

editorial opinion

We choose Doug Ross in state senate primary

An open, two-way line of communication between elected officials and constituents is an essential ingredient in maintaining effective representative government.

In the 15th state senatorial district, this line has been severed by a man who holds one of the most powerful posts in Lansing—the majority floor leader.

A person with such high responsibility should be exemplary in his constituent relationships. Instead, Daniel Cooper has used his position as an excuse to get away from the people.

We believe that excuse is a poor rationalization by a man who has become enamored with the trappings of power and is out of touch with those who sent him to Lansing. His conduct toward his constituents has been nothing less than shabby and, at times, contemptuous.

A change is needed. We call upon voters to cast their ballots for Doug Ross in the Democratic primary on Aug. 8.

Ross, 36, has waged a vigorous campaign aimed at reaching out to 15th District voters and attempting to restore their faith in state government—faith which has been tarnished by the incumbent.

Voters can feel confident in casting their ballots for Ross. He is well-experienced in government

affairs. He worked as a legislative aide for two U.S. representatives and one U.S. senator.

His adult life has been dedicated to public service. He served as executive director of Michigan Common Cause and was director of the Michigan Citizens Lobby. He is founder of Citizens to Save Small Business, a group formed to reform Michigan's disastrous single business tax.

Ross has vowed to open up the windows and let the fresh air into the 15th District. He has committed himself to the formation of constituent committees to coincide with committees in the senate. We believe this is a good and progressive move. And we will hold him to that campaign promise.

If the Ross campaign organization is any example of how he will operate in Lansing, the 15th District constituents have reason to be very hopeful. Ross' workers are full of genuine enthusiasm for his candidacy. His is one of the few candidacies in the state to create a flame of interest among voters and has drawn a virtual army of volunteers.

In the days of cynicism and apathy among the general public, it is reassuring and, more importantly, necessary to have a person elected to office who can create a positive spirit in the electorate. We believe Doug Ross is that person.

Martha Hoyer: Our pick for county commissioner

A pair of Novi residents — Dennis Murphy and Martha Hoyer — are vying for the Republican nomination for the 24th District seat on the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

Murphy is the incumbent. He was elected to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of incumbent Republican Lew Coy in a special election in the spring of 1976, and was subsequently elected to a two-year term in the general election in November of 1976. Coy is running for his old seat as a Democrat and will face the winner of the Republican primary in the November election.

Mrs. Hoyer is a former member of the Novi Planning Board and has been a Novi City Councilwoman for the past three years.

We have not been displeased with Murphy's performance in Pontiac. But we are troubled by an attendance record during 1977 which was among the poorest on the board of commissioners. Fur-

ther, we believe that he could have done much more to establish positive chains of communication with the communities in the 24th District, which includes a major portion of Farmington Hills.

Mrs. Hoyer, on the other hand, has impressed us with her capacity for hard work and dedication to her responsibilities as a member of the city council of Novi. We are convinced that she would establish better lines of communication between the communities of the district and county government.

Although we do not find her as knowledgeable on county issues as Murphy at the present time, we feel certain that her penchant for hard work will erase this shortcoming.

We endorse Martha Hoyer for the Republican nomination for the 24th District seat on the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

As parties go downhill, so does our government

You as a voter will be concentrating on the primaries for U.S. senator, governor and in some cases the Michigan Legislature when you go to the polls Aug. 8.

But don't forget the bottom of the ballot. That's where the precinct delegates are.

Your party's precinct delegate will attend a district convention and later, probably, a state convention. There they will nominate candidates for lieutenant governor, other administrative offices, the state supreme court, state board of education and the governing boards of three large universities.

That is a big responsibility. The powers of the supreme court alone are immense when you consider its decisions on crime, taxes and legislative apportionment, not to mention workers compensation and human rights.

Our papers don't typically list candidates for precinct delegate because there are usually too many. Besides, they are your close neighbors, and you undoubtedly know them already.

WE URGE RESPECT for the precinct delegates. They are the volunteers who are the backbone of our political parties, and the political parties have an immense role in our governmental system.

In recent years, the role of parties has waned, and government has suffered for it. Perhaps we in the press and broadcasting fields are to blame, for it is easy to get off cheap shots at "politicians" and "partisanship."

But look at it this way, if a politician doesn't respond to a political party—and in Michigan, those delegates are elected by you, their neighbors—whom does the politician respond to? The alternative to elected political parties is non-elected committees and special interest groups.

We are aware Democrats will often say Republicans are heavy on white, middle-class business interests, and Republicans will say Democrats are under the thumb of big labor. Actually, both parties have good cross-sections of plain citizens. Sneer at a political party and you are literally sneering at your neighbors.

IF ANYTHING has typified the politics of the late 1960s and early 1970s, it has been the emergence of groups interested in only one specific issue.

Cutting taxes. Abortion. Women's rights. Minority rights. Unionism for police officers. Capital punishment. Raising the drinking age.

We suggest politics would be healthier if groups had broader interests—in other words, if people would join political parties, get them to write broad and courageous platforms, and hold their candidates responsible for implementing their platforms.

Another unwritten rule about political parties is that they recruit good candidates. Oh, it's not that they machinate to frustrate the primary election process. Rather, party leaders often persuade good men and women to seek office, and those candidates can draw on party members for campaign help.

In many sections of Wayne and Oakland counties this year, we note a drastic shortage of candidates. Several candidates of both parties have no opposition in either the primary or the general elections. In other cases, the opposition is token. Active, respected political parties could have fielded candidates.

VOTING for your neighborhood precinct delegate is only the first step you can take to improve the entire political process.

You can join a political party yourself. If no precinct delegate is elected in your neighborhood, you can contact the district chairman about being appointed to a vacancy.

You can contribute to a party. The more money candidates in November can get from their parties, the less they will have to raise from non-elected special interests.

You can get active in the party. A political party is as worthy a civic group as Rotary, NOW, Jaycees, Business and Professional Women, the community chest—any of them. And as we said, those parties are the backbone of our system of government.



Don't overlook tax proposal

It's not going to change the world, but don't overlook the ballot question in Oakland County's Aug. 8 primary.

In simplest terms, the county proposal calls for freeing county government, township and school district shares of the winter property tax pie at about current levels. A unit of government would be free to levy a lower rate.

What the proposal would do, if passed, is eliminate the annual pulling and hauling in the county tax allocation board about how to slice the tax pie. That pulling and hauling does nothing but encourage local governments to fight for all the money it can get for fear that, if they don't get it, someone else will.

The proposal makes sense. It should be passed.

19% decide it for all

The Michigan primary election will be held next Tuesday, Aug. 8. Up to this point, we have been overcome with lackluster campaigns, and the biggest local issue seems to be apathy.

What probably will happen is that the same old 19 per cent of the registered voters, most of whom are party workers, will go to the polls and elect our public officials.

Then for the next two to four years, the other 81 per cent, some of whom will get to the polls in November, will complain about the caliber of government. Yet they will be part of the cause of the state of government today.

IN THE STATE legislature, of 148 seats, less than two handfuls would be considered swing districts. The rest are either safe Republican or Democratic districts.

That means the person nominated by the dominant party in these districts in the primary will almost automatically be elected in November. The same is true from the U.S. Congress down to our county commissioners.

So the guy who walks around with his chest puffed out and says, "I have voted in every November election the last so many years . . ." really has had little influence on the course government takes if he hasn't voted in the primaries.

This is particularly true of people who call themselves independents and don't vote in either party's primary.

One of the unfortunate things about Michigan primaries is that they occur in midsummer when



BY FRANK HOLLAN

people are taking vacations and are less interested in what is happening in the world.

Since the general election doesn't occur until three months after the primaries, voters are then plagued with an over-long, drawn-out campaign season.

AMERICANS WOULD do well to learn from other nations that the shorter the campaign season the more people vote on the issues. Even politicians should appreciate the shorter campaign season—it would cut the cost of the election.

The Watergate mystique still looms in the background, scandals and incompetence still rear their ugly heads, high taxes and the frustrations of inflation eat away paychecks—and all add to a desire on the part of the electorate to turn the rascals out.

New and younger faces that are idealistic enough to want to change the world offer themselves as alternatives.

But there will be very little change if only the party regulars turn out on Tuesday's primary.

On moving to the boonies

This was the week of surrender. Well, at least partially. After living a decade in the heart of the teeming city, we moved to a house in the rutabaga belt—out among the rural potentates as it were.

All we really did was move little more than a mile from the City of Plymouth into Plymouth Township, but as one who often has spoken out against the township form of government, I may have to munch a mouthful or two of crow.

It was wonderful to find that electricity and a zip code had replaced kerosene lamps and rural free delivery.

THE ONE MAN, ONE vote philosophy still gives me the privilege as an individual of believing in unification of city and township, or of voting for charter township status, just as it gives me the personal right to oppose annexation of chunks of township land by the city government.

It's on that final topic of annexation that I will find a basis for friendly accord with my next door neighbor, a true Scot named John D. McEwen. A mile of a man, Jack was Plymouth Township supervisor for some years before retiring after 1970.

We had our differences when he was supervisor and I edited our Plymouth edition, but for the record let it be said that Jack—the Emperor as I nicknamed him—was one of the most honest news sources I've ever known.

He's a true gentleman, and as his 71st birthday approaches on Aug. 24, I join his many friends in wishing him the best of all things.

As a gift, I think I'll have a portion of the minutes from a 1969 township board of trustees meeting inscribed on parchment.

Taking note of references in print to the title of Emperor, Jack gained official and unanimous denial from the board that he ever had asked members to vote other than as their own minds dictated.

"Further," read the minutes, "he (McEwen) stated that the electorate of Plymouth Township has the intelligence to vote in people who know what they are doing, and who will continue to do the best for all of the people of the community."

Even without being set to music, his heartfelt expression of political innocence helped restore my faith in the everlasting glories of motherhood, Babe Ruth and the American Red Cross.



where we now abide have such quaint, historic names as Governor Bradford, John Alden, Priscilla Lane and Turkey Run. Let me share with you what I consider a hilarious family anecdote.

I quote directly from the family history which shows that Philippe de Lannoy was the first of our family to reach these shores, being one of 35 passengers on the good ship Fortune which arrived in the harbor of Plymouth, Mass., in November of 1621.

Why did this young man of 19 leave his mother, his family and his native country for the uncertainties in a new English settlement? It was because of his love for Priscilla Mullens, but he eventually lost the lass to the much maligned "Speak for Yourself" John Alden.

The appropriate footnote to this sad story of unrequited love was the eventual union of the Mullens and Alden lines with ours in 1667 when Philippe's son Thomas married Priscilla's daughter Mary in one of this country's first shotgun marriages.

Massachusetts' Plymouth Colony court records reveal that Thomas Delano was fined 10 pounds on Oct. 30, 1667, "for having carnal copulation with his now wife before marriage."

The evidence, of course, was the birth of a son on their wedding day. I hope our move, 311 years later, to Gov. Bradford will be accepted as family forgiveness.

With morals what they are these days, if the courts would assess the same fine for that same offense and then disperse that income among all governments—townships included, Jack—we wouldn't need Headlee, Tisch or property taxes at all. Even with the English pound worth only \$1.93 American at the hour this is written.

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