

OBSERVATION POINT

Lawmakers Flout Campaign Expense Law

By Philip H. Power

Politicians make the laws. They are the last people we should expect to violate them.

But they do—flagrantly, constantly and, I believe, idiotically. Not all laws, let me hasten to add, but mainly those that have to do with reporting of campaign contributions and expenses run up during an election.

The law is very clear. Candidates for nearly every office—federal, state and local—are required to file a statement of their income and disbursements. Some of these statements, for Congress, should be filed with the Clerk of the House of Representatives in Washington; statements for candidates for other offices should be filed with county clerks or with the Secretary of State's office in Lansing.

The law is also very clear about the deadline for filing.

Trouble is, the majority of politicians don't do a darn thing about it.

HERE IN Observerland, the majority—not just a few, but the majority—of candidates running this fall failed to file their election income and expense statements with the proper authorities by the deadline. They broke the law.

Included in this group are candidates for congressman, for state representative, for county board of supervisors, and even district judge. There were Republicans and Democrats.

A number of stories on this point have been printed recently

in this newspaper. These stories have named names and cited dates. They have included both winners and losers. In some cases, those who had not filed by the time we ran the story have still not filed.

Now there is no present point in relishing by name exactly who has broken the law in this way. The point is that the law was broken by a great number of people who pretend at the same time to be the wise men who set up the laws that we ordinary citizens are expected to obey.

I don't think this is right! I think something should be done about it.

IF A LAW is consistently violated, two possible courses of action suggest themselves:

- Rescind the law. This suggests that the law was silly in the first place, that it was either unenforceable or untenable, and that the only sensible thing to do is take the law off the books. At least that's better than ignoring it. Prohibition was a good example of such a law; they tried ignoring it for a while, at least until the situation got too absurd, and then Congress rescinded it.

- Put some teeth into the law and enforce it. The teeth in our present election expense reporting laws presently wouldn't do much violence to a bowl of strawberry jello.

On a state and local level, about the worst that can happen is that someone (just who isn't clear) can petition to deny office

to a winning candidate who does not follow the reporting law. There seems to be no real penalty for a losing candidate who breaks this law. I have never heard of a Michigan prosecution under this law.

On the federal level, failure to report by the deadline time is in theory a violation of the federal corrupt practices law and in theory carries a jail term or fine if someone is convicted. But Richard Nixon was late in filing his reports for his campaign this year, and you don't hear of anyone proposing to prosecute the president-elect. Not even Vice-president Humphrey.

WITH NO TEETH in the reporting laws, there is nothing to penalize someone who breaks them. So we have the odd situation in which politicians go around flouting the very laws they help create, while the ordinary citizen dutifully pays his traffic tickets and other such.

And how is that situation going to help teach adults and children the respect for the law that is such an important part of our society? Not at all.

So let's either rescind the campaign expense reporting laws or put some teeth in them. Some politician, I suspect, will get a fine reputation as an honest man if he proposes something sensible along this line.

Sense And Nonsense

Customs and habits die hard—even at such an unconventional place as the University of Michigan.

Each year the Athens of the West sponsors a series of concerts called the "May Festival." Because of a new semester setup, however, the festival has been moved up to April.

But according to the announcement of the 1969 series of concerts called the "May Festival," will still be called the "May Festival."

The Detroit Free Press in a recent "Business and Industry" page had a story headlined "Prostitution Loses Out to Amateurs." Well, that's show biz.

A Garden City optometrist has a perfect street address for his profession: 2020 Middle Belt.

It seems these days that the success of the Christmas spirit is measured in dollar estimates by the chambers of commerce across the country.

Many persons seem to be in favor of providing public funds for non-public schools. But the public's mood change when a Negro organization wants to start its own school and demand public funds under any type of a parochial program?

Who is a flower child, anyhow? Or, maybe, more appropriately what is a flower child?

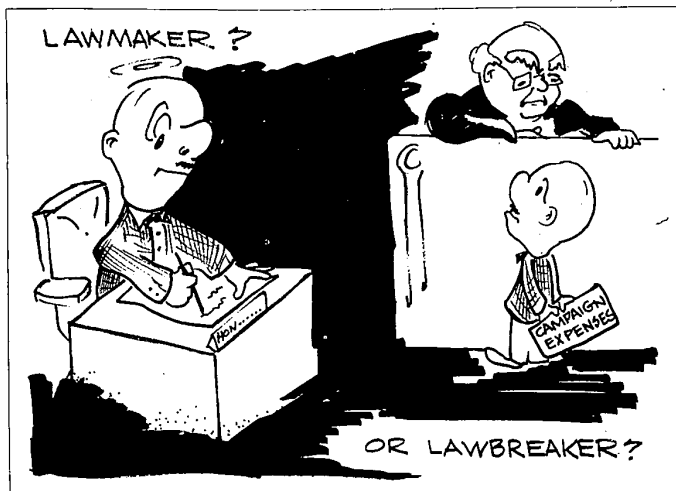
Acting San Francisco State College President S. I. Hayakawa was shown this week draped in flower leis. However, he was handing his posies to the policemen he had called to the campus to put down student rioting.

The Chicago police department says that this business about police brutality at the Democratic Convention is nonsense. They believe it so much that they will clobber anyone with a night stick who dares to disagree.

Westland's City Council has spent a lot of time talking about improving its local animal shelter instead of joining four other cities in a cooperative effort. Why all the fuss? Dogs don't vote.

One sour note about Christmas as compared to say, birthdays. When you get a birthday card, you can look at the code numbers on the back and figure how much the card cost. But Christmas cards are sold by the box and you'll never know the price unless you bought the same series yourself.

LAWMAKER?



Tim Richard Writes

Wallace Backers Try Anew In Unfamiliar Territory

Stand up for Westland, Y'all!

The supporters of the American Independent Party, under whose aegis George C. Wallace ran for president this year, say they will field candidates for the Westland city elections and possibly for boards of education, too, next year.

It's part of a movement in several states to keep the AIP alive and not to let it go to pieces with Wallace's relatively weak nationwide showing. The Westland effort is the first in Observerland, if not in the state as a whole.

There are a few curious things about the continuation of the American Independent Party that deserve a closer look.

FIRST, IT WAS the only party of the six on the Michigan ballot that completely failed to field any kind of ticket for state offices. Republicans and Democrats filled their slates; the socialists got eight names to run for education board; and even the nutty Eldridge Cleaver crowd put up five candidates.

The only names on the American Independent Party slate were George Wallace and his running mate. They failed to nominate a single candidate for anything else.

And yet they say they're going to run candidates for the Westland City Council. We'll see.

Funny thing: In the Observer Newspapers' election supplements, we printed lists of candidates of the two major parties, primarily to show the local races. A lot of Wallaceites made a lot of nasty telephone calls about it. They couldn't understand why we didn't care to devote a full column for the name of one candidate.

A SECOND STRANGE thing about the AIP endeavor is that the party and candidate Wallace had little to say about state and local issues in the last campaign.

Wallace vowed he would return control of schools "to the people," by which we took him to mean that nasty federal interference, such as the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to desegregate the schools, would somehow be overturned, and the local school folks would be free to practice bigotry again.

Beyond that, Wallace devoted himself largely to national issues and to denouncing those who would hamstring the local police, without bothering to say how as president he might do it.

And so, while it's possible to detect Democratic and Republican views on state and local issues through their state and district platforms and candidates, it's virtually impossible to say what the AIP will advocate when we'll be watching that with intense interest.

A THIRD STRANGE thing

about the Westland AIP announcement is the projection of how many votes it might get.

AIP spokesman George Brooks notes that Wallace got 4,000 votes (15 per cent of the total) in Westland in the presidential election. He further notes that the Westland city primary drew only 8,000 votes last year. He reasons that the Wallace supporters, if they stick together, can be a potent force.

The trouble with that projection is that no party's vote is as strong in the off-year or local races as in the presidential election.

Moreover, our six editors in Observerland communities nearly all noted a tendency Nov. 5 for Wallace voters to pull only the presidential lever and ignore the other issues. They're clearly attracted by the Alabama himself

and seem to have little interest in voting for other offices.

Conversations with clerks in other areas indicate that many Wallace votes this year came from persons in their 30s who had never registered to vote before. Rather than "stick together" in 1969, these are the sort of persons who are more likely to quit.

Here's the sum of the irony: A party whose strength lies in Dixie saying, it will field candidates in a northern suburb; a party that has shown no interest whatsoever in Michigan or local issues saying it will get active in city and school races.

It's improbable that they'll win anything, but it certainly isn't impossible. And if they do—well, more power to 'em, as the good sports say.

Guest Editorial

'Local Control' Is Dying Locally

South Lyon Herald

Normally, township boards and small town school boards are conservative strongholds, where members cling—in theory—to the republican ideal that local control is the truly democratic process, and that centralization is another name for bureaucracy and just a step away from state control or socialism.

Ask most any member serving on one of these boards and he'll tell you in no uncertain terms what he thinks of the state and federal governments and their increasing participation in local matters.

And nothing, absolutely nothing is wrong with this free enterprise idea. After all, the town hall and the annual township meeting are the last vestiges of the truly democratic process, wherein all people have a voice in government.

YET, WHAT IS SAID in theory is not being practiced in fact. Several area township boards are reluctant, for instance, to adopt local ordinances because, so the argument goes, there is a state statute to cover that matter.

This argument is the antithesis of the cherished ideal of local control. What is happening, indeed, is that the local governmental body (the township board) is abdicating its right to local regulation and enforcement in favor of state control.

Why have a local ordinance? Wouldn't that lead to mere duplication? In a sense it would. But the advantage of a local ordi-

nance to control, for instance, junk heaps and garbage dumps is that the local ordinance can be designed to cover a specific situation as long as it does not conflict with the state statute.

THERE ARE OTHER areas in which township boards and school boards are relinquishing control. But no blame can be placed on these individual bodies. Rather the blame is implicit in our economy and society.

The United States is growing. Population is centering around the bigger cities in a gigantic urban sprawl. South Lyon and vicinity, once a rural area, is slowly but surely succumbing to the influx of persons from the eastern populated areas and from the western rural areas.

Simple truth of the matter is the problems are too big for the small, local community to handle.

Thus, the call for help goes out to the state or federal government, especially to lend financial assistance.

This is particularly true in the areas of federal grants for municipal development. Many municipalities, limited in resources and manpower, have taken giant strides toward a better community through use of government funds.

WHAT IS SURPRISING, in view of this trend, is the fact that the federal and state governments have exhibited an amazing amount of restraint in helping to resolve local problems. What is surprising is the few strings attached to financial assistance.



This Is The Week That...

Comes A New Regimen

By Don Hoenshell

Thank God for that spear in the chest, a heart attack by any other name.

Nobody's going to make any crucial vows and spend Saturday afternoons passing out tracts on Main Street, but there's no going to be no kidding around, either.

It was a pretty good one, as they go, at 5 a.m. in mid-October. The day doesn't matter, except that it's a heck of a time to be calling people on the telephone and hitchhiking a ride to the emergency room.

But enough of this boring detail. Oh, one thing, if this happens to you: Tell it To Glenn. She made the telephone calls and did not make jokes about the oxygen cone. It makes you look like a sitting statue of Danny Thomas.

The saddest thing is you can't show your irritation, even if that's what it is.

Actually, it isn't. It's an infarction, and it's not anything what it sounds like. Aunt Sal, and try thinking more pristine thoughts. It means you've got a problem.

HEART DAMAGE, of course, is a rough thing, folks.

You can put a broken leg in a cast until it heals and you can patch over a cut. But a heart you've got to rest, sleeping 12 to 18 hours a day for awhile. It's rough to get used to, really.

So you recover after your leisure. You can go walking, but you can't take a lawnmower with you. No smoking, huh. You can drink all the booze you can get

on a Gulf Oil credit card at Dante's and Taylor's. You can ride a bike, but only on the handlebars.

Jogging? Sure, a little later, maybe, but for now only if you're riding a golf cart with snow ureas. Golf? For now, one three-par hole but watch it on television.

And sleep late in the morning, a most important bit. Doctors encourage it. It's good to be able to do all the things you've always cherished—like nestling under the electric blanket at 8 a.m.—and finding the whole world appalling.

BUT THE BIG thing is smoking, for a 2½-pack-a-day man for 25 years. It's a habit like scratching your ear.

First day back from the hospital, you roll a piece of paper into the typewriter, adjust the margins and grab your shirt pocket for a cigarette. It's not easy, but it's a way to survive.

So you make a choice. Cigarettes, booze, all night with a good book then up and at 'em in the morning, live on peanuts for a couple of days or drive 22 miles on an icy freeway on a whim.

Or get those hours in the sack and figure what's most important.

You do all this or maybe you die.

Don't get alarmed, folks.

That big ashtray a daughter gave you on a birthday?

Makes a great candy dish.

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