

Ruppe is caught in a running story

PHIL RUPPE'S U.S. Senate campaign is falling apart like a drunk trying to walk across a pitched tile roof. The more he tries to keep his balance, the worse the footing gets.

Ruppe has been campaigning for more than six months to become the Republican nominee for Senate. Tall, distinguished-looking, wealthy and ambitious, Ruppe has appeared in his conservative pin-stripes, white shirt and club tie at every gathering involving ten or more voters to make a pitch for his candidacy.



Bob Wisler

But he is now in danger of looking like an also-ran because of the flap over his filing.

Ruppe, the scion of a brewery family, is the victim of the ineptitude of someone in his organization and of what some newspapers call a "running story."

THE INEPTITUDE comes in when the person responsible didn't ensure that the proper candidacy forms called for by state law were filed in an orderly and timely fashion.

Apparently, Ruppe's campaign workers filed his candidacy statement a half-hour before the deadline but it was not accompanied by an affidavit of identity as called for by law. Ruppe's campaign manager dashed in 15 seconds before the deadline with an affidavit but it was flawed. The campaign manager had signed Ruppe's name and the document had been notarized by a person whose notary commission had expired. Now Ruppe is in a court fight to keep his name on the August primary ballot.

One might question why a man who has intended for many months, perhaps even years, to run for Senate waits until the last minutes to file the necessary papers and why, even then, the filing wasn't accomplished perfunctorily.

Most voters realize that a candidate for Senate relies on staff members to accomplish necessary but routine details. Still, the incident is bound to have an adverse affect, even assuming Ruppe stays on the ballot. Why should voters prefer a man for the U.S. Senate who can't even oversee the routine filing of his own candidacy?

THE UNFORTUNATE aspect of the matter is that the filing issue is

a case of a fairly trivial matter becoming the focus of a continuing story. Ruppe's opponents in the race have been astute enough to realize that they could make statements decrying Ruppe's gaffe and utilize the press coverage for their own benefit.

Almost every statement about the filing and someone's reaction to it has prompted another newspaper or TV news story.

A somewhat inconsequential matter becomes the subject of a running story, one which newspapers and television staffs are continually updating.

While this goes on, little attention is given to the candidate's background, proposed programs and ideas for performing as a senator and little attention is given to what the other candidates say, feel or propose about the office.

RUPPE'S FLIGHT is perhaps similar to that of a running story about Austin's when Austin ran in 1976 for the Democratic nomination for U.S. Senate.

At the beginning of the campaign every poll showed Austin ahead by miles. Then Austin became the focus of a running story about Richard Austin's in the Secretary of State's office and his campaign and election chances were never the same.

For as long as most politicians can remember, the Secretary of State was at the apex of a patronage system which awarded secretaries of state offices to those with party connections. As Secretary of State, Austin did more to clean up the system than any of his predecessors.

Yet, when one of the minor candidates seeking the Democratic nomination for Senate — James Elmendorf — started making statements about Austin being the chief purveyor of political plums, the newspapers and TV stations picked up on the statements the way an ant eater gathers dinner.

STORIES appeared day after day and the charges were repeated again and again.

Austin's campaign was like a ship caught in cross-winds. While it may be oversimplifying to say that this finished his campaign — many factors were involved — the campaign never seemed to be on course again. Austin was defeated in the primary by Don Reigle 3-2.

The best thing that an office-seeker can do in the few weeks left before the primary is to make sure that he, or she, doesn't get caught in a running story. It's far worse than a draft.

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comment

The old ways are best

Celebrating Fourth, Independence style

EACH YEAR when the Fourth of July rolls around, The Stroller feels the pangs of homesickness.

He longs to be back home to celebrate the Fourth as he did as a youth many years ago.

No Fourth of July went by that he didn't visit his Aunt Fannie in Philadelphia and join her on a trip to Independence Hall. There we would slowly visit the rooms where the sessions of the Continental Congress were held. Even the pegs on the wall where they hung their hats and coats took on real significance.

Once through the conference room, we moved on to the Liberty Bell. This became a solemn moment. We moved around to the side of the bell where the big crack showed. Then, with Aunt Fannie leading, we would place our hands over the crack and pray for the welfare of the country.

In those few moments, we learned more about the early history of our country and took more interest in its well-being than The Stroller ever learned in school.

BUT THAT ISN'T the finish. On this Fourth, he will take a trip down Memory Lane and again leave the Liberty Bell to move on to the home of Betsy Ross, the seamstress who made the first United States flag, and then continue



the stroller

W.W. Edgar

a few blocks to Christ Church. Here The Stroller always took great delight in sitting in the same pew occupied by George Washington, our first president.

This annual trip left lasting memories. The constant repetition made his love of the country grow stronger. He often wishes every child in America could enjoy the same thrills he had on those Fourth of July mornings.

In later years, The Stroller's thoughts turned to other things for a few hours, but he never missed the trip through the pages of history to visit Independence Hall.

HE LEARNED to divide the holiday by attending the morning game of the baseball doubleheader, then seeing the Liberty Bell and later in the day taking a boat trip down the Delaware River to Wilmington.

Somewhere along the line he would visit Bookbinders seafood house, rated the best in

The Stroller often wishes every child in America could enjoy the same thrills he had on those Fourth of July mornings.

America, and enjoy a hearty meal of oysters, clams or hard-shell crabs.

By the time he returned home, The Stroller had had a great day. He strengthened his knowledge of our early history, saw the famous team old Connie Mack had built in the major leagues and then enjoyed the peace of a cruise on the Delaware.

If only today's youth could take a trip like that on July 4, they would have a better feeling toward their nation.

And the memory of these trips comes rolling back through the years as he rips the month of June from the calendar, and the old pangs of homesickness set in. And just for one more time he'd like to be back home, walk again to the room in Independence Hall and place his hand on the crack in the Liberty Bell while Aunt Fannie looks on, praying for the welfare of the country.

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