



Reagan faces paying the tab

Jimmy Carter paid a heavy price for demystifying the presidency. He carried his own traveling bag and collapsed in the race. He somehow didn't fit Americans' image of the Imperial Presidency.

Americans just don't want to believe that their country is neither the strongest on earth nor able to solve international problems in a single stroke. And they don't like signs of weakness in their leader. As former President Richard Nixon said in a Time magazine essay last week, the wrong decision is better than no decision.

Carter wasn't the first president to sink when he tried to walk on water, and he certainly won't be the last. And it's definitely not omniscient to assume that Ronald Reagan will learn the hard way that leadership of a country as diverse as the U.S. isn't wrapped up in a strong defense system.

THIS ISN'T 1880 or 1940 — and the superiority of American technology won't matter a whit when it comes to problems of international terrorism, dwindling energy supplies, African famines and blood baths or the wars caused by religious fanaticism in the Middle East.

Liberal senators tried to tell Americans that the MX missile wasn't the answer to international problems, but Americans just weren't buying that logic this time around.

Idaho's Frank Church, Indiana's Birch Bayh, South Dakota's George McGovern and Iowa's John Culver were just a few of the senators felled by crusading conservatives. These crusaders used more than the senators defense posture to bring them down. The senators were portrayed in direct-mail literature and handouts as baby killers and advocates of homosexuality.

One of the newest political groups in the country — and one of the most successful by virtue of Tuesday's record — is the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC).

The group targeted Bayh, Church, Culver, California's Alan Cranston and McGovern for defeat.

And in anybody's book, four out of five's nice shooting. NCPAC, by the admission of its director, used money — lots of it — to defeat candidates who did not wholly support their ideologies.

Now these conservative crusaders are looking for their candidates to pay their dues.

REAGAN'S SUPPORTERS will be looking for massive tax cuts, both for individuals and business, and a massive military buildup to prove our superiority on the globe — without inflation.

That means massive cuts in the federal budget somewhere — but Reagan has promised senior citizens, union members and the middle classes that those cuts won't be taken out of their hides.

And the conservative crusaders are looking for a Constitutional amendment to ban abortion. As Paul Weybridge, affiliated with the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, said last week, "To the extent that the politicians live up to those principals, we will be with them." Weybridge went on to warn Vice President-Elect George Bush that he'd better march to the tune of the Republican platform and the conservatives.

Reagan and Bush are going to have a very difficult time convincing these crusading conservatives that leadership of an entire nation requires much compromise, awareness of all the issues and, above all, attention to the entire constituency.

AT THIS STAGE it's far too early to call 1980 a watershed election. Despite the overwhelming Reagan tide, we won't know some years hence if this country has changed drastically since John Kennedy took office 20 years ago.

We may discover that the 1980 conservative crusade was simply a reaction — to inflation, a troubled economy, foreign affairs, America's presumed loss of power on the international scene or a combination of all the woes emphasized during this election year.

We may discover what Jimmy Carter learned — that there aren't any simple answers, that most of the world's problems are beyond American control and that the president is a man destined to be torn among the many conflicting ideals of this country.

Or we may discover that the conservatives are here to stay — at least until Americans decide that the Moral Majority isn't quite the kind of thing they had in mind when they talked about a return to American values.

ODDLY ENOUGH, the Me Generation and the conservatives continue to look to government to solve their problems and return to them what they believe is rightfully theirs — whether that is more of their earnings through tax cuts or their belief in the right to life of unborn fetuses.

Reagan might be able to return tail fins, but he can't turn back the clock. The present mood, however, is a far cry from a time when John Kennedy issued his challenge.

"Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country."



Two counties eye charter politics

Carl E. Zimmerman, a retired Ford Motor Co. senior analyst, is a pretty unusual guy.

What, you will ask, is unusual about a 58-year-old Dearborn man who is retired from Ford? The answer is that Tuesday he was elected to the Wayne County Charter Commission and is the practically the only person from industry in that august new body.

If a visitor from Mars were to analyze the economy of southeastern Michigan by picking up the list of charter commission winners, he would conclude, not that this is the automobile capital of the nation, but that most folks work for government, practice law or engage in volunteer civic work.

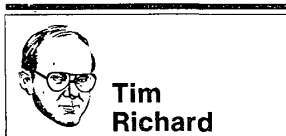
AND SO A HIGHLY political group of 27 will assemble at 2 Woodward Avenue in the next six months to attempt to draft the first charter — or first two charters — of any Michigan county.

They will be watched not only by Wayne County voters but by their neighbors in Oakland County and even by Bay County. Oakland and Bay were the first counties in Michigan to adopt a county executive form of government.

The county executive form is so far imperfect. Oakland County Executive Dan Murphy, for one, would dearly love to combine the Public Works Department, which reports to him, with the Drain Commission office. That will take state legislation. Murphy alone can't achieve it. Murphy and a Wayne County executive, along with Bay County's Gary Majestic, might have a crack at it.

In an unusual display of legislative meddling in local government, the Michigan Legislature provided that the Wayne County Charter Commission is to write two charters with identical provisions except one: One charter is to provide for an elected county executive, the other for a manager appointed by the board of commissioners.

The voters are then to decide between the charters. The charter commission's job is to juggle the powers of the top administrator.



Tim Richard

AT THIS POINT, the characters of those elected to the charter commission become important. That is why I began by noting only one person from industry is on the charter commission.

One commission member is Michael Einheuser, 29, executive assistant to Mayor Coleman A. Young of Detroit. Hm-m-m-m.

Next comes Alonzo Bates, 40, executive administrator of the Detroit Recreation Department and a member of a regional board of education. Hm-m-m-m again.

Charmie Currie, 55, is a former county commissioner and currently an officer of the Wayne County court.

Cynthia Stephens, 29, is an associate general counsel for the state of Michigan.

John J. Fitzpatrick, 70, is not only a former nine-term state representative but was in a managerial role at the Wayne County Road Commission. A loud hm-m-m-m. In Oakland County, the road commission has been generally at odds with the executive.

Leon Jenkins, 26, is a former legal assistant with the Wayne County Road Commission and now a lawyer. Hm-m-m-m.

Alma G. Stallworth, 45, is a community-services specialist (whatever that means) with the U.S. Census Bureau. She is a former state representative.

George Ward, 39, an attorney, was former executive assistant of the Detroit Charter Revision Commission.

George Orzech, 24, is a Detroit firefighter. Thomas Watkins, 26, lists himself as "administrator, Wayne Center." His background is in social work.

Tim Manning, 24, is a wastewater specialist for the Wayne County Department of Public Works. His dad is a county commissioner — an excellent one, in my opinion. Though politically green, young Manning has a pipeline to good advice.

Kaye Tertzag, 41, is city attorney for Melvindale and River Rouge.

William Brainard, 59, is retired from the Wayne County prosecutor's office. Hm-m-m-m.

David Geiss, 37, is financial secretary-treasurer of UAW Local 189. If he's from the Bard Young UAW group, OK. If he's from the Buddy Battle group, hm-m-m-m.

THE SUBURBS are sending some additional interesting folks into the fray.

The Grosse Pointes came up with Barbara Gattorn, 43, a civic volunteer and member of New Detroit's Wayne County Reorganization Subcommittee. Sounds like a progressive.

Livonia is sending Lyn Banks, 38, a civic volunteer, past president of the Livonia League of Women Voters and former chair of its county reorganization committee. Impressive credentials, though she's unlikely to have the sheer, raw clout of the man she beat, former state Rep. Marvin Stempien, also a progressive.

Justine Barnes, 55, Westland councilwoman, may be no orator, but she's a tough progressive.

Bart Berg, 68, is the retired nursery owner and president of the Canton Chamber of Commerce.

Voters Nov. 4 also turned down four county millage proposals by heavy margins. It appears the charter commission has a mandate. The question is: Will the progressives make them listen to it?

It's hard to say.

Holiday has a new twist



Louise Okrutsky

If there weren't ready-made holidays, someone would have to make them up.

And a few stubborn individuals do. My brother-in-law and his buddies hold March 8 sacred. Every March 8 they gather and celebrate. Last year they wore identical March 8 T-shirts.

The same urge to create a holiday hit my husband and his friends. Every July they faithfully attend the "Hack Wilson Memorial Baseball Tour" complete with its ceremonial breakfast of White Castle hamburgers.

The tour honors Wilson, a ball player noted for his capacity to drink before the game and fall asleep while standing in the outfield. The goal of the tour is to pack in as many baseball games in as many cities as humanly possible within the space of one weekend.

It's a good thing these holidays and others like them have remained private. The greeting card companies, professionals at making up holidays, would surely have thought up an appropriate card to send on such occasions.

Can you imagine receiving one wishing you "Happy Hack Day?"

Not that they've been lax in that department. They've come up with some great little holidays. It's already tantamount to sin to forget Secretaries' Day (coming up April 22.)

AND THEN there's Boss' Day coming around next Oct. 16.

I'm sure these days thrive because there are secretaries and bosses who insist upon receiving a card. And they're probably the type of persons who look on the back of the card to make sure it's the brand with the little crown above the product's name.

One good thing about holidays made up in the offices of florists and greeting card companies — they give people an excellent excuse to go somewhere nice for lunch.

That's the whole trick to making up a holiday — aim it at a group of persons who don't already have a day to call their own.

That's why Friendship Day (Aug. 2), Grand-

parents' Day (Sept. 13) and Mother-in-Law's Day (Oct. 26) are hitting the greeting card stands and florist shops.

I thought Mother-in-Law's Day was something invented to fill the lull in card sales between Sweetest Day and Hanukkah and Christmas.

That's before I noticed Thanksgiving Day cards on the rack. They were right next to the Halloween cards.

Now who in the world exchanges Thanksgiving cards with friends, let alone Halloween cards?

Maybe it's just sour grapes on my part because I've only received one Sweetest Day card and present in my whole life.

A BOY I knew in college sent me a rose in a brandy snifter for Sweetest Day. I was a little surprised by the flowers but I was mystified by the card.

"When's Sweetest Day?" I asked my roommate who kept up on these things.

"I thought it was sometimes in March," I continued.

Luckily I married someone who doesn't believe in Sweetest Day. Luckily, he married someone who still thinks Sweetest Day falls sometime after St. Patrick's Day.

But what do you do if mutual disbelief doesn't exist?

As a lark, I wished my mother-in-law "Happy Mother-in-Law's Day." She was thrilled. It's her first year as a mother-in-law and by golly she was remembered.

So I guess I better start making up my Thanksgiving Day card list.