

editorial opinion

Shirlee's sallies

by Shirlee Iden



Patricia LeCroix writes

Pity car shopping people

What makes Libby run?

Most of the people betting that Bill Fitzgerald, Democratic candidate for governor, would choose a female running mate had their money on Libby Maynard.

On Thursday, he announced her as his choice to stump the state with him in the attempt to win the executive office for the Democrats.

There were earlier inkings that Ms. Maynard, a longtime state Democratic Party officer, would be the chosen one. She was named by the party's Women's Caucus as one of their eight recommendations just two days after the Aug. 8 primary.

But the real tip-off came in a meeting the Saturday following the election at the Renaissance Center. Fitzgerald called the caucus together so he could hear their views, rented the room and brought the coffee, too. About 25 women came and since the meeting had been publicly announced, some media people showed up, too.

Before the meeting opened, Fitzgerald turned to Ms. Maynard and asked if she would be uncomfortable with the press there. When she indicated she'd prefer they be excluded, he said he didn't care, the women ought to vote.

They voted. And despite some voices that exhorted for openness, the press was made to cool their heels outside the room for two hours. Meanwhile Fitzgerald and the women thrashed out what sort of running mate would add most to their ticket.

DISCUSSION about women on the ticket had been going on for nearly two years and the women were quite united going into the meeting.

Most agreed that only a woman

would bring balance to the ticket and no one disagreed that the female picked should be pro-choice on the abortion issue.

Fitzgerald, a Catholic, has picked for the ERA and is good generally on women's issues, but is an open opponent to abortion. The incumbent governor, William Milliken, has endorsed Medicaid abortions recently though he says he is personally opposed. His running mate, James Brickley, a former lieutenant governor, is known to be strongly pro-life.

The top of both state tickets thus have a dichotomy on the abortion issue and a kind of tenuous balance. Whether this will de-politicize the abortion issue remains to be seen.

Olivia Procter Maynard brings more to the Democratic ticket than her femaleness and a willingness to allow women to make their own choice on abortions.

She has a mainstream approach to Democratic politics which she embraced as a college student. She earned a bachelor's degree in political science from George Washington University and a master's in social work from the University of Michigan.

Ms. Maynard was born in Cincinnati to an affluent Republican family whose wealth comes from soap manufacturing. She owns comfortable amounts of stock, mostly from Procter & Gamble which is held in trust for her and her three teen-agers.

SHE WAS divorced from her husband, Erville Maynard, an Episcopal

minister in 1966 after they had already lived in Flint, Mich., for eight years. Her children—Elizabeth 19, Benjamin 17, and John 14 live with her. She has not remarried.

She came to the Michigan Democratic establishment as recording secretary in 1967 when Zilton Ferency was state chairman. By 1974 she was a vice-chairman and has served in that slot since.

Her credentials include activity in the civil rights movements and the anti-Vietnam War movement as well.

She has been a national convention delegate in support of Eugene McCarthy, George McGovern and went uncommitted to the 1976 convention though she voted for Rep. Morris Udall in the Michigan primary.

Ms. Maynard works fulltime for her party for no pay. She's a quiet, dependable worker with a low key personality.

Some say she won't bring the necessary fire to the campaign and others say she's too accustomed to taking orders from the party hierarchy to win a constituency of her own and on her own.

Ms. Maynard has never held elective or even appointive office in government at any level, which may or may not be a weakness.

Soapy Williams said recently that Fitzgerald should choose a woman for his running mate because it's the mood of the times. Ms. Maynard is nobody's idea of a flaming feminist but she possesses a lot of credence and surely has paid her dues.

Now it's up to the voters.

Illness: Car fever.

Physical symptoms: Susceptible to sudden, involuntary nervous twitching, especially when passing automotive dealers' property. Occasional drooling. And the ones that are, since these are such finds, are priced way out of line—which in my case, was right around \$2,000. There are lots of cars that are big enough to drive a family of 24 around, but I don't need a car that big, seeing as my family consists of one—me. There are also lots of cars that are just big enough to drive my pet fish around, but unfortunately, nobody could fit in it except her, and she doesn't know how to drive.

Diagnosis: Terminal, no known cure.

Honestly, it's enough to make a grown person wish she never passed freedom of "having wheels." But struggle as people may against this illness, everyone gets it. Some people get it as soon as they earn their license, others wait for college graduation. Some people get severe cases, others get just a slight rash on the skin.

I should know. I had it bad this summer.

It's even worse, though, when a new car is entirely out of the question (due to certain economic limitations), and the person is faced with the problem of finding a good—there's such thing—used car.

THE BEST WAY to go about finding a good used car is to check the classified ads in the newspaper. Or at least that's what people told me, so that's

where I began.

This first step will yield the simple information that there are precious few 1973-74-75 mid-to-large-sized cars that are still in operating condition. And the ones that are, since these are such finds, are priced way out of line—which in my case, was right around \$2,000. There are lots of cars that are big enough to drive a family of 24 around, but I don't need a car that big, seeing as my family consists of one—me. There are also lots of cars that are just big enough to drive my pet fish around, but unfortunately, nobody could fit in it except her, and she doesn't know how to drive.

Another point: It isn't wise to tell friends that you are in the market, because they always seem to have a friend who is selling this "real gem." The gem generally turns out to be something less than a made-in-Japan plastic ruby, and then you are faced with the prospect of telling your friend that he is either crazy or blind.

SO, ITS BACK to the classified ads with hope and the vision of THAT IDEAL CAR dancing in your brain.

This car would have all four wheels, and even another for steering. It would have one color all the way around, not the top side blue and the bottom side rust. It would have an engine, and preferably this engine would work. It would not have a leopard skin vinyl top. It would have less than 177,882 miles. It would not sound like every battle of the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, World War I, the Korean

War, World War II and the Vietnam War combined.

I didn't think this was too much to ask.

There is something to be remembered when looking at classified ads, however. Don't believe everything you read. In fact, believe very little of what you read. "Excellent condition" in print becomes "so what if the sides are rusted away," in person. "Good condition" means that the junkman offered \$24 to haul the car away last week. "Must see to appreciate" means this is a relic, and unless you are into outhouses and candle making, don't bother.

But as risky as going through a private owner can be, it's a million times better than going to a used car lot.

"This little pearl was driven by a little old lady to church—on Sunday—and I can let you get away with it for only \$2,295 and you'll just look so good behind that wheel—and so what if it doesn't have any seats you'll be the first on your block to drive standing up."

Wonderful. Somehow I was looking for a little more credible claim to fame.

But perseverance pays off in the end.

I found a car. And I'm going to treat that car even better than my fish, because I really don't think I'll get car fever for about 50 more years.

tinkering around

by LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Advice: Ask not, want not

Once I was through memorizing the old boy for high school exams. Shakespeare and I made peace with each other. I even professed a liking for the old boy on occasion.

One thing you begin to appreciate about Bard is he usually comes up with a great quote for almost any occasion. Now I realize Hamlet does the same thing, but there is something intellectual about a person who pulls out a Shakespearean quote over dinner or drinks.

It's one of the ways society provides for persons to prove their intellectual superiority at memorizing passages.

I could never quote Shakespeare word for word. Even on high school tests, I usually picked the questions which allowed me to rephrase. If you remember, those were the questions that required the student to do an in-depth analysis of Falstaff's character or at least solve the ancient question of whether Hamlet was really mad.

At any rate, the above paragraphs serve as an elaborate apology for watering down the old master.

I just set out to write about Shakespeare. I want to write a few words about advice. And it seems to me Shakespeare once created a character

who was fond of giving contradictory advice.

DON'T GIVE ADVICE, don't accept advice but keep an open mind, was one of this character's pieces of wisdom.

When I was in school I thought that was rather contradictory. But recently, I've developed an addendum to that piece of advice.

I'd love to add that we ought to keep an open mind to any advice because someday someone will give us a useful suggestion. Until then, ignore a good percentage of what passes for popular wisdom.

Advice is a funny thing. The suggestion can work for the advisor and fail the needy. My mother was great on advising me when I was younger. Whenever I brought a young swain home, mom was full of words of wisdom and caution.

Most of her advice on the subject can be summed up in two words: "Say no."

Some of her advice concerned itself with men beyond my control. Usually she advised me to make sure the man I'm dating gets a haircut and shaves. She gave up on that one when I advised her that my brother would be a good looking guy if he shaved his beard and got a haircut.

She knew her gambit was up when she admitted to me that her father was inordinately proud of his mustache.

"But it was in style, then," she said, excusing him.

AFTER producing two magazine ads as exhibit a and b, I rested my case and my motherlier her objections.

Just think of all the useful advice that went unsaid.

Nobody advised the Roman Emperor Nero to quit fiddling around and get down to running the country. (There are historians who say he ran it into the ground but they weren't around to offer their advice.)

Nobody advised the Irish monks in the 5th century that the Vikings were more than tourists passing through town.

Then think of all the useless advice handed out.

Who told Edison the light bulb would never work?

What about the feeling that the car would never amount to anything? Useless advice. All of it.

They were the same people who advised the Beatles to quit singing yeah, yeah, yeah.

There's a lot of useless advice around.

Battle rape with knowledge

Proponents of rape prevention warn women against stopping, walking or traveling alone.

It's good advice, but sometimes hard to follow and definitely not foolproof.

Last week, for example, three women were driving together around Oakland County when a man sidestepped their car.

When the women got out of their car to investigate the damage, the man forced them back into their car at knifepoint. The assailant then had them drive to a secluded area and raped two of them.

There was no power in numbers for those women. They were helpless to a young man armed with a knife. Happening right in the middle of Oakland County, coupled with memories of recent sexual assaults in other communities, makes fear an only recourse.

Police caution us against getting caught up in fear. They say it causes irrational behavior that impairs our ability to react safely in emergencies. But then we ask, what is a safe reaction? Should we run, try to hurt our assailant or submit to his perverse actions in hopes we will walk away unharmed?

POLICE CAN only advise a woman to act in her best judgment when a rapist strikes. That means nothing. Since most women never see the rapist before the attack, they must assume that he is playing with half a deck, and probably reacts spontaneously.

It may be more advisable to submit than resist and sustain great injury or death, police say. But

there are no guarantees.

Submitting may make the assailant even more violent.

Screaming may drive the rapist away, or it may anger him. If you decide to fight, do so vehemently. Put out his eyes, scream, gouge, strike at his Adam's apple, temple or bridge of his nose. Use your fists, elbows or knees.

Police say studies show that using resistance is more likely to prevent rape, but it also makes the victim more likely to be injured. Women must ask themselves if they would rather be injured than penetrated.

The answers are baffling. A woman's only weapon is awareness. Rape is a vicious crime that occurs too often.

STUDIES INDICATE that it's not the type of clothing a woman wears that attracts a rapist, but rather her clothing is used against her. A scarf tied around the neck can be pulled causing the woman to choke. If a woman is wearing cloths or high heels, she isn't able to run fast.

If you're unaware of what to do when a rapist strikes, get a bunch of your friends together and contact your local police department. Ask them where you can go to spend a few hours learning about rape prevention.

It might help save you from this ugly crime.

(This column was written by Suzie Marks, a staff reporter for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers)

from our readers

She calls cat declawing dangerous

Editor:

May I say a word to veterinarians and cat owners who declaw cats? Have you ever stopped to consider how helpless you are rendering that animal?

My niece found a beautiful, long haired white cat in the vicinity of Fink and Ashley (in Farmington). It was a bedraggled, matted fearful piece of fluff. Unable to climb a tree to get away from other larger animals, unable to fend for itself foodwise since it couldn't even tear open a garbage

bag. Not even able to scratch itself. How terribly cruel this practice is.

This particular cat had even its back claws taken out. Why? No cat ever scratches furniture with its back claws.

Veterinarians have a responsibility to explain to these stupid cat-maimers that this renders the cat absolutely vulnerable to attacks and starvation. Are vets that money-hungry that they advocate declawing front and back claws for the sake of a couple of bucks?

And pet owners, if you really think that much more of your worldly possessions, then just don't take an animal into your home.

BECAUSE my niece had a cat-hating dog, we brought it home here, but it has not yet made friends with our other cat after seven weeks. That's how terrified this poor little animal was before being rescued. Shame on anyone who declares a poor animal and leaves it defenseless outdoors.

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