

Jack Bologna

Electronic voting adds new pitfalls

The first Tuesday after the first Monday in November is set aside by federal mandate for our presidential election.

It also will be a time when we vote for 435 U.S. Representatives and one-third of our Senators.

Add to that sum the state and local offices that will be up for grabs and you're likely to come up with about 100,000 folks running for public office.

If the Pareto Principle (80/20 Rule) of random numbers works in this election, about 20,000 (20 percent) of the candidates, may have their elections jeopardized by fraudulent tabulations, posting errors and machine break downs.

Recounts will be demanded by many of the losers. Lawsuits for libel and slander may be filed by a few, and grand juries may even be empaneled to look into allegations of criminal conduct by candidates and election officials.

We can predict this scenario based on past national elections.

ONE THING WILL be really different in this election. It won't be whether your vote will count. The question will be: Will your vote be counted?

This year, for the first time, many precincts throughout the country will use the latest bit of voting technology — computerized voting systems.

Gone from these precincts will be the "bed sheet ballots" of old which were cumbersome, precinct workers and ballot challengers alike. Even in small precincts, these ballots took hours to tabulate, were subject to numerous challenges and created many human errors because manual tabulation is tiring.

Gone, too, will be the big black monsters, those marvels of electro-mechanical wizardry, the voting machines, which made you fear for your life when you hit the "close" handle and the curtain flung itself around you, as if to choke off the air in your cubicle. You had to vote in a hurry if you couldn't hold your breath long.

So today, we are out of those dark ages and into the era of electronic voting by computer. The voting booths are collapsible, small, compact contraptions, and cities, states and counties don't need to spend a fortune storing them between elections.

The ballots are no longer road map size either. Voting is done by computer card, and tabulation is done by computerized sorting of the cards, which takes much less time and allows some interesting manipulations of the voting data throughout the election day, i.e., hour by hour readouts of trends, patterns and totals, comparisons with past elections and statistical projections.

BUT LIKE ALL other amazing advances in technology, there are some pitfalls in the new voting and vote counting process.

Most of the pitfalls are in the nature of: (1) the technology (weaknesses in the hardware and software) and (2) the nature of man ("it's better to win than lose"). As between the two, the latter represents the greater security threat and vulnerability.

The election districts that now own the new systems have had limited experience with them. Many districts have not done much to instruct and inform precinct workers and other election officials.

In one county of a western state, no one in the county government knew or understood the full ramifications of its advanced system except the county clerk, who had ordered the system, saw to its installation, and was the only one trained by its manufacturer (not only in how the system operated, but in what its weaknesses and vulnerabilities were).

Given this insight, the clerk commenced to amend the tabulation program; so as to take one vote away from his opponent for every 10 cast and add that vote to his (the clerk's) count. As you might expect, the opinion polls showed the clerk was behind by about 10 percent and in the final tally, he barely squeaked by his opponent.

The genius of his idea developed when an accountant told him most mathematical errors were transposition errors (18 vs. 81) and therefore always divisible by 9. If, therefore, there was any question over the accuracy of the vote tabulation, he could attribute it to human error rather than fraud or tampering with the results.

THAT'S ONE of the many new wrinkles in our efforts to make vote tabulation more quickly, so that the networks can, in turn, make their magical victory predictions come true during prime time, rather than at 3:15 a.m., when most people are asleep.

So if you turn in early on election day and wake up to find your favorite candidate lost by a landslide, when the polls showed her/him ahead, don't concede defeat. Impound the voting cards and have them run on someone else's computer.

(Jack Bologna is president of Computer Protection Systems, Inc. of Plymouth, a subsidiary of George Odiorne Associates, Inc., a management consulting firm.)

Some people like to curl up with a good book, watch television, play the stereo or write long chat-ty letters.

My husband, Jack, likes nothing better than a big shiny apple, a bowl of freshly popped popcorn and a western movie on the tube. He never writes letters.

While he relaxes that way, I unwind my way. First I read the newspaper, beginning by noting what's on television so I can tell Jack. I read the newspaper front to back, almost compulsively. He usually starts at a book in the round file.

He doesn't talk a lot about what happened at work unless I draw him out. I talk a lot about what happened at work.

From the newspaper, I go to newsmagazines and perhaps a look at Vogue or New York. I also read the items in the day's mail that require more than a quick look, a check or a toss into the round file.

AFTER THE magazines are perused, I flip open one of the two or three books I'm currently reading. Meanwhile, about a foot from my head is the tiny transistor radio telling me the play-by-play of the Tiger baseball game.

Should the game be televised I go into the bedroom and watch it on TV. I don't watch it on the bedroom and watches anything but baseball.

In years gone by, I also used to prop three textbooks in front of me and taking notes on a legal pad, compiling lecture material for the history classes I once taught.

By now you have the idea. When they talk about "Type A" people who think of two or more things at once, overschedule themselves, talk a lot and gesture a lot, hate waiting in lines or getting hung behind a slow car, that's me.

Psychologists determined the "types" years ago. Lately, they've been harping more on what people



Shirlee Iden

should eat, drink or smoke. Now that the cholesterol scare has been put in questions, it's pendulum has swung and they're taking swipes at us "type As" again.

BASICALLY there's not too much you can do about being an "A." Someone who scores a low five in the Bo Derek scale of one to 10, can lose 12 pounds, get a haircut, learn to put on eye make-up and build herself up to a seven or eight. But altering your personality in mid-life is kind of out of reach.

So I don't worry too much, though I feel guilty about never washing my car because of those infernal car wash lines. And I'm grateful when Jack does the grocery shopping.

Disgust me this. Last Wednesday morning rushing into a Southfield deli to grab lunch before a staff meeting, I decided I'd do two things at once again. So I stepped into the entry where there's a pay phone to call Jack. After all, we both have to eat and I was so close to his office.

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Those were days of sandwiches

Because he is a lover of good food and never takes time to count the calories, The Stroller never misses an opportunity to turn to the food pages of the newspaper to see what's new that will hit his appetite.

And so it was on a recent morning that he came across a full page dealing with various types of sandwiches. It was amazing the number of different styled sandwiches the modern chefs have devised.

But as he read each recipe — word for word — The Stroller couldn't help recalling some of his ex-

periences not only in eating the sandwiches, but in preparing them for others to devour.

In his younger days when the family owned a small lunch counter in our little town that served mainly as a stop on the Jersey Central and Lehigh Valley railroads, The Stroller often was called upon to take care of the customers.

ALL WE HAD at the time was a three-burner gas stove and a coffee percolator. But they served their purpose well. And it never was difficult for The Stroller to fill in as the short order cook.

Then one day a stranger walked in. He was one of the traveling salesmen who frequented our little counter at lunch time. He took his seat at the counter, looked at The Stroller whose head was even with the top of the counter, then smilingly asked, "Could you make me a sandwich?"

Assured that it was no trouble, he said, "I want an egg, over hard, with white bread with a thick slice of Spanish onion."

This was a combination that was new to The Stroller, but he rounded up the Spanish onion and managed to prepare the unusual sandwich just as it had been ordered.

Along the counter, other luncheon customers look on with amazement as they, too, had never heard of such a combination in a sandwich.

If that was strange, it was as of nothing compared to the visitor's next trip to the lunch counter several weeks later. This time, the young short order cook was waiting for him. He even had a Spanish onion in hand. But this time, the diner fooled him.

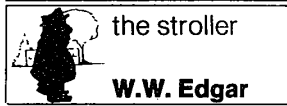
"You were kind enough to make me a strange sandwich on my last visit, and I wonder if you would try another?"

As The Stroller stood by waiting for most anything, the diner ordered "an egg over rather easy on white bread with a thick slice of an orange cut through the middle."

This was something new, and all others at the



W.W. Edgar



counter looked on with amazement. But the sandwich was prepared. It was the oddest combination The Stroller ever has seen in his long stroll along life's highway.

But the sandwich he remembers best as appealing to his taste for a good, rich sandwich that "sticks to your ribs," as the Pennsylvania Dutch would say, was the pride of Walter Borowski, a Polish saloon keeper, who made a hit in our town in a hurry.

He fashioned a pork sandwich that was out of this world, as the saying goes. And here's how he prepared it.

He started with what he called a fresh ham (it was just a big hunk of pork) and he allowed that to stew in a large kettle for a full day. From time to time he would add water.

Then, on the second day, he would slice it while it was still hot and serve between two pieces of square bread, moistened with the so-called gravy from the long stewing period of the day before.

Never before, or since, has The Stroller enjoyed a sandwich more than he did those old-time Walter Borowski sandwiches.

Unfortunately, when Walter passed on, no one followed his lead and prepared the sandwich as he did.

What a joy it would be for The Stroller to sink his teeth into one of them now or to find the recipe on the modern day food pages.

should return home with a bouquet of roses for the wife to let her know she's not forgotten.

While I think that the image of women in that movie an interesting attempt at showing why women had to change their role in society, I do have a few bones to pick with it.

THE CLOSING speech given by Lee Remick was nicely done, but it ended the movie with an air of "God's in her heaven, all's well with the world." Not every woman has the financial wherewithal to go to school, have a cute little apartment and not work like one possessed to pay for it all.

A woman working to support herself who found herself in the same situation as Ms. Remick did in the movie would find it next to impossible to go to college. And of course, in the movie, the main character's sons were handily sent off to live with dad, circumventing the problems of a single mother trying to raise a family on her own.

But on the whole, it's nice to sit back and congratulate ourselves on changing, even a bit, towards the better.

Even Mrs. Cleaver has left the dinner table. When last seen in "Airplane," she had acquired a job as a live-in translator, slinging around phrases like "Slip me five."

Film highlights change

TV abandons type like Beaver's mom

I don't think I've talked to one woman who hasn't mentioned the movie version of "The Women's Room."

And each one of them had some story that she related to the movie. In each instance, the reaction wasn't one of "I will never talk to a man again," but one of sympathy with women who had and have no choice but to stick out a bad marriage or hang on to a man because there was nothing else to do except perhaps get a low-paying job.

With "The Women's Room" on television, a full circle of sorts has been drawn in that medium. We've gone from June Cleaver in "Leave It To Beaver," with her pearls and perfect hair, to a story about a woman who decides to take life into her own hands.

"Leave It To Beaver" was a comedy but June C. was an image of what the perfect wife and mom ought to be. I remember that as a child I couldn't quite figure out why no one I knew looked like Mrs. Cleaver with her sweater and skirt ensembles.

Her television sisters weren't very different. Donna Reed and Loretta Young were both ladylike, well-dressed and gracious. But your really couldn't imagine either one living on her own or fixing a flat tire.

THE EMBARRASSINGLY poor plots, laughable



Louise Okrutsky

as they are today, are a pathetic reflection of what women were supposed to be. There was Donna Reed hiding a new hairstyle from her husband because she was afraid he wouldn't like it. Mrs. Cleaver asking Ward what to do and serving dinner on time.

Both programs reflected the idea that women were truly supposed to stay home. Nothing else.

Recently, someone gave me a pamphlet on wedding protocol that was written in the early '60's. The list of clothes for the trousseau included appropriate outfits to take to lunch, evening clothes and five house dresses — hardly the dress-for-success look.

The pamphlet advised men that "She might like it into her pretty head to choose an expensive wedding ring." Of course, he was supposed to buy it for her. And on the first day he returned to work, he