

Tim Richard Writes

Beat The System: Register By Oct. 4

You'd think, with all the domestic and foreign issues the two major parties have to fight about, that registration of voters would be a neutral, colorless matter. It isn't, at least not for area Democrats. They're criticizing

Republican clerks wherever they can find them—notably Redford Township's Dawn Rice and Farmington Township's Floyd Cairns for failing to conduct vigorous voter registration programs.

While at first glance it may seem that registration laws affect Republicans and Democrats equally, the truth of the matter is that the voters in each party have quite different behavior patterns. It is quite possible to rig your voter registration system to help one party or the other. You almost can't be neutral.

THERE ARE TWO conflicting theories at work in voter registration issues.

The first is that the ballot box should be as accessible as possible, that registration should be practically effortless and perhaps even perpetual.

The other is that there should be protection against tampering; that only the proper persons vote; that they vote only once; and that no corrupt political machine cast the ballots of persons who fail to vote.

At a time of over-simplifying, it's generally true that Democrats put more weight on the accessibility theory, Republicans on the anti-tampering theory.

The areas of conflict boil down to three questions: Are the clerks open long enough hours? Should everyone have to come to city or township hall to register, or should the clerks go out to the people? And finally, how many voters should clerks have to wait before cleaning out "deadwood" on the registration books?

LET'S LOOK AT them one at a time.

Both Redford and Farmington townships will be open evening hours this week, with both open on Friday 'til 8 p.m.

Evening hours are a virtual necessity in suburbia, where most people work in a different town from where they live, and where the number of persons who travel during the week is high.

Unless one proposes a system of keeping clerks' offices open 24 hours a day, it's hard to fault anyone on this question.

Locations seem to be little that only the proper persons vote; that they vote only once; and that no corrupt political machine cast the ballots of persons who fail to vote.

In Farmington Township, how-

ever, the site problem has become highly political. Clerk Cairns points out that he caught heck from Republicans when he used to take registrations in the Democratic precincts, and caught heck from the Dems when he went into GOP precincts, so he quit that. Anyway, he says, the township hall is centrally located.

The Farmington Township Road Association, a non-partisan group that has been frequently used as a sounding board by Democrats, wants Cairns to provide registrars at their meetings, contending that many members lack transportation.

That contention is dubious. Why should one pressure group have its own registrar? And what is to prevent the group from organizing a car pool and hauling a couple dozen persons to the township hall every afternoon and evening to register? Should the prospective voter be asked to make no effort at all to register?

Another suggestion commonly made is that the clerk deputize volunteers who can register elig-

ible persons anywhere in the township. This plays into the hands of groups that have the money to hire "volunteers"—groups like the AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education, which can be expected to work on registering Democrats.

To hear some Democratic leaders tell it, there are tens of thousands of "lost" voters around these parts, the evidence being the fact that voter lists are smaller today than in 1960 or represent a smaller proportion of the adult population. There's an innuendo that somebody isn't doing the job in getting folks registered.

The truth of the matter is that a 1964 law—Republican-backed, to be sure—requires clerks to cancel the registrations of voters who have failed to go to the polls for two years; previously, the rule had been four years.

This change knocked a good 10 per cent of the names off the registration books.

Democrats despise this law. It's a verifiable fact that Democrats have more persons in their ranks who vote only in presiden-

tial elections; they stand to be hurt worse than the Republicans by this law.

The case in favor of the law is clear: Ours is a mobile population, with 20 or 25 per cent of our families moving each year. It's in keeping with the facts of modern life—especially in suburbia—to weed out these lists.

The overwhelming majority of these "lost" voters aren't really lost at all; they've died, or they've moved. To keep their names on the books for four years or longer is to invite a dishonest machine to send imposters to vote in the "lost" voters' place.

Yet it's also true that the two-year registration law has a built-in bias for Republicans.

YOU ALMOST CAN'T be neutral about voter registration laws and policies.

But you can do this: You can make sure you yourself are registered by trotting down to your city or township hall by Friday, Oct. 4. We're electing a president and some other pretty important people this year.

OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS

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This Is The Week That...



Another Use For Olympic \$\$

By Don Hoenschell

It seems poignant at a time when every handkerchief is wrung dry trying to get World Series tickets that we'll never know in the suburbs the joy of an Olympic Games in Detroit.

Could you care less, Mr. and Mrs. Equanil of Suburbia with the closets stocked with things which make dead guys out of live guys?

Well, let us consider, Suh. It would be a sports spectacular of the first magnitude. It would bring millions to the area, both dollars and people. The improvements—stadiums and all the rest—would be permanent.

Even in Mexico City, the suburbs are prospering from the Olympics. Tokyo built an Olympic City so far out they had to build a road to it. The last time for the United States was Los Angeles in 1932.

Then, for heavens sake, let us forthwith bid for the 1978 Olympic Games and wait for that gorgeous flow of dollars.

NOW WE READ that Detroit Mayor Jerome P. Cavanagh has not lifted a finger to bid for 1972.

Also we read that Fred Matthaei Jr., an industrialist and banker of considerable acumen, is taking Cavanagh to task before his very own Michigan AAU for this oversight.

Leave us look at the record, a new phrase can buy for 10 cents and the shrunken heads of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Cavanagh caught the dream in 1964 and offered it to Detroit. Trusting souls worked to raise money, talents offered extra thousands in time to prepare exhibits. The executive vice president of the National Bank of Detroit was finance director.

The Legislature in Lansing passed bills authorizing a \$100,000 stadium. An Olympic City was planned at Wayne State University. The IOC was given and promised anything he wanted.

The whole southeastern Michigan region was working together. Service clubs were raising funds, the Jaycees were working on the project. The best the area had went into the effort.

After two political run-ins with Los Angeles—which brought movie stars and other conviners to New York—and lesser challenges from Philadelphia, San Francisco and Seattle, Detroit

was selected to make the U.S. bid.

IOC Chairman Avery Brundage, the powerful and petulant patriarch of the Olympic Games, voted against his own country. The move gave solace to the European folks and it became easy to vote for Mexico City.

TWO MONTHS AGO there was a meeting in Detroit attended by Matthaei, members of the mayor's staff, financial and industrial leaders. But the important stuff was handled by U.S. Olympic Committee Member Doug Roby. The issue was whether to start raising \$50,000 to finance the bid for 1976.

"You're crazy," Roby was quoted. "Don't put in a bid. Detroit hasn't got a chance."

Cavanagh believes the money it would cost would be better used in the city to correct its own municipal iltumnyha. How can Jerry build a stadium when rats are still biting kids?

"Mayor Cavanagh has made a grave mistake in withdrawing," Matthaei said in the Michigan AAU Bulletin.

"Since 1935, every Detroit mayor and Mayor Cavanagh on two previous occasions, has seized this opportunity to bring great benefits to Detroit.

"The city needs the stimulus generated by hosting such an event. Look at the rebirth of Tokyo and Mexico City as the result of their hosting of the Games."

MATTHAEI INHERITED his enthusiasm for the Games from his father, Fred Matthaei Sr., an industrialist who has spent his life pleading for Detroit to bring the Games to the city.

You watched the elder Matthaei plead before a legislative committee for bills to make it possible. You watched Fred Jr. giving everything but his blood to the 1964 effort.

And you saw Cavanagh organizing, uniting the city and its suburbs behind the campaign of 1964. The victory in New York for the U.S. bid kicked off civic interest and work never seen before.

Then came the IOC meeting in Germany and the coup de grace by Brundage and others.

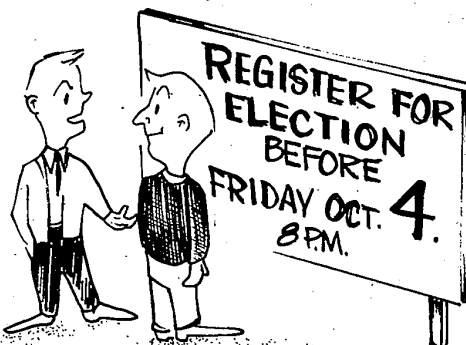
Maybe Detroit would rally again to the cause, but it's humane and wise that Cavanagh didn't ask.

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THAT'S DEMOCRACY



"YOU BET I'M REGISTERED—THIS IS ONE YEAR I'M NOT GOING TO 'LET GEORGE DO IT'."

OBSERVATION POINT

Whittling Down The Papers

By Philip H. Power



When I got back to the office this week from a business trip to New York, I couldn't find my desk.

Why? The mound of paper that had suddenly sprouted there like mushrooms after a spring rain.

Despite the heroic efforts of my secretary to make some sort of order out of chaos, paper completely enveloped any working space on the desk and overflowed onto the floor.

Newspapers, Periodicals, Letters, Reports, Things to read. Things to act on. Things to file.

Business acquaintances who have been away from their offices for more than a day report the same problem.

Indeed, as I sit here going through the motions of clearing out some of the mess, I can only conclude that the biggest problem currently facing our society is the proliferation of paper. It

also seems to me that the man who develops a foolproof system for handling paper will go down in history as our next culture hero, right next to Denny McLain or the Beatles.

THE CONGRESSMAN I used to work for had a pretty nifty system.

He would take all the letters he got and put them into a separate box to be read and answered. He would then take all the newspapers, magazines, reports, Congressional Records, government documents and associated garbage and throw them in a pile on the floor in the southwest corner of his office.

On the first day of each month, he would take a large blank sheet of paper and write the month on it in big block letters. He then would stick that on top of the pile, thereby sorting the growing mound of paper by the month.

He would also take the month's accumulation of a year ago and simply throw it out.

"If I haven't had to go back to it in a year, it certainly isn't worth my time reading it now," he used to say.

I admired the system for its simplicity and ease of maintenance.

Only drawback was the problem of finding something that came into the office at an uncertain date and had been put somewhere into the pile. Have you ever tried to find Volume III of the Report of the National Automation Commission in a stack of paper four feet eight inches (by actual measurement) high?

ple in Pennsylvania proposes another system.

In effect, it's a survival of the fittest way of going about handling paper, and is therefore called the "Darwinian System." It requires nothing more than a large table, on which to put a phone, typewriter, pencils, pens, and all the incoming paper.

"The operation of the system is deceptively simple: all mail, all papers, all magazines, all notes, all bills are simply piled on the table. These items, it should be carefully noted, must in no way be filed, clipped, or sorted else the inscrutable laws... which govern the system will not be effective."

What then happens is that you sit back and let nature take its course.

Your secretary comes in and by accident knocks a few letters and magazines onto the floor. These are immediately thrown away.

If you have a wife who also comes into the office, she will use the phone at your desk. She will, through rigid natural laws governing the behavior of women, proceed to make notes about phone numbers, the date of the next PTA meeting and a new recipe for Hungarian goulash on various of the papers stacked on your desk. Once filled with such notes, such papers are clearly of no further use and can safely be thrown away.

MY OWN SYSTEM is not as elegant as the two previously described.

It is best characterized as the "sieve method," and it works through a progressive whittling out of various categories of paper before it is read: I throw it immediately away.

All junk mail advertising circulars. All mail containing some free gift. All mail advising one of something for free.

All letters, the address of which is written in more than one color of pen or pencil, as these are surely from some nut.

All mail marked Urgent, Special Reply Requested, From the Office of the President, House of Representatives.

All mail from any public relations outfit, anywhere, goes to our editor, and that's his problem. (Ed's Note: Thanks, Boss.)

At this point, the pile has been reduced by at least two-thirds, and I can get on with dealing with it piece by piece.

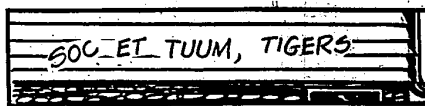
I'M NOT satisfied by this system.

It takes too long, and the pile that remains after each sort is discouragingly large. Sometimes useful things get lost.

If anyone has any good system of his own, please send me a note on it.

If I don't throw it out before looking at it, I'll run it in the paper.

Our Own Graffiti



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