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Buying the vote

by Herb Cawthorne

In 1957, running for the Virginia House of Burgesses, George Washington dispensed the following to 391 voters, all men of course: 28 gallons of rum, 50 gallons of rum punch, 34 gallons of wine, 46 gallons of beer, and 2 gallons of cider. A quart and a half of booze per voter!

Votes have always been purchased, and it's not different today. But the nature of the "purchase" and the peculiar campaign spending laws create a situation much worse than loosening the folks up with a little booze before the speech.

In 1974, Congress tried to change campaign laws. First, they set a maximum contribution from an individual at \$1,000 for the primary and the general election—\$2,000 total. Second, the new election law created Political Action Committees (PACs), which can give \$5,000 in the primary and \$5,000 in the general election. Two other provisions in the 1974 law were struck down by the Supreme Court. The Court ruled that the \$70,000 ceiling on House races was unconstitutional. In addition, the Court said it was against the First Amendment to limit to

\$25,000 the amount an individual or his family can give to his own campaign.

This latter decision is a threat to even the possibility of expanding participatory democracy. If one is rich enough, he doesn't have to worry about drumming up thousands of \$1,000 contributions, or begging the PACs for \$5,000 contributions. He can simply write his own check. In the 1980 Congressional campaign, Texas Democrat William Pattman "loaned" himself \$496,593.15.

The new campaign laws, which were supposed to stop the "under-the-table-dealings" of Watergate, have created a situation that favors those with big personal fortunes. The rich can "loan" money to themselves. But the middle class candidate—who may be the best person with a solid reputation—must work like hell to raise up to \$600,000 in small contributions. They can't write a check to themselves. That doesn't sound like representative democracy to me. More and more only one class of people have the financial resources to be represented—the wealthy class.

When the very wealthy "loan"

their campaigns big sums of money, they have a chance to gain it all back. You see, Political Action Committees can give contributions retroactively! A candidate loans himself the money to win an election. After he wins, a labor, business or some other special interest PAC can give up to \$10,000 in retroactive contributions to a campaign run years before. This is nothing more than a breeding ground for corruption.

Robert Doie, the Republican Senator from Kansas, said, "When these PACs give money they expect something in return other than good government." In other words, they expect the right vote on the right issue. What we have is a legal form of bribery. Congressmen with old campaign debts exchange votes on key issues for contributions to campaigns run long ago. And the money goes straight into their own pockets—in the case of those who pay off the loan they gave to themselves!

The cost of campaigning is obscene. But the new election laws, after the Supreme Court threw out provisions that would have brought equity, are even more destructive. An election spending law was a bad-

ly needed reform. The Supreme Court chopped up the reform, and now we have money ruling national politics as openly and flagrantly as ever before. There are 3,149 Political Action Committees. To Congressional candidates alone, they gave \$80 million in this last election. As Thomas Downey, a democrat from New York, said, "You can't buy a Congressman for \$5,000. But you can buy his vote. It's done on a regular basis."

There will be little movement toward progressive government, toward including those who have been systematically left out of the process at the national level, unless election laws are changed. If they are not, then progressive people, blacks, third parties, and other racial ethnic groups will have to work more closely together, devise unique means to gain recognition, organizing around carefully developed issues and a smaller number of candidates. But most importantly, in groups that cross cultural and ideological lines, held together by common issues, we will have to put forth the one thing which neutralizes money—leg work, leg work, and more leg work!

Bits and Pieces

by Ruth Spencer

"If we teach a child to read, yet develop not the taste for reading, all of our teaching is for naught. We shall have produced a nation of illiterate literates..."

—Charlotte Huck

The nationwide survey of American school children made in 1980 by the National Assessment of Educational Progress unearthed some thought-provoking information. The good news is our students can read better now than those in the past. The bad news is that the majority do not enjoy reading. The older the students, the less they liked reading. Half the surveyed 17-year-olds chose reading as their least favorite leisure-time activity. These poor attitudes toward reading weren't necessarily linked to poor reading ability. Many skilled readers don't seem to value reading.

What can parents do to inspire enthusiasm for reading? Help your child discover the real reasons for reading—its pleasures. Reading aloud to children is one way to open them up to all the magic and power of good books.

General Roscoe Robinson, Jr. was appointed the first black four-star general in U.S. Army history. As one of only ten four-star generals in the Army, General Robinson is also the U.S. representative to the NATO Military Committee.

With a B.S. in military engineering and a masters in international



affairs, Robinson's personal philosophy is a simple one: "I do the best job I can." He thinks of himself as a good soldier who has been "doing my job." "The promotion and the NATO assignments are natural advancements and deserved recognitions that will serve to encourage young blacks in the military for years to come," he said.

Americans are living longer than ever, according to the National Institute for Health Statistics in Washington, D.C.

In 1979, the last year for which figures are available, the average American lived 73.7 years, up four-tenths of a year from 1978.

White women have the longest life expectancy of all at 78.2 years, followed by black women at 72.7. White men can expect to live 70.6 years, and black men 64 years.



Eighty percent of the children who enter school today will grow up to work in careers that have not yet been invented. Are your children learning how to observe, organize, discover, plan, solve problems and manage time or are they still memorizing the average rainfall in Terre Haute? Think about it. The child who is taught to reason and think today may be the man in charge tomorrow.

Joseph Davidson has been named Managing Editor of *The National Leader*, the weekly national newspaper linking the black community nationwide. Davidson, who holds a B.A. from Oakland U. at Rochester, Mich. and a Masters from U. of Mich., has received several journalism awards and an invitation to serve on the Pulitzer Prize Board in 1983.

Jackie Robinson is the first baseball player of any color in the 206-year history of the United States to appear on the postage stamp. He joins thirteen other distinguished black Americans—Booker T. Washington, George Washington Carver, Benjamin Barneker, Dr. Ralph J. Bunche, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Whitney M. Young, Jr., Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglas, Peter Salem, W.C. Handy, Henry Tanner, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Dr. Charles Drew.

For many years Amnesty International has lobbied for the abolition of the death penalty. But the organization reported from London there was a sharp increase last year in the number of prisoners executed around the world. Amnesty International reported 924 persons on death row in this country; but in August, Associated Press reported that there were 1019 people on death row in the U.S.

Six new members have joined the Senior Adult District Advisory Committee: *The Reverend Ira Mumford, Mrs. Sara Mayfield, Mrs. Irene Sage, Mrs. Carrie Cannon, Mrs. Precious Wasson, and Ms. Karen Lee Rice.*

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Ellsberg, Berrigan visit here

Anti-war activists Daniel Ellsberg and Daniel Berrigan will talk about ending the nuclear arms race on Sunday, November 21, at the First Congregational Church, 1126 S.W. Park, at 12:30 p.m. Admission is free.

Daniel Ellsberg and Father Daniel Berrigan, S.J., have practiced civil

disobedience as a means of resisting the Vietnam War and the nuclear arms race. In 1971 Daniel Ellsberg released top secret documents about the Vietnam War, known as the Pentagon Papers. Charges against him were later dropped when it was learned that his psychiatrist's office had been broken into by Watergate

burglars Liddy and Hunt. In November of 1978 Ellsberg was convicted of trespass for blocking trains bound for the Rocky Flats nuclear arms plant near Denver, Colorado.

Daniel Berrigan, along with his brother Philip Berrigan, S.J. was one of the CATonsville Nine, who, in 1970-71, served 18 months in Danbury Prison for burning draft files with homemade napalm. In 1981, as a member of the Plowshares Eight, he was convicted of burglary, criminal mischief and criminal conspiracy for breaking into a General Electric plant near Norristown, Pennsylvania, and trying to beat two nuclear nose cones into plowshares with hammers. Daniel Berrigan is an award-winning poet and author of more than a dozen books, including *The Dark Night of Resistance* and the play *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine*.

For more information contact Johnny Stallings at 233-1887.

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Heard about the Cervical Cap?

The Cervical Cap is used as a barrier method of birth control. It is a thimble shaped cap made out of rubber which fits tightly over the neck of the cervix, preventing sperm from entering the uterus. The cap was used in this country years ago, but has not gained popularity until recently. It has been used for years successfully in Western Europe. At this time the cervical cap is not approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Studies are being done to determine its current effectiveness and safety.



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The first American war submarine was constructed in 1776. It was called the "turtle" and carried a crew of one.

Since rice grows in great abundance, guests at weddings long ago threw great handfuls at the bride and groom to make certain they would have many children and much food.

The record for most goals scored in a soccer career is held by the Brazilian soccer star, Pele. He scored 1,281!

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