

OBSERVATION POINT

Laws, Punishment, And Fat Cats: A Comment

By Philip H. Power
Publisher

No society can operate without rules. No rules can work without sanctions which certainly penalize the violation of those rules.

These seem like two elementary propositions, clearly understood by any parent who has told a child that 9 p.m. is bedtime, or else.

But it is the violation of these twin principles that has brought our nation to its present sorry state.

We have a system of laws (rules, if you will) which state with admirable clarity just what is permitted by the society and what is not; we also have a system of penalties (sanctions) including fines and jail terms which are visited upon those who break the law, partly to extract pain from violators and partly to encourage others to follow the law.

Unfortunately, the way the system is working in practice these days is that the ordinary guy who breaks the rules pays the price but the big shot who does it gets away with a wet noodle slapped across the wrist.

AS EXAMPLE, take the cases of two suburban politicians, Robert Sincok of Plymouth and Spiro Agnew of Baltimore, Md.

Bob is a distinguished citizen of Plymouth, a leading candidate for mayor after November's election, and a real estate man by profession. A couple of weeks ago, he signed the name of a client to a deed to help speed up a real estate transaction.

Sincok received no commission on the transaction,

but signing someone else's name on a deed constitutes forgery, which is against the rules.

The State Department of Licensing and Regulation heard about the case, asked Sincok about it, and got an admission of wrong doing. Sincok then got his real estate license revoked. He broke the rules, and he got punished.

Spiro is a distinguished citizen of Baltimore, was a leading candidate for the presidency in 1976, and is a politician/lawyer by profession.

According to the U.S. Justice Department, while governor he repeatedly took payoffs and bribes from Maryland contractors and engineers to help them get state contracts, and continued this practice while vice president of the United States.

Normally, bribery, conspiracy and extortion are serious violations of the rules, punishable by many years in jail and big fines. Because of the political situation involving Agnew, he bargained with the Justice Department, copped a plea and beat the rap, getting a suspended sentence and a light fine, in return for resignation as vice president.

You see how it works.

OTHER EXAMPLES abound.

The powerful Detroit teachers union is fetid in contempt of court and fined for failing to go back to work when so ordered. When a settlement is finally worked out, a key part is that the school board will not push the union to pay the fines.

A Michigan state senator and a judge were recently found guilty of taking bribes in a liquor license case, but they continue to sit in the Legislature and on the bench

even though the law forbids convicted felons from holding public office.

And so forth. A Lou Harris poll released Monday reported that public confidence in performance of law enforcement agencies has fallen to an all time low. Sixty-nine per cent of those polled agreed with the idea that "our system of law enforcement does not discourage people from committing crimes."

It's not hard to see why people feel this way.

"I ASK YOU LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE VOTING PUBLIC, WHAT'S IN A NAME?"



Police Win High Praise

EDITOR:

We've lived in Livonia for four years and I never wanted to move here. I still don't like it for numerous reasons. But since I've come in contact with the Livonia police department, and their judges, I could never move from here.

I don't think there could be a safer place to live in the whole world. I do not know any of them personally, but one cry for help and they are there in a matter of minutes.

My father suffered a serious heart attack in my home three years ago. He was visiting from Florida and had no doctor here. I ran to the phone in near hysteria and dialed the operator for help. While I was still talking

to her, a policeman ran in the front door with oxygen and contributed to saving his life.

On Sunday, Oct. 7, at 3:30 p.m. I was about to enter Lawson's at Five Mile and Merriman with my two children when a young boy pulled my purse off my arm and ran. I left my children and ran after him, calling for help all along.

I was very lucky, for my help came through the Livonia police department. In less than two hours they recovered my purse and caught the boy. I'm not very good at writing letters, but I just had to say thank you somehow.

MRS. BERNARD KUDLA
Livonia

This Principal Played It Safe

EDITOR:

While driving down Sheldon Road in the dense fog recently, I could not help but get a warm, secure feeling for the children at Gallimore School.

Each morning of the fog, Mr. Dotson was assisting the crossing guard with the tremendous task of stopping traffic on Sheldon and getting the kids across safely. I'm sure this isn't in his contract!

The kids at Gallimore are lucky. — someone really cares.

CONNIE CAVANAUGH
Plymouth

READERS' FORUM

Please type (or write clearly) and limit letters to 300 words.
• Letters must be signed, with the writer's address. Names will be withheld only at the writer's request and for good cause.
• The editor reserves the right to reject unsuitable letters.

Cut Garbage By Recycling

EDITOR:

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We have available right here in Redford Township one of the finest, most complete recycling centers anywhere. If the residents would make the small effort necessary to recycle a glass and newspaper, our garbage pickup would be cut considerably and at the same time we would be conserving our natural resources.

RUTH PETTIT
Redford Township

12th? It's Unbelievable!!

The four remaining are high ideals and far-reaching educational vision. The new building campus is on 200 acres along Hagerty Road between Six and Seven Mile Roads in Livonia. From 2,000 students in the fall of 1964, the college has more than 8,000 enrolled now. It recently opened an instructional center in Garden City with 550 taking classes there.

It's a far cry from the college that gained the nickname of "Haggerty High" in the early stages of development. From that description, it has developed into one of the foremost community colleges in Michigan and in the Midwest. And predictions are that it will have a total enrollment of more than 20,000 by 1980.

Happy Birthday to President Nelson Grote and his staff. May the next 12 years be even more fruitful than the first.

By R. T. THOMPSON

Is Information System Wrong?

Last week, in writing about vice-presidential nominee Gerald R. Ford, I recalled that despite his high character, he gave answers to questions that seemed to have been cranked from a name machine, and that he said nothing memorable in all the times I've covered him.

Marv Esch is a different kind of guy. The 2nd District congressman from Ann Arbor was visiting the Livonia and Plymouth segments of his sprawling bailiwick, and we got to talking about whether it's fun, rewarding and productive to be a U.S. representative.

"We have a reactionary Congress," he said. He used the word not in a policy sense but because Congress "reacts to interest groups and doesn't think ahead."

Esch, a PhD who taught at Wayne State University and the University of Michigan, zeroed in on our process of information gathering. It's outmoded.

"We need to have consultants to do detached research and analysis instead of what we're doing. Congressional hearings don't really provide information. They get across a point of view. You know pretty well ahead of time what the testimony will be."

I suggested that because Congress is dominated by lawyers, committees conduct hearings the same way a court does, with members sitting on banc like a panel of judges. He agreed the analogy was apt, and went on to tell about a new kind of information gathering he and others are trying in the Science and Astronautics Committee.

"We have 15 or 20 leaders in for a one-day conference that they ran; we observed. Then there was an interview between them and the committee members," he said. Out of that came legislative proposals.

Esch, it should be pointed out, is an expert in group dynamics and has been a laborer to business and labor in that area. Anyone who has ever been in a company with several departments of varied types of expertise can understand the critical importance of the storage, retrieval, coordination and application of information.

If you have a lousy system, employees who could have valuable input into the formation of company policy are ignored. The same is true of national policy.

Esch is saying, therefore, that we've been using an archaic, legalistic method in Congress of feeding information to the people who write our laws.

He went further. It's one thing for a Congress to pass laws, but it's quite another to evaluate how they actually work. Congress, says Esch, has been weak in overseeing the administration of our laws.

"We don't oversee the oth- view. We're not capable of seeing how well, for example, the Office of Education is doing."

"We should have an oversight committee for each committee of Congress to ride herd on the administration and evaluate our programs," he said.

But he points out that "we are gradually taking away the power of chairmen. Committee members can now call up a bill." And he recalls that in 1968 he worked with then-Rep. (later Senator) Charles Goodell to open up nearly all sessions of the

House Education and Labor Committee.

You never hear imaginative ideas like that from a Richard Nixon or a Gerald Ford, the lawyers. They and Esch are all Republicans, but the intellectual approach of Esch is as different from Nixon-Ford as night and day.

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"We at Spring and Bumper want to make sure that we aren't guilty of any pollution," said Dauch to the investigators. "I'll have our laboratory send a crew of men to the lake to make some tests and ascertain if the oil on the lake is of the type we use, if so, then we'll pay the expense of the tests and also accept the penalties handed down by the courts."

"If it isn't our kind of oil, then we'll expect the state to pay for the tests and find which of the plants dumping into the same sewer line is guilty."

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Public Service Goes For Naught

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cooperation from the state investigators.

Almost two weeks have passed since the GM chemists and laboratory experts completed their tests and found it was not oil from the Spring and Bumper plant.

After receiving cooperation of that kind from a plant which was willing to take the risk of being guilty, one would think the state Department of Natural Resources investigators would expedite their efforts to find the guilty party.

However, such isn't the case. Either the state isn't interested or the workers are taking their good old time before acknowledging the report from Spring and Bumper.

It isn't often that a plant manager offers the services

of his experts to help resolve a case of pollution in which his organization could be involved. All know that a stiff fine could be imposed if the plant was guilty along with an order to correct the situation immediately regardless of cost.

In this instance Dauch was so certain Spring and Bumper couldn't be involved because of its precautions against pollution that he risked possible penalties against the skills of his laboratory technicians and chemists.

It appears Dauch has won but one wouldn't know as far as the state investigators are concerned. Perhaps they feel it better to hide their heads in the sand than to answer a report from a person interested in a public service.

Time To Think Impeachment

By EMORY DANIELS

That compromise plan by Nixon shouldn't be viewed as a voluntary act on his part to resolve the tape issue, nor Cox's refusal to agree as defiance against the President.

Nixon was ordered by the U.S. Court of Appeals to produce the tapes. The stipulation was that a compromise would be accepted only if Cox was agreeable.

On Oct. 20, Nixon openly defied the Court and U.S. Senate. He now stands in contempt of court and contempt of the Senate. He has dismantled the Watergate investigatory task force, seized the evidence, and fired those responsible to pursue a fair prosecution within our system of justice.

Nixon has placed himself above the courts, above the law, and above the U.S. Constitution. The nation cannot afford to leave the man in office. If the U.S. Constitution means anything at all, and if America is a nation of law, removal of the President is non-mandatory.

Once done, we can get on with the proper handling of charges against Watergate participants, resolve that matter, and get on with the business of running the nation. But, we can no longer

run the nation with Nixon at the helm.

It hardly seems possible so much has taken place in the relatively short time of 12 years. But today Schoolcraft College celebrated the 12th anniversary of its founding.

It only seems like yesterday that we were attending board meetings in the old Newburgh School in Livonia at the intersection of Ann Arbor and Newburgh Roads.

Those were the days... meetings in the small auditorium at the abandoned school during the heat of the summer with windows wide open and all sorts of insects flying around including wasps which made you duck constantly, a time when the college was in its infancy and the board of trustees was busy selecting a site, approving faculty and administrative personnel for key positions.

Of that original group, only four are still associated with the college, and all of the board members are long gone.

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