

Opinion

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Their wheels are spinning

MAYBE THE people doing it feel good. But you have to wonder whether the "peace" groups who picketed Congressman Bill Broomfield's Birmingham office and the anti-tax groups still trying to recall Gov. Jim Blanchard are using their time productively.

Start with the Recall Blanchard movement. Upset with the rules imposed by Secretary of State Richard Austin, they went to Oakland Circuit Court — and lost. They're headed for the Court of Appeals, where they'll no doubt lose again.

IF THEY CAN even file their petitions, they will need 760,000 signatures, which guarantees only an election, not a recall. On the other hand, it would take only about 9,000 signatures to put a Republican candidate for governor on the ballot in 1986 and 20,000 for a Democratic candidate.

For a recall to be successful, you must collect your signatures in a 90-day time span. To nominate another candidate in 1986, you have no time limit.

There are a host of other rules inhibiting recalls.

On a recall, you must use a separate sheet in every city or township, but for a candidacy you can mix them within a county.

The state is telling the recall folks they would have to bear the cost of a special election. But if they simply nominated an opponent to Blanchard at a normal election, the state would bear the cost.

Which is simpler — a recall or a positive campaign for a rival candidate?

AT THE VERY beginning, we tried to warn the recall folks.

We told them how difficult it is to pull off a recall, but they wouldn't listen. We respected their views on taxes but suggested they use their energy in supporting a rival to Blanchard in 1986. They wouldn't listen.

We told them that people tend to be active in politics an average of 3.8 years (that's based on a Republican Party study



Tim Richard

of precinct delegates). Since volunteers tend to burn out, we suggested it would be wiser to join an established political party and work for positive change, not a negative recall. They wouldn't listen.

Now they are snarling at the distinguished judge (with a Republican history) who ruled against them. Meanwhile, Blanchard is rising, rising, rising in the opinion polls and hell-bent for re-election. And the recall people spin their wheels.

BROOMFIELD, WHO has been in Congress since the mid-1950s, isn't the most visible officeholder in these suburbs. When he's in town, he speaks to business and banking types who wear three-piece suits and buy tickets to his fund-raisers.

It stands to reason: If you want to hear Bill Broomfield and get his ear, the way to do it is to put on a three-piece suit (or a designer dress, if that's more appropriate), buy a ticket to his fund-raiser and tell him there that you want the U.S. to keep hands off Nicaragua. He would understand that.

Casually dressed folks have picketed Broomfield quite a bit in recent years. His re-election margins keep growing.

If American foreign policy is to be changed, the Bill Broomfields of America will change it, not the peace activists. It wasn't John Kennedy who opened America's door to Communist China, but the red-baiting Richard Nixon. It wasn't retail merchant Bill Milliken who changed state government's bad attitude toward corporations, but the supposedly liberal Jim Blanchard.

Pickets make good news copy and pictures. But they aren't achieving positive change.

Granpy launched an orator's career

AFTER TRAVELING along life's highway for any length of time, a fellow gets a yearning to turn back and relive some of the days of his youth.

Each year as we enter Easter week, The Stroller thinks of the days of long ago when this was the day for the big family dinner.

It wasn't the food that brought back the memories. It was the visit with Granpy Edgar when the meal was finished.

Grandmother raised chickens, so we always had full and plenty to eat. But after dinner it was something different.

Granpy took all the boys into the parlor and chatted with us. He asked all sorts of questions. When he was finished getting the information he wanted, he would ask us to recite for him.

KNOWING THAT was what he was after, The Stroller always memorized some verses and was ready when called upon. This always pleased the old gent, whose daily occupation was piling up cast iron pieces on what was called the iron wharf back home.

With this background, one never would guess the old gent had a love of poetry. So when the others were finished, he called on The Stroller, and then came the thrill.

On one particular Easter Sunday, he stepped to the center of the room in front of the kind old gent and recited "The Village Blacksmith." As he went from verse to verse, he noticed the smile on the old gent's face. And he knew Granpy was going to be pleased.

When the verses were ended, Granpy got up, grabbed The Stroller around the shoulders and praised him for a fine effort.

"Some day you could be an after-dinner speaker," he whispered, "that would be a lot of fun for you. So don't ever give up."



the stroller
W.W. Edgar

SO WHEN Easter week comes along, the memory of that particular Easter years ago comes back, too. In memory, The Stroller always has a fine visit with his granddaddy.

As the years passed and he came west from the Pennsylvania Dutch country, the prophecy came true. He was here only a short time when he was invited to address a luncheon club. From that day on, The Stroller was more or less a regular on the lettuce circuit.

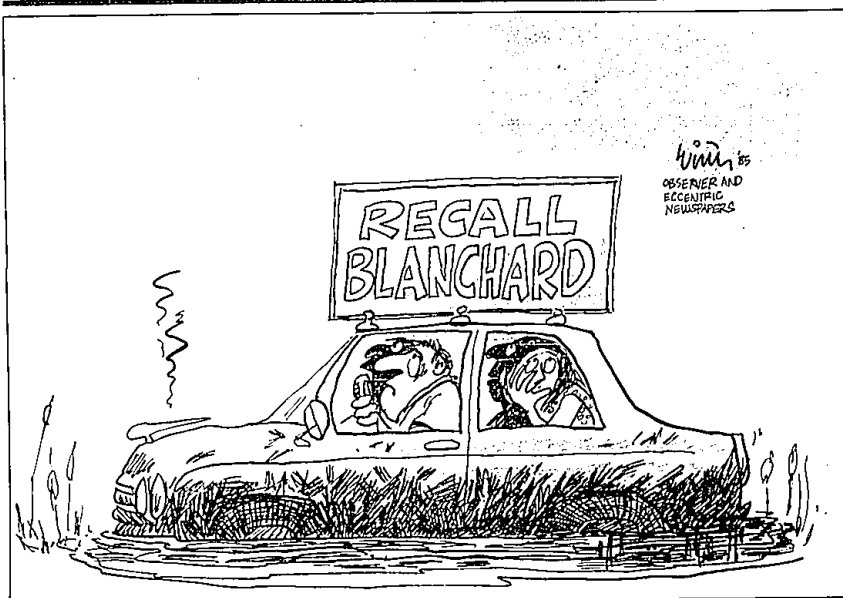
Each time he spoke before these luncheon groups, his memory carried him back to that Easter Sunday afternoon when his granddaddy hinted it was going to happen.

SO THIS Easter Sunday afternoon, there will be no colored eggs in the little white house with the green shutters. We have outlived that custom and favor soft-boiled eggs for Easter Sunday breakfast.

But as he sits there enjoying his meal, The Stroller's mind will carry him back to the old home town and family dinner, and then meeting with Granpy Edgar. That takes the lead over colored eggs, the coming of rabbits and all other traditions.

Easter Sunday memories are a thrill, and The Stroller's only wish is that he could return for another visit with Granpy in the parlor.

Then his Easter would be complete.



Dad turns driver for field trip

HER CAMPAIGN started in the middle of February.

"Dad, what are you doing on March 22?" she asked. "Do you think you could be a driver for the first grade field trip to Cranbrook?"

She was unrelenting. One night it was, "Did you check with your boss today to see if you can get off?" The next it was, "Did you look at your calendar at work today? Can you get off on March 22?"

What father doesn't melt like butter when confronted with a determined 7-year-old daughter? After a few days, I had no alternative. I agreed to drive on the field trip.

IT WAS A delightful experience. When I reported to the classroom, I found that I was the only father along with four mothers who had volunteered to drive. An enthusiastic group of children was excited about the trip.

My first job was to drape a cardboard sign with string around several children. It had the name of the child and address of the school. Then I was given a list with five names on it — the children I would transport to Cranbrook.

Next came the instructions to the children from their teacher. "It's time to leave," she said. "Remember to fasten your seat belts. You can talk, but don't yell in the car."



Nick Sharkey

With that, I left with the five children. I strapped three in seat belts in the back seat and two in the same seat belt in the front seat. We were on our way.

WHAT DOES A group of talkative first graders say when riding in a car?

• "I hate school. I like field trips and gym, but that's all."

• "Why does that sign 'Kar Wash' spell car with a K instead of a C?"

• (On a turnaround island) "Why did you go on a red light when the teacher says you're only suppose to go on the green light?"

• "A lady in our neighborhood had a car accident and got hit on her head."

• "I've been to this place before. I know where the bathroom is."

• "Look at that graveyard. I've been there. It's true, there are bats flying around."

• "My brother walked in dog do last night."



Bob Wisler

PRISONS: Once again, the wrong people are in charge. They keep building prisons that are more expensive than Holiday Inn motel rooms. The price of a cell is now \$60,000, and it costs more to maintain a prisoner that it does a student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

We should turn the prison system over to the Japanese. With their innovative methods, they could start building compact prisons which would win accolades as models of efficiency.

In a few years, instead of complaining about too few prisons, we would be asking the Japanese to voluntarily restrict their import of prisons. As the crime rate goes down, we could start talking about a fair exchange — say, allowing us to import handbags to Japan to even out the trade imbalance.

MAIL: The U.S. Postal Service keeps getting more and more expensive. For what? So that we can get daily three pound parcels and brochures from supermarkets, department stores and coupon outfits. Do we really need daily mail service and \$25,000-a-year mailmen

• "I was in a running race and won a trophy."
• "School is boring. I like reading, but that's it."

WE SPENT ONLY a little over an hour at Cranbrook. In total, the morning field trip took a couple of hours.

During that time, I learned much. I met the children my daughter had talked about at home. I picked out the troublemakers and the best-behaved kids.

I could see how my daughter acted around her friends. But most of all, I could see how happy she was that I was there.

Finding volunteers is a serious problem for schools. Remember the days when a "room mother" took care of everything from classroom Halloween decorations to collecting money for the teacher's Christmas gift? In many schools, there are no more "room mothers."

A majority of mothers now have jobs. Fathers have not filled the gap. As a result, schools have cut back on such extra offerings as Valentine's Day parties, birthday celebrations for children and field trips.

Fathers, give up a few hours and participate in your child's school activities. I'm glad I listened to my daughter's pleadings. I now have peace at home.

And many fond memories.

Some daring new solutions

to disseminate on a daily basis this kind of stuff? I say no.

Scale down the postal service to deliver just valuable mail. Turn the rest of the delivery over to someone like the Mafia. Why not? Every time I read about the Mafia in the paper, some federal official is claiming that the Mafia is making billions in such illicit industries as drugs, loan sharking, gambling and pornography and billions in legitimate businesses such as night clubs, laundry services, juke boxes, construction, etc. They have made an art of delivering drugs, dirty movies, towels, juke box records.

Hey, if they can make money like that while being harassed by the police and a legion of federal agencies, why not give 'em a chance to turn the postal system into a money maker?

So maybe the dead letter file would grow. If that is too much for the public to take, why not turn over mail deliveries to Tom Moanahan (Domino's Pizzas) and Mike Blitch (Little Ceasar's Pizzas), who started out as poor boys and made millions delivering pizza. If they can do it delivering pizza, they can do it delivering mail. They could even combine the operations. You would get your Social Security check with your pizza at night. Who says we need daytime deliveries anyway?

I say there are thousands of improvements we could make if we just dare to be different.