

Sleaze factor part of political process

Sleaze factor — a term used by Democrats denoting unethical behavior by the Reagan administration.

Democrats coined the phrase to attack officials in the Reagan administration for alleged unethical behavior. The president's administration provided ample material for the Democrats: the theft of the Carter briefing books before the Carter-Reagan debate, the appointment of Edwin Meese as attorney general and mismanagement of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Meese still hasn't been OK'd for the attorney general spot and probably never will be, because of irregularities found in personal loans Meese received. Anne Gorsuch Burford, who resigned as director of the EPA in 1983, now is the chairwoman of the National Advisory Committee on Oceans and Atmosphere.

Walter Mondale had planned to use this "sleaze factor" as one of the cornerstones of his campaign against Reagan.

But Mondale has discovered the sleaze factor knows no political party boundaries. He will have to think twice before using that argument after his selection of Bert Lance as his general campaign manager.

Lance resigned under fire as Jimmy Carter's budget director in September 1977 amid allegations that he engaged in questionable banking practices in Georgia. He later was indicted on a series of charges — including bank fraud — but won acquittal on nine counts and the rest were thrown out.

But Lance has been a key force behind the scenes this year to get Jesse Jackson to resolve his differences with Mondale and join in the party's efforts to defeat Reagan in November.

Obviously, party unity carries greater weight than whether a person's behavior is ethical.

Sleaze factor — 1) a term denoting questionable ethics in any political administration; 2) an inescapable aspect of politics.

— The Battalion Editorial Board



Going to San Francisco in a wooden crate

By ART BUCHWALD

Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

I was getting off the airplane at the San Francisco airport when I saw a large wooden crate standing on the tarmac. Several customs officials were staring at it.

"What's going on?" I asked the chief customs inspector.

"We're not sure. We think we can hear a human voice from within."

"It's addressed to the Democratic National Convention, Moscone Hall," I said. "It's probably a stack of 'Fritz for Pres' placards or 'We Want Teddy' balloons," I told the man.

"We can't take any chances. It could be something bigger than that. It could be Gary Hart."

"Why would Gary Hart arrive in a crate?"

"He doesn't have much chance for the nomination and he might be trying to do something dramatic to turn the convention around."

"Well, if Gary Hart wants to arrive in a crate, what concern is it of yours?"

"It might not be Gary Hart. It could be Louis Farrakhan or Phyllis Schlafly. We don't like people arriving in San Francisco in wooden boxes."

"What are those German shepherd dogs doing?"

"They're trained to sniff out suspicious crates addressed to the Democratic convention, just to make sure if they're accredited or not."

"It couldn't be Mrs. Ferraro, could it?"

"No, we've eliminated her, now that Mondale has announced she would be his running mate. There would be no sense in her arriving by box since there would be no element of surprise."

"What made you people pick that particular box?"

"For one thing it wasn't marked 'FRAGILE' or 'THIS SIDE UP,' and it wasn't insured. Then when two people

from the Democratic National Committee showed up in a van to claim the crate, they didn't argue when we refused to turn it over, and just drove away."

"Maybe it's Jesse Jackson?" I suggested.

"We've ruled him out. He'd never arrive by crate without tipping off the media."

"Maybe it's just one of the speakers scheduled to address the convention."

"Yes, but why would a speaker arrive in a crate?"

"Perhaps he didn't want to come in the first place, and that was the only way to get him out here."

Two-term presidents often flops

By JIM ANDERSON

Columnist for United Press International

WASHINGTON — An underlying theme of President Reagan's re-election campaign is expected to be that his second term — whatever the faults and failings of the first four years — will be better than the first term.

But one authoritative look at history says that "twice-elected Presidents accomplish less, never more, during their second terms" and second-term presidencies are almost always flops.

What makes the survey of second-term presidencies interesting, and possibly embarrassing, is that it was done by the scholar and political scientist who is now President Reagan's director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Kenneth Adelman.

Adelman surveyed the 10 American presidents who served second terms, starting with George Washington and ending with Richard Nixon.

The overwhelming historical evidence was "remarkably consistent," with only Franklin Roosevelt and Dwight Eisenhower breaking the general pattern of twice-elected presidents doing worse in their second terms.

One example is Thomas Jefferson, who negotiated the Louisiana Purchase in his first term, but infuriated public opinion with his Embargo Act of 1807 and was so unpopular during his second term that he left Washington several weeks before his successor was inaugurated.

Adelman came up with several possible reasons why second-termers mostly do worse the second time around. Some of the reasons sound like the sort of political ammunition that the Democrats have been seeking to bombard Ronald Reagan in the approaching election campaign:

"It may be that economic, political or moral errors committed during their first terms come back to haunt them. Or it may be due to lame-duckism (mandatory since Harry Truman but customary since Washington), or to 'tired blood' (second-term infirmities are frequent), or to tired brains (new ideas get harder to come by)."

Warnings for movies, rock concerts

By DICK WEST

Columnist for United Press International

WASHINGTON — The film industry has expanded its "G," "PG," "R" and "X" rating system to include a fifth category — "PG-13," which means parental guidance is recommended for pre-teenagers.

I commend the rating board for its sagacity in recognizing that certain movies depicting nudity, profanity, violence and "adult situations" should not be seen by children of tender years until their parents have had an opportunity to check out the contents.

No parent, I'm sure, would be so presumptuous as to keep the kids away from shows they themselves have not seen. I am wondering, though, if Hol-

lywood went far enough in adding just one new rating to its moral code.

What may be needed equally urgently is some sort of rating like TG-MA. This means that parents who have reached middle age should seek guidance from their teenage children before seeing certain films.

All so-called "horror" movies automatically would be rated TG-MA, for example, as would any films about summer camps, high school gymnasiums or college fraternities.

The primary purpose of the new rating would be to protect the innocence of middle age parents, so that they are not aware of what goes on in summer camps, high school gyms and frat houses.

As a rule of thumb, any film would

carry a TG-MA rating if teenagers in the audience would be inclined to call it "really keen."

"But what's it about?" a guidance-seeking parent might ask.

"Well, it's mostly about a college fraternity bachelor party where the nude moonlight swimmers from a nearby girls' summer camp are hacked up with chain saws obtained in a high school gym," the teenage movie critic reports. "It's really keen."

For that matter, while we are in the rating business, why stop with movies?

There are a lot of rock concerts that parents probably wouldn't attend if the touring musicians and singers were rated TG-MA.

Non-movie ratings might have to be cleared by the Supreme Court to make

"We won't know until the order to open the box arrives."

"Is there any law about shipping someone to the Democratic convention in a crate?"

"Not if he was provided enough food and water. Otherwise ASPCA will bring charges."

Someone handed the Chief a hammer and he went toward the order and he went toward the order with a hammer and crowbar. He opened a few boards and talked to the person inside. Finally he nodded his head and hammered back the boards.

"Well," I said, "who was it?"

"You're not going to believe it, but it was Jimmy Carter."

A marriage made in heaven

By ARNOLD SAWISLAK

Columnist for United Press International

SAN FRANCISCO — The critics who say the trouble with the Democratic Party is that it suffers from too much democracy probably might also conclude that the Democrats and San Francisco deserve each other.

There are some easy parallels to draw between the political party and the city.

Both have been trying for years to strike a balance between open participation and political efficiency. Critics say both have leaned so far toward the democracy side of the equation that they have jeopardized or even destroyed their ability to perform their principal functions.

The knock on the Democrats is that they have ceded too much institutional power to what are called special interest groups — feminists, unions, blacks, Hispanics, Jews, the elderly, the handicapped and more. There is no doubt that Walter Mondale's decision to seek the presidency with a female running mate will be regarded as more of the same.

The criticism of San Francisco is similar, usually focusing on the political power held by the sizable homosex-

It has been said the Democrats have been losing elections because they have lost touch with plain vanilla Americans, the people who see themselves as ordinary citizens just trying to earn a living, raise families and live in peace.

ual community in the city and the cheerful tolerance afforded all manner of people and groups who swim outside the perceived American mainstream.

An example was seen in the city last week when a group of people costumed as animals and birds declared they would lobby the Democrats on behalf of all non-human species. They were greeted with tolerant smiles.

It has been said the Democrats have been losing elections because they have lost touch with plain vanilla Americans, the people who see themselves as ordinary citizens just trying to earn a living, raise families and live in peace.

And it has been said that San Francisco cannot be regarded as one of the

great commercial and cultural centers of the nation and the world because it too has developed a taste for exotic flavors to the exclusion of the accepted norm.

Of course, neither the Democrats nor San Francisco agrees with the last two conclusions.

The city will admit to some faults, such as being situated on a major geological rift that from time to time will shake up its citizens and its real estate. But in general, San Franciscans appear to believe they live in the best of all possible cities, a place where everyone has freedom of expression and no one is afraid to exercise it.

The party believes itself to be the vehicle of political and social justice for all Americans, a representation of the best aspirations for the country and the world. It also will concede error, especially after losing elections, but that usually takes the form of self-criticism centered on tactics rather than principles.

The smart money says the Democrats are not likely to nominate a winning ticket this week in San Francisco. The Democrats have a different opinion, and all things considered, there may not be a better place than San Francisco for them to express it.

The Battalion
USPS 045 360

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