press conference—a bad mistake—to protest that McCarthy backers were given the back of the hand at the Ingham County Democratic Convention. Whoever heard of a deputy calling a press conference?

Palmer sided with McClure. All this time Hare was a Hubert Humphrey man faced with a palace rebellion. Remember, Hare has to go before the party councils, too. A guy who can't run his own office is pft.

Gov. Romney had a few cryptic criticisms of Hare at a press con-

ference of his own.

Remember how Romney swept out the governor's office in 1963—including civil service people—and brought in people who didn't even know how to prepare certificates for notaries public?

No uproar then, nor has there been in a dozen other public and private firms just as poignant and maybe more so than the McClure-Palmer business.

There have been suggestions that Hare settled upon the manner of the firings to take the public rap himself rather than embarrass the folks suddenly left without income.

HARE IS A SMART politician. He has consistently led his party's ticket and his office has done a good job, all the while keeping pressure on the legislature to improve things for the people.

The Secretary of State's office is the last bit of mass political patronage left in Michigan, if you discount the maneuverings on examinations and the Rule of Three in the civil service system.

Hare's office raises a lot of money for the party, as it did for Republicans under the last GOPs to hold the office, Fred Alger and Owen J. Cleary. It is a political prize worth its weight in green.

There have been reports that branch managers kick in part of their fees for party purposes. This, of course, is true. It's been that way for generations, a slush fund for both parties.

And, logically, patronage posts are filled with people who agree with the boss. It's the closest thing to a fiefdom in the 20th century.

If we don't like it, let's change the system.

But let's not rap Hare for playing the game.

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