

points of view

Voters still support familiar ethnic names

LITTLE CHANGED in the 1988 election. It was as if an elephant strained and strained, and gave birth to a goat.

American voters are adding their own lesson to the civics textbooks, which tell you about the division of power among the legislative, executive and judicial branches and the separation of powers between the national government and the states.

The voters' notion is to divide power between the political parties, too. As Dick Van Dusen, the Republican Wayne State University board member put it, folks seem to want one set of rascals looking over the shoulder of the other set of rascals.

THE NEW PRESIDENT, George Bush, will continue to be Republican, though of a more moderate stripe on "rust belt" issues.

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The U.S. Senate will continue to be Democratic, and then some, with two new senators of that faith. Democrats also picked up a handful of seats in the U.S. House. Little change there as 98 percent of incumbents won re-election. Purists such as Zelton Ferency



Tim Richard

and I prefer the parliamentary system, where you get to pick only one candidate, and where the prime minister and the legislative majority are necessarily of the same faith. Makes for accountability.

Lana Pollack, the liberal Democrat from Ann Arbor, managed to get her feminist contacts from other states to make the 2nd Congressional District a national target.

After spending three-quarters of a million dollars, Pollack chipped only a few points from Republican Con-

gressman Carl Pursell's margin, cutting it from 59 in 1986 to 55 percent. It's still a safe Republican district. Michigan voters split their tickets for the three university boards, electing one Republican and one Democrat to each. One gets the impression that about 70,000 voters picked one name first, then automatically picked the second name from the other party.

THE MORNING after the election, I was compiling results as they dribbled into the Oakland County building when Ed Sosnick, who had won a circuit judgeship, came in.

"You know," he said, "they do exit polling on why someone voted for Bush or Dukakis for president. They ought to do exit polling on why people vote the way they do for judges."

The judicial results reflected poorly on voters. Take the state Court of Appeals races, for instance. In the 1st District, which includes Wayne County, voters picked two Irish names — Reilly and Brennan. In the 2nd District, which includes Oakland and 14 other counties, they picked two Irish names — Cavanagh and Kelly, neither of whom ever had been a judge, ignoring two circuit judges named Jansen and Kuhn.

In an even more dramatic example, Joan Young, who seemed to have 50 signs in each of Oakland's 900 square miles, barely scraped by against a candidate named Brennan, who ran a virtually invisible campaign and has his office in Macomb County.

This is not to cast aspersions on the legal abilities of the Irish — just

to say that voters favor an Irish name.

Certain Jewish names do well, too — such as Kaufman. In the Supreme Court race, an obscure and relatively young chap named Jerry J. Kaufman, nominated by the Tisch Party, drew a bigger vote than Marvin Stempfen, a former leader in the Legislature, a Wayne Circuit Court judge who handled the Dearborn parks bias case, and the nominee of the Democrats.

Like Sosnick, I wonder what goes through voters' minds when they vote. Check the index of names in the back of the red-covered Michigan Manual in your local library if you think I exaggerate.

Veteran's Day

It's definitely worth giving a first thought

HE WAS A fifth grader in a strange school in a new town. The teacher was trying to tell the class about the military. How many of your fathers, she asked, served in the armed forces? Of those, how many were in the war?

A simple question. Around him, the boy saw hands shoot up. His remained down. Was his father in the war? He simply didn't know. If he raised his hand like most of his classmates, would his ruse be discovered? What if the teacher asked him which branch? He wouldn't be able to answer. He decided to take the cautious course. He didn't raise his hand.

He berated himself on the way home. What a fool you are! You don't even know if your dad was in the war.

He shouldn't have been so hard on himself. His dad was in the war. But only if you asked him carefully could

Veterans Day brings to mind a classroom question that stumped the son of a sailor.

you learn that fact. Or that he served on a ship that was off the shore of France on D-Day.

HIS FATHER seldom talked of Navy, must less the war. When he did, it was usually in a self-deprecating way. He talked about his quick-study officers training course which supposedly taught a college boy all there was to know about being a sailor.

Fat chance. He never came close to learning how to navigate, which was one of his responsibilities. He loved to tell of how he used a sextant to determine his ship's location — and



Rich Perlberg

proudly placed the USS Doyle 30 miles south of Paris.

To this day, he insists that the only way his ship returned home was to follow another across the Atlantic.

When he does get serious he talks about how frightening it all was. And how he and his mates unabashedly cheered at the news of the A-bomb. They cheered because the war was ending but also because the sudden strike meant they would not have to sail off for the brutal fighting in the Pacific.

EVEN WHEN his father was serious, the boy could not picture him

in the war. He was so old. People that old didn't fight in wars. (This was before the boy knew of Robert Mitchum.) Try as he might, the boy could not imagine his father to be a young man.

If it was far easier to picture in uniform a sailor he had never met. The boy's aunt was a teacher and years before had made a deal with a troublesome student: he could teach her about football plays if he would let her teach him about fractions.

The fractions were learned, the football games were played, the student went on to the Navy. It was easy to picture him at war because he never got old. He was killed at sea.

Veteran's Day was Friday. Many people, including many veterans, don't give it a first thought. They should. They should also think about a future day when a teacher asks her class if their fathers served in the war. And no one can raise his hand.

Mom: high marks but work is poor

Q: I have a daughter that has received As every marking period in an eighth grade English class. Yet when I reviewed her papers I see many grammatical errors, some poor sentence structure and other areas she could improve. My daughter tells me that most of the children in this class get As or Bs. I don't believe her work is A work.

A: Some teachers use the generosity or halo effect. They are very generous in grading and tend to literally give high grades because of their kind nature or because they want to please children and parents or just want to keep parents off their back. It is unfortunate that this occurs because it does not give the child a true picture of what his/her capabilities and real needs are.

Conversely, there are many teachers that Einstein could not get an A from because no one is as brilliant as their expectations. Furthermore, some teachers use grades to control behavior in the class; that is, act-out in class and your grade goes down. It



Doc Doyle

is a tough choice for students as to which teacher to take for a class. Fortunately, most teachers are reasonable and fair.

I tell young adults going to college to never take a college or university course by the nice sound of the course title. Find out all you can about the teacher... get one that is fair but has high standards.

The answers provided here are the opinions of Dr. James Doyle, and not the Troy School District. Questions for this column should be sent to Doc Doyle c/o the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI. 48150.



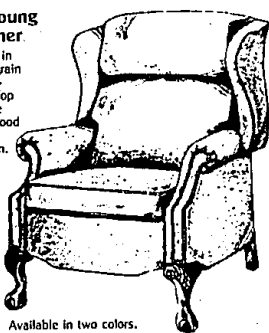
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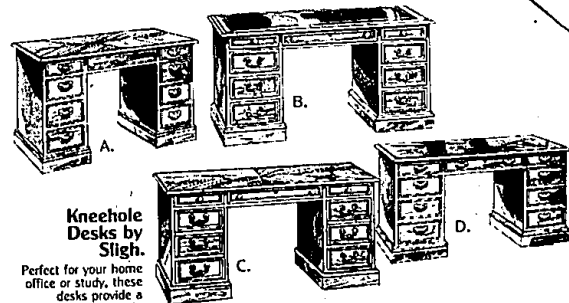
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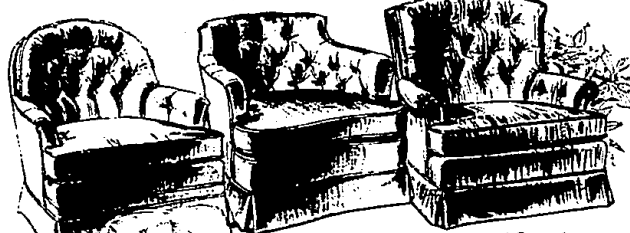
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