

Slouch By Jim Earle



"It will handle any mathematical problem in seconds; but confidentially, I would recommend that you get one that works on batteries!"

More suggestions to shorten the presidential campaigns

By CLAY F. RICHARDS
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Among the proposals in the latest study to overhaul the way America elects its presidents is one that consolidates the primaries into a four-month period and allows only one primary day each month.

States would pick which of the four primary days they wanted. Then after each round, there would be a month for candidates to campaign for the next series, and for the voters to contemplate the results of the previous round and take a hard look at the candidates as they prepared to vote in the next round.

The proposal by the Duke University forum — a bipartisan panel of 10 Democrats and 10 Republicans including former presidential candidates, campaign managers and national party chairmen — is an alternative to the present system where the Iowa caucuses begin in January and the

season ends in California in June.

In addition, the panel recommends fewer primaries than the 37 held in 1980.

Not only would the primary season be shorter, less tiring and less boring, but early small states like Iowa and New Hampshire — their primariness is boosted by at times outrageous media hype — would no longer play the role of kingmaker.

The Duke panel argues that nominations would not be wrapped up early as Ronald Reagan did in 1980, or by candidates like Jimmy Carter, who was able to spend a full year in the small states, overwhelming Democratic opponents despite the fact he was virtually unknown and untested.

But there is no guarantee that under the Duke plan the best candidates would always win.

If, say New York, Texas and Oregon all held their primaries on the Tuesday in the first month and one candidate won all three, he would be the clear front runner

for carrying three such diverse states. It would make competition difficult for a candidate whose strategy had been to bypass the first round to concentrate on later series.

The Duke panel is one of several studying the elections process. Both the Republican and Democratic parties have appointed commissions to make similar studies. More than anything else, what the study shows is that while there are many problems with the current system, there is no perfect alternative, or at least none has been found yet.

And the constantly changing rules, things like television, jet air travel and computers play in campaigns will force changes in the system.

In the past good systems have produced bad candidates and bad systems have produced good candidates. And rather than making any radical changes, the parties and parties will go on tinkering here, tinkering there.

Sour notes in schools' music education classes

By PATRICIA McCORMACK
United Press International

Music is supposed to: — Soothe the savage beast, be both a universal language and a language made in heaven.

But in this era of budget retrenchments in the nation's schools and even in Washington where the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities are facing reductions, a central question about music and the schools these days is this: "What is the state of the teaching of music?"

The question was among those tackled by musicians and educators during a four-day conference on the future of the performing arts in America, a meeting sponsored by Yale University School of Music and the American Assembly Inc. of New York.

The answer, coming from many among the 53 conferees, leaders in education and performing arts, was a collection of sour notes. Murry Sidlin, a conferee and music director-conductor of orchestras on the east and west coast, said every year for quite a while now the number of music teachers in the nation's public schools has gone down by 3,500.

Teachers who die or retire are not replaced. Teachers are let go as schools trim in response to budget cuts.

"At best the teaching of music is a haphazard affair," said Sidlin, whose orchestras are the New Haven Symphony in New Haven, Conn., and the Long Beach, Calif., Symphony. He also teaches at the Aspen Music Festival in Colorado and lectures nationwide on music education and programs for the gifted.

Sidlin said, as is the case with the performing arts these days, schools also are taking their cue from the federal government.

"When music support as a part of the National Endowment for the Arts is in a state of increasing danger, corporations, private donors, foundations feel this and the reflection is also made to various school systems," he said.

The \$158 million sought by the National Endowment for the Arts is subject to cuts from 25 to 50 percent, depending on how Congress votes on the Reagan administration recommendation of cuts.

"Music and the other arts sit on death row waiting to have their sentences commuted," Sidlin said.

"Because the commutation doesn't come along we lose from the public school sys-

tems 3,500 positions every year — this was happening even before Proposition 13."

Proposition 13 was the California law that held property taxes for school at a level much below the high ones that prevailed for years. As a result schools had to operate on much less money. The idea, "proposition 13 fever," spread to many other states.

The big soft pedal on music programs is even much more intense these days, as Sidlin sees it.

Why? "Because there is no signal from Washington that the arts are integral to people's lives," he said.

During the administrations of presidents Carter, Ford, Nixon, Johnson and Kennedy we had at least a signal that the arts are a major force as vital to our senses as blood is to our veins. Under the present administration the blood has turned to water.

"Since schools are a reflection of the total values of society, the music teaching picture in the public school system is becoming more and more disastrous.

We have to turn the whole situation around and realize a civilization, a culture, a government and its people will be represented by its art and we must develop in people, especially children, an understanding of the meaning of uniqueness and individuality through discovery of their own perceptions and imagination, fantasy and wonder.

"This is only achievable when children have a direct opportunity to be touched by art.

"And that introduction must take place in the schools — the very place where it is being eliminated."

Sidlin predicted that without music and the other arts "we are destined to become lesser human beings as a society."

In its report at the end of the conference in New Haven, Conn., the assembled leaders from the performing arts world made these points about arts education:

— "The arts (theater, dance, music) should be taught in the classroom as a fundamental part of basic education beginning at the elementary level. They are another language with which to interpret ourselves to ourselves and to other cultures."

— "Schools should strive to achieve literacy of perception rather than mere arts appreciation. To understand the commitment involved as well as the creative process, the young must experience performance by actual participation and by observing professional artists."



The cry of the wild tofu on Capitol Hill

By DICK WEST
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Part of the budgetary flap over the school lunch program involved the issuance and withdrawal of federal regulations that, for nutritional purposes, classified tofu as a meat dish.

Some of the arguments on both sides were, I suspect, rooted in ignorance.

There must be millions of Americans who have never tasted tofu and thus are unable to discuss its lunch program role intelligently, much less know what type of wine to serve with it. I, I confess, am among them.

When the controversy first arose, I resolved to remedy my deficiency. So I asked my wife if we might have tofu for dinner one evening.

"It's OK with me," she said. "If you can catch one, I'll try to cook it."

I called up a gamekeeper, a rustic chap named Mellors, and asked if there were an open season on tofu.

"It's always open season on tofu," he replied.

"What's the bag limit?"

"As many as you can carry. Just make it light on yourself."

I asked Mellors whether we might be able to snare a tofu or two by setting out a

few traps.

Mellors said he was entertaining a lady in his cottage that afternoon and wouldn't have time to fool around with trapping. However, he promised to give the matter his fullest attention at the earliest possible moment.

Meanwhile, I busied myself in research. Actually, I discovered, there aren't a great many tofu recipes in the cookbooks one is likely to have in one's kitchen. I found one recipe for braised tofu and another for smoked tofu with lemon sauce, and that was about it.

After talking it over, my wife and I decided to wing it with roasted tofu smothered with lamb chops.

When I heard from Mellors a few days later, he told me he had spent several hours stalking the elusive tofu to no avail. The expensive hound he had borrowed to assist

in the tracking lost the scent just over first ridge and was of no help at all.

Mellors concluded that the chances of capturing a tofu in its natural state was actually nil. He suggested I go to a meat store and buy a frozen one.

"Be sure to get one that already has skinned," he advised. "They're the clean."

I have yet to find a provender that is tofu, skinned or unskinned.

"They're had to find this time of year," one locker plant manager told me.

However, he said he understood could order tofu under glass at some of more exotic restaurants.

Until I get an opportunity to sample in some form, my policy on the school issue is this: Don't knock it if you haven't tried it.

Warped



By Scott McCullar

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