

opinion

Bush gets a chance to earn his keep finally

by Steve Gerstel
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Vice President George Bush, after being shut out for two and a half years, has finally cast his first vote.

The great moment came last week when Bush, in his role as president of the Senate, broke a 49-49 tie and gave the administration a victory in efforts to go ahead with production of new nerve gas bombs and artillery shells.

The vote underscored once again how little the Founding Fathers found for the vice president to do, except hang around in case something befalls the chief executive of the nation.

The Constitution is explicit: "The vice president of the United States shall be president of the Senate, but shall have no vote, unless they be equally divided."

And for a long time — probably until the presidency of Dwight Eisenhower — vice presidents did little more than that.

Which led John Nance Garner, FDR's first vice president, to comment that the post was not "worth a bucket of warm spit."

Of course, Garner, then the speaker, knew all that when he accepted FDR's

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invitation to the ticket.

As another Texan, Lyndon Johnson, knew it when he became John Kennedy's vice presidential candidate in 1960.

Starting with Richard Nixon, vice presidents became much more active and Bush has carried on the latter-day tradition.

Although still very much an invisible

agent in the administration — in contrast to the White House troika or the top Cabinet members — Bush has quietly carried the message for President Reagan, here and abroad.

But this is no thanks to the Constitution. Whatever Bush does for Reagan is up to Reagan.

Although Bush spends almost all his time away from Capitol Hill, he has been summoned, sometimes urgently, to the Senate by Republican leaders on the chance of a tie vote.

Until last week, those trips proved washouts, the Senate deciding the issue without his help.

Last week's vote was a rarity but it did show how handy it is to have a vice president.

The question of nerve gas production — one of the most controversial issues in the military bills for several years — last year went against the Pentagon in the Senate.

In effect, Bush provided the vote the administration needed.

It can, however, be argued that the two missing senators, Goldwater of Arizona and Murkowski of Alaska, both pro-administration, could have been found or the vote postponed until they surfaced.

Yet, Bush should be grateful for his opportunity. His predecessor, Walter

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Mondale, voted only once in four years. Bush's vote came six years later.

According to the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Con-

gress, vice presidents have voted

times. In some instances, the Senate

say how many, the vice president

was not needed. An amendment

tie anyway and the vote was a

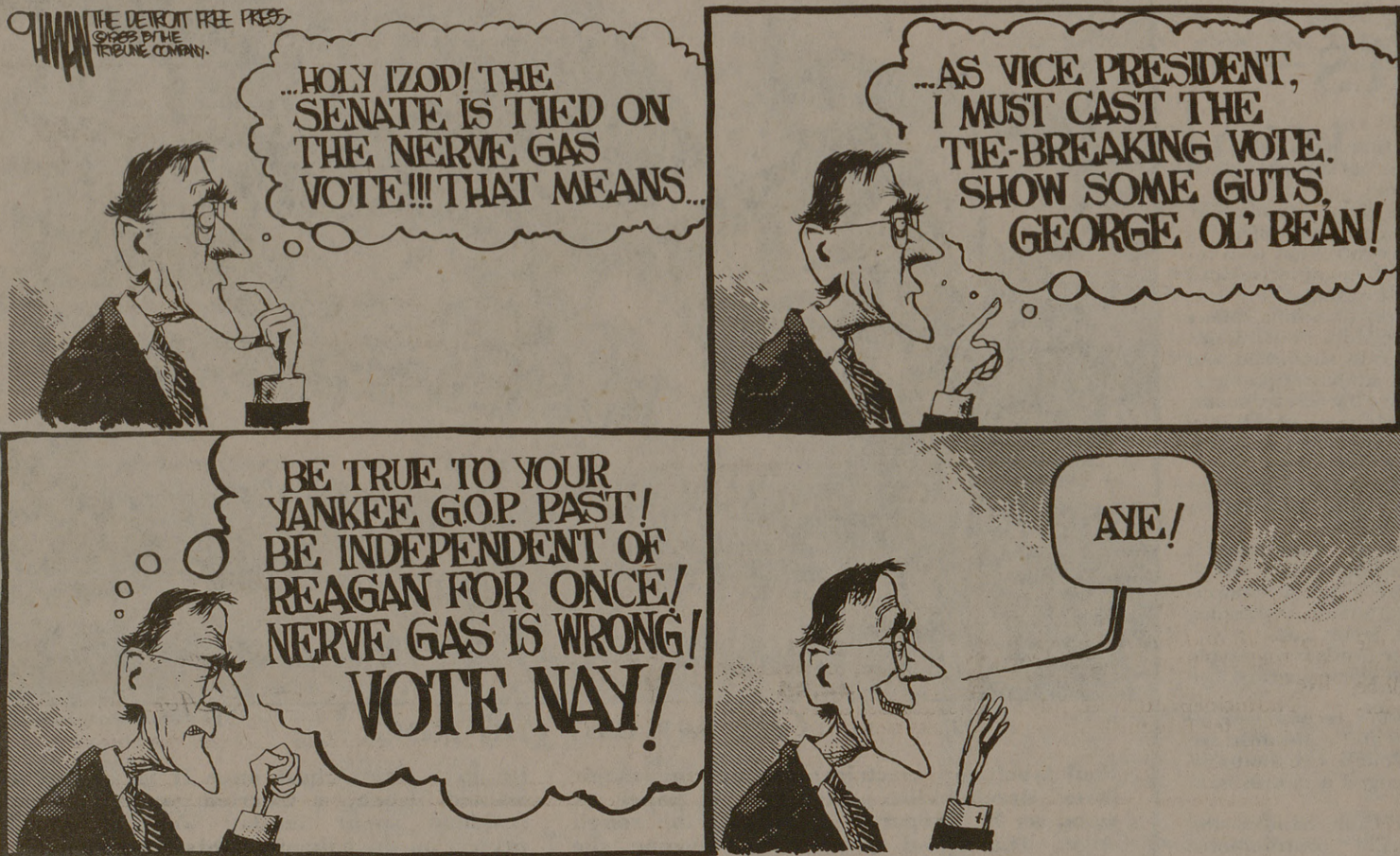
down dressing. John Adams, the first vice president, still holds the record for votes with John Calhoun, a close

28.

At the bottom are 10 vice presidents including Gerald Ford and Nelson Rockefeller, who never had a chance.

Although some of the votes were on secondary issues, vice presidents have broken ties on major controversial fields of foreign policy and domestic programs.

With the Senate closely divided between Republicans and Democrats, almost certain that Bush will be called to Capitol Hill again. Whether he is needed is still to be seen.



Hot, lazy days of July inspire 'silly season'

by Ira R. Allen
United Press International

WASHINGTON — The political "silly season," a phrase coined by some pundit long ago to describe campaign publicity gimmicks, is generally thought to start a few weeks before the first primary and to continue through Election Day.

But close observers of headline patterns know the "silly season" is not some vague election year metaphor. It arrives on schedule once a year and lasts precisely 31 days.

It is July — a month so hot and humid in Washington that statues sweat and lethargic pigeons slide right off.

No sooner do the lightning bugs and mosquitoes rise up from the capital's primordial swamp than lawmakers and top government policymakers flee to Delaware beaches or California mountaintops. Top investigative reporters loll on Martha's Vineyard.

The regular order of official business comes to a stop. It's too early for politicians to be campaigning; the voters don't start paying attention until Labor Day in an election year, and they are barely conscious of politics in off years.

In July, there are not just slow news days. It's a slow news month.

That is why for the past seven years, seemingly minor events become full-blown scandals, dominating the headlines until Congress or the president does something truly substantive.

Every recent July has seen the Washington media, usually consisting of those reporters who have to work when everyone else is on vacation, embarked on a feeding frenzy nipping at the latest juicy tidbit.

This July, for example, the only story in town — breaking as soon as Congress left on a 10-day vacation — is "debate-gate."

While potentially more substantial than other scandals, there has yet to be any solid evidence that anybody did anything illegal. There is a growing suspicion that whatever is proven, only a few lower level campaign aides will suffer any consequences.

What makes this July even juicier is the allegation that friends of the president and possibly some government officials committed bizarre sexual activities to video tape.

Senate Republican leader Howard Baker speculated that the current brouhaha boiled over just as lawmakers

went on a July Fourth vacation

that "this city has missed Congress goes crazy writing its own

Last July, the story was allegedly lawmakers engaged in homosexual with pages and may have used

In 1981, the July scandal involving of CIA covert operations

Hugel for his past deeds in a stock swindle, and calls for the CIA Director William Casey to fully disclose his financial

Casey is also involved in the controversy.

In 1980, President Carter's only embarrassing brother, Billy, required to register as a foreign

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What do you say about 'the book'?

by Art Buchwald

Things to be said when discussing Carter's black book and other crimes and misdemeanors, if you are a Republican team player.

"It's much ado about nothing."

"Everybody does it in politics."

"We didn't steal the book. Someone gave it to us."

"I never used any of the material. It was useless and boring."

"If there was any wrongdoing I hope the Justice Department gets to the bottom of it."

"In retrospect it was stupid to even have accepted the material, but at the time we thought it might be helpful."

"Their side was probably doing it to us."

"I never heard about a mole in the Carter White House until I read it in the newspaper."

"When I received the material I'm sure I gave it to X."

"Y must be mistaken. He never gave it to me."

"It's summer and the press has nothing to write about."

"It's unfair to compare the stealing of a black briefing book to Watergate. There

were no break-ins, and the president isn't trying to cover up anything."

"It's silly to think that Carter would have won even if Reagan didn't know his game plan."

"Jim Baker was stupid to admit he saw the material."

"George Will didn't do anything wrong when he helped Reagan prepare for the debate."

"In a political fight you use everything you can to beat your opponent."

"It's different to steal material than if someone hands it to you."

"I forgot who gave me the stuff. I never saw the guy again."

"It's ridiculous to say I knew anything about it."

"The whole thing is a Democratic conspiracy to make us look bad."

"There was never a Republican mole in the Carter White House."

"If there was a mole in the White House he never passed on any classified material."

"The information from the Carter National Security Council was common knowledge to everyone."

"Nobody cares about the dirty tricks except the press and the politicians."

"The president says he wants to get to the bottom of it. That shows he had nothing to do with it."

"You can't control every volunteer in a political campaign."

"In a campaign you get so many pieces of paper that you never ask where they came from."

"I don't know how the Carter papers turned up in my files. I certainly didn't put them there."

"It's strange that this story should have broken just as the 1984 elections are upon us."

Things to say if you are a Democrat: "If someone had given me purloined papers from the Reagan camp, I would have returned them immediately."

"It makes me sick to think this is how they won the election."

"Nobody learned a thing from Watergate."

"I'm not enjoying the White House discomfiture one bit. If I were the president I'd fire the whole staff."

"If it hadn't been for the mole in Jimmy's White House, Amy Carter might now be in charge of nuclear proliferation policy."

Letter: Laws necessary for equality

Editor:

In reference to Roy Robertson's letter, *The Battalion*, Thursday, July 7, "White Now Minority," I have these comments to make.

Due to individuals' preferences (attitudes) as the one Mr. Robertson entertains is why there are laws, federal agencies, etc. to enforce equal rights for all people and to protect those groups of people who have been victims of past and present forms of discrimination.

I know not, or care to know the level of Mr. Robertson's intelligence or educational background, apparently, in a sense, the level is very low as indicated by his letter, but if he would look back or take a look around today he could see why these laws and agencies exist. Mr. Robertson should take a look at the system, take a look at our community.

We as blacks welcome these agencies that are present to enforce and protect

the rights of those individuals involved, but do feel that it is sad that this must be the case. That it is sad that there are people who fail to realize that all people are created equal and because of a skin differential should not be denied.

If it had not been for these laws, I know for a fact that we (blacks) would not be allowed equal education and employment, permission to enter restaurants and theaters, to join certain clubs and organizations, or to use public facilities as our white Americans, as was the case in the past.

We'd still be entering places from the back door (if allowed to enter at all), instructed to sit at the back of the bus, and not allowed to vote in public elections. This is fact!!!

Mr. Robertson speaks, in his letter, "if he could change his racial origin and sexual gender, while retaining his identity

and 'intelligence' he would emerge black and female."

While being both is something to be proud of, Mr. Robertson speaks though to be black and female could lose her intelligence quo. Mr. Robertson demonstrated your ignorance further and apparently have not met Ms. Shirley Chisholm, Ms. Coretta King, Ms. Barbara Jordan, Ms. Ed King, or Ms. Harriett Tubman, name a few.

Mr. Robertson come forth, love to meet you and talk with you, ask you this question, knowing you probably could care less, but would you think blacks would be had in for the minority advancement? Surely, we would not be leaving the way to the bank . . .

The fight for equality goes on. Joyce Th... Sr. Secretary, TAMU

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