

Gay voters to test Republican waters

By JUDITH BERNE

Four years ago there were none. This year there are two.

There are two openly gay delegates to the Republican National Convention. And Timothy E. Drake, a homosexual delegate from Illinois, Tuesday said Ronald Reagan's choice of a running mate will determine whether gays can support his candidacy.

At a sparsely attended press conference in Detroit's Cobo Hall, Drake said Reagan "has proven in the past he was willing to give us a fair break. But we have some concerns we want to express."

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— Timothy E. Drake, homosexual delegate from Illinois

front of a microphone," he added, with a smile. "We are making a very profound statement in being here. We are activists but somewhat realistic. I want some assurance they aren't anti-gay."

Sen. Paul Laxalt of Nevada, among a number of candidates Reagan is reportedly considering for vice-president, was the only one named totally unacceptable by Drake.

In choosing Laxalt, "he would be writing off all the gay vote," Drake flatly said. Drake said among the three potential presidential candidates — Reagan, President Carter and John Anderson — "Anderson has an impeccable gay rights stand. His position paper is as if we wrote it," he said.

"Is there any reason to stay within the Republican Party?" Drake was asked.

"THE REPUBLICAN PARTY isn't going to go away," he responded. "I have put in too many years in the Republican party. I support its stand on foreign and economic issues. I have a lot of trouble with social issues. The answer is not to walk out, but to hang in there."

Four years ago, the Democratic Convention registered "two or three" openly gay delegates, according to Drake. Next month they are expecting more than 75, he said.



Most of these are tied in with the Republican's conservative platform which works against minority rights.

"It's my belief that this platform doesn't represent the Republican party as a whole," Drake said. "The moderates have just been trampled at this convention."

"It's our fault," he continued. "We allowed the radical fringe to gain control."

"GOV. REAGAN is a strong advocate of individual rights," said Drake. "He has the potential to generate good will among gay Americans, of which there are an estimated eight million in the United States."

They're not all open and standing in



The way it is

Walter Cronkite, the only anchor the CBS Evening News show has had in its 18-year history, seems relaxed in his perch high atop the convention floor at Joe Louis Arena. Cronkite, 64, will retire from full-time assignments at CBS next year. (Photo by David Frank)

Convention's telephone hookups simple as GOP

By CRAIG PIECHURA

There are countless more people involved in the Republican convention than the 2,000 delegates, 2,000 alternates and 8,000 members of the working press assigned to cover them.

At Michigan Bell alone there are about 400 persons from various departments of the company who have been assigned to work solely on convention business. In addition, 100 technical specialists were brought in from the American Telephone and Telegraph Co. to assist in the communications set-up serving a temporary population the size of a city such as Marquette.

One year after joining Michigan Bell, Joseph Luginski, 20, of Southfield was pulled out of his job in the Redford business office to work at the Convention Control Center as a customer service representative.

It's Luginski's job to make sure that business customers, primarily the American Broadcasting System (ABC), have all the phones, phone lines, transmission cables and microwave equipment they need to cover the convention. The marketing department at Michigan Bell has set up what it calls a SWOT team, which stands for statewide order transmittal, at the convention site. Luginski makes sure that whatever SWOT orders, the client gets.

HE'S WORKED the last 17 days in a row and expects to be working another eight straight. Instead of griping about the long hours, Luginski says he volunteered for the assignment and explains that he's thrilled to be a part of the convention.

"It's a good experience for me," Luginski said. "The idea of working on one of the major events of the year, this is exciting to me."

According to a Bell spokesman, the phone company's convention task force has installed enough cable around Joe Louis Arena and Cobo Hall to ring the globe — some 25,000 miles of the stuff.

To serve the convention, the phone company established a special exchange — 457 — which corresponds to the letters "GOP." Consequently, the number for the Republican Arrangements Committee is GOP-1980.

SECURITY is so tight that utility manholes were cemented shut downtown to foil sabotage of convention communication transmission.

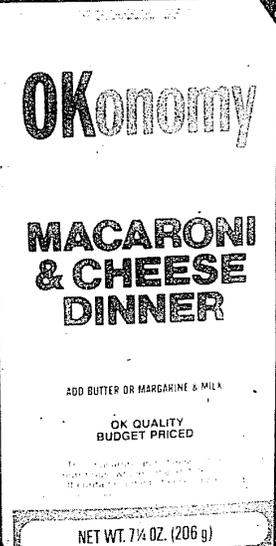
Phones and phone lines are in every conceivable place and then some. For example, Luginski had to send a crew to Kennedy Square to install a bank of temporary phones outdoors for the press covering Monday's mass demonstration by persons supporting passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.

Those phones, the GOP exchange, the manholes and most of the miles of cables will be unneeded after Sunday. Michigan Bell purchased much of its equipment from New York Bell after the Winter Olympics in Lake Placid. The utility plans to resell much of the same equipment back to New York Bell for use in next month's Democratic convention.

The hoopla is exciting and the responsibility of running a convention smoothly is a challenge, Luginski says. "I heard somebody down here say that seeing all this makes them proud to be an American," Luginski said. "It kinda does. You can see a major event and you're a part of it. Whoa, this might be a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see a political convention in Detroit. There's a certain pride to say 'I had a part in the 1980 Convention.'"

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