

The Battalion

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City referendum violations insufficient to void election

By STEVE GRAY
Contributing Editor

A committee, appointed by College Station Mayor Larry Bravencoc last Monday, has apparently abandoned its effort to seek out further irregularities in the April 3 city charter referendum.

Bravencoc appointed the committee to investigate complaints concerning the manner in which the referendum was presented on the ballot. Voters approved a change to a ward system of election by only 29 votes.

Councilmen Gary Halter, James Dozier and Jim Gardner, the members of the committee, told the council last Thursday that the referendum contained several violations of the Texas Election Code: (1) three of the election clerks for Precinct 20 (Texas A&M University center) were not registered voters as required by the code, (2) choices on the proposition were labeled "For" and "Against," instead of the required "Yes" and "No," (3) the ballot contained two proposed changes, the ward system and election of city officials by plurality vote (state law says only one change may be

included in a proposition.) City officials, however, have said none of the irregularities are serious enough to void the election.

"There's really not much more we can do," Halter admitted last night.

Councilman Gardner said the committee, which spent several days studying alleged irregularities in the wording of the ballot at each of the city's six voting precincts, could not detect any additional violations within the ballot. The ballot was presented to voters in the form of a city ordinance.

Gardner said the next step will be for the city to begin holding public hearings on the determination of the ward boundaries, one for each councilman.

"I think the students, particularly, should get together with the council and discuss where the wards will be designated," he said. "We need to know how the students feel about this."

City Attorney Neeley Lewis said the city soon will submit the ward system proposal to the U.S. Dept. of Justice for its approval as required by federal law. Next April

places 1, 3 and 5 will be up for election on the council.

Lewis said courts generally have been ruling in favor of the ward system where legality of the ward or at-large systems of election has been challenged, usually by minority groups.

Lewis cited a recent court case in which a Tyler judge ruled that the city of Paris, Texas had to switch to a ward system to insure adequate representation for that city's minority population.

"The at-large system dilutes the minority vote. That's pretty obvious," he said. "I can see nothing but benefits for the minorities here in College Station."

However, several councilmen have criticized the ward system on grounds that it would effectively destroy minority representation. Most minority members are scattered any one area.

Halter said there has been talk among several blacks in the community that the ward system may be challenged in federal court under the federal Voting Rights Act which was revised recently to include Texas. He said some minority members say they feel the new system will not effectively represent minorities in the city as it is intended to do.

Lewis said much of the controversy about the wording of the charter ballot

came after the referendum narrowly passed, much to the surprise of most council members.

"There had earlier been some question about the way the ballot was to have been presented to the voters," Lewis said.

At least one change had been made in the ballot during the first day of absentee voting when city officials told the firm that tabulated election results to change the charter ballot from a short form to one in the form of a city ordinance.

Lewis said the revised ballot was based primarily on the recommendations of the council's Charter Revision Committee. The recommendations were then passed on to the council for its approval.

M. L. Cashion, chairman of the revision committee, said he wasn't exactly sure who wrote the final form of the ordinance as it appeared on the ballot.

The Battalion last week conducted a survey in which two dozen persons, including two former College Station mayors, indicated they had voted erroneously because they were confused about the wording of the ballot.

"We prepared the (revision) material but I really didn't look at the ballot when I was voting because I was already familiar with the issue," Cashion said. "I knew what 'for' and 'against' meant."

Ford postpones A&M trip

Jack Ford will not be on the A&M campus this week as previously announced in The Battalion.

The President's son will campaign on the A&M campus sometime around April 28, two days before his father faces Ronald Reagan in the Texas Republican primary.

Coordinators of the local campaign for Ford will not know the actual time of Ford's appearance for another three days.

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Ecofair '76 is in its second day of a week-long symposium discussing modern architecture. Page 3.

The Aggie Players' production, "Celebration," was found to be worth seeing despite acting flaws. Page 3.

The circus was in town over the weekend, complete with elephants, a parade and happy children. Page 5.

Senate refuses to cut '77 defense spending

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate refused Monday to cut the fiscal 1977 spending target for defense or to allow substantial increases for domestic programs. The Senators approved a \$412.6-billion federal spending ceiling.

The hold-the-line amendment votes preceded final passage of the overall spending ceiling for the year beginning Oct. 1. The spending plan, which also must pass the House and is subject to adjustment later in the year, compares with the lower \$395.2-billion proposed by President Ford.

The budget resolution, proposed by the Senate Budget Committee and okayed 62 to 22, allows for a fiscal 1977 deficit of \$50.2 billion, compared with the administration's \$44.6-billion deficit proposal.

The legislation now goes to the House where the House Budget Committee has recommended a higher \$413.6-billion ceiling which would produce a \$50.6-billion deficit.

Quickly, the Senate rejected an amendment cutting outlays for defense by \$500-million from the \$100.9-billion recommended by the Senate Budget Committee.

The President proposed a \$101.1-billion defense budget. Sen. Birch Bayh, D-Ind., proposed the amendment which lost 58 to 27.

Also failing 58 to 27 was a \$3.2-billion additional for public service jobs, nutrition and unemployment programs for the elderly; road, water and sewer developments; Medicare-Medicaid, and community development programs. Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., proposed the amendment.

The Senate voted 62-23 not to reduce spending targets by \$6.8-billion for energy, transportation and social programs. Sen. James Buckley, Con-R.-N.Y., sponsored the bill.

Chairman Edmund Muskie, D-Maine, of the Budget Committee, opposed all increases, saying the budget resolutions were in 17 general categories and not in specific programs.

Muskie reminded senators they can adjust the figures in the final congressional budget resolution in September, after they have acted on the regular authorization and appropriation bills dealing with specific programs.



Bike trap

Photo by Steve Goble

Campus policeman Jim Carpenter tickets Mike Carnett Monday afternoon in front of the Reed McDonald Building. Officers were ticketing bike riders with unregistered bikes. Those ticketed must buy a \$1.50 registration sticker from University police, even though the registration period is nearly over. Carpenter said the crackdown would encourage bicyclists to obey regulations.

Conflict of interest cited

Regent asks issue be revoted

By Lee Roy Leschper
Battalion Staff Writer

Richard A. Goodson, a member of the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents, has asked the board to reconsider a vote taken at their March 23 meeting. Under that vote Goodson violated a conflict of interest law.

Goodson, of Dallas, voted during the March meeting on an addition to an insurance policy for dependents of university employees. Goodson is a director of Southwestern Life Corporation, which controls the insurance company holding the policy.

According to state law, Goodson should have announced during the board meeting that he has business interests in Southwestern Life. He then should have disqualified

himself from voting on the policy, the law requires.

When questioned by the Battalion, Goodson said he didn't know about the law.

"I presume I did vote on that matter (the insurance policy)," he said. "It came up as a routine matter."

University President Jack K. Williams said, "He (Goodson) asked that I not take any action on it (the insurance policy) for now." The board vote had authorized Williams to contract the policy addition with Southwestern Life.

Goodson will explain his connection with Southwestern Life and disqualify himself from voting on the policy in the board's next meeting May 25, Williams said.

Williams said the administration had to accept blame for Goodson's voting on the policy.

"It was our responsibility to tell him about the law," Williams said. "We should have made it clear to him that he should disqualify himself and not vote."

The conflict of interest law, Article 6252-9b of the Texas Statutes, requires that state officers such as regents file an affidavit with the Secretary of State for any state-regulated business in which they have an interest.

Goodson filed such an affidavit for Southwestern Life, which is regulated by the Texas Insurance Commission, with the Secretary of State March 22, 1974.

The policy approved by the board was an addition to an employee policy A&M has had with Southwestern Life for many years, not a new policy, Williams said.

Ray Smith, university director of personnel, said that A&M has had five insurance policies with Southwestern Life for some time. Goodson was appointed to the board by Governor Dolph Briscoe in January, 1973.

Smith said the policy addition was recommended originally by the A&M Systems Personnel Committee. That committee is made up of personnel representatives from all divisions of the system.

"The committee determined what insurance to offer, then the mechanics (in organizing the policy) were done in the personnel office and the board approved it," Smith said.

Williams said the policy addition will not be delayed if the board reconsiders it. The addition was slated to go into effect for the new fiscal year beginning this September.

"With or without Mr. Goodson's vote the board would have approved the policy," Williams said. The 9-member board approved the policy unanimously.

While no charges are expected to be filed, a regent can be removed for violating the state conflict of interest law. In serious cases, the state attorney general would file a petition against a regent; a district court must then find him guilty before he can be removed from office.

One hundred people ate their fill, but still there was 20 feet of hot dog left.

The record for the longest hot dog in the world was set Saturday at Thomas Park in College Station, but the crowd that gathered could not eat it all.

Four Aggies produced a 181-foot long, two-inch round hot dog, breaking the old Guinness World Record of 95 feet.

Jimmy Nichols, a senior in the A&M animal science department conceived the idea more than three months ago. He enlisted the help of Bill Marshall and Rees Harward, two graduate students in meat science at A&M. They went to John Slovacek of Snook and got permission to use his sausage-making facilities to produce the giant wiener.

The team used about 50 pounds of ground pork, beef and seasoning. A casing containing the sausage was non-edible but strong. It was a livid red color looking much like a crimson garden hose.

They solved the problem of how to keep the sausage together and cook it by inventing the "frank wheel." The wheel is a wooden barrel-like cylinder supported by two posts allowing the long wiener to be wound around. The sausage was smoke-cooked on the device until the meat reached an interior temperature of 175 degrees, signalling that it was done.

With the wiener ready, a 181 foot, two inch bun had to be prepared.

The fertile Aggie minds once again went to work. They called upon Drew Woods, Incorporated of Bryan to help them design the oven.

The team found designing an oven ten feet long and a bread pan 181 feet long would work. They only had to move the pan when sections of the bread were done.

The head bread maker, Cecelia Coones, a French major at A&M and the president of Alpha Delta Pi sorority, held rehearsals Friday night to determine that the contraption and techniques would work.

All day Saturday, starting at 7 a. m., her crew of helpers kept joining loaf after loaf until they had mixed, kneaded and baked a bun longer than anyone else ever has.

The completed loaf, sitting in its bright metallic pan, was sliced down the top middle, with the wiener laid into place and topped with mustard. The Aggies had broken the record.

The super hot dog was notarized and its dimensions are being sent to the New York office of the Guinness Book of World Records.

The estimated cost of the hot dog is \$400, not including labor costs.

Rees Harward said next year he hopes to shatter this record, by creating a hot dog over 300 feet long.



Photo by Ce Cowart

A WORLD RECORD

Four Aggies created the world's longest hot dog



photo by Douglas Winship

"Celebration!"

Aggie Players presents its big musical production for the year, "Celebration!" The play, centering around the struggle between innocent youth and jaded age, appears in the Rudder Theatre through April 18. See review, page 3.