"A WORM’S EYE VIEW OF THE POLITICAL FOREST"

It is to be hoped that most of the readers of this paper are not as ignorant about the August 3rd elections as this editor. After spending the day at the library reading clippings and juggling maps, if the ignorance has decrease, confusion rose in its place. Did you know that every single major (all minor!) local and state offices have entirely different districts? The Shelby County legislative body has a set of districts, then there is another set for the U.S. Representatives and another for the State Representatives and still another for the State Senate. All of which are quite necessary, I’m sure, but boggling just the same when you consider that our VECCA neighborhood belongs in seven different political districts. (See map, please).

At the suggestion of IRV SACHRITZ, this issue is devoted almost exclusively to the election. The original idea was to do a sort of record of experience of each of the candidates from our “district”. Since there were exactly 32 candidates running for these various offices and the E/NEWS only has four pages, I decided to concentrate on those that are more closely involved with neighborhood issues. Therefore, you will find only the State Legislature and the Shelby County/Commission candidates discussed. Much of the material is lifted from the Commercial Appeal series they have run on the editorial page. Still, I though it was useful to put their observations all together in one place. Also whoever wrote the “job descriptions” that preaced their recommendations writes a lot better than I do. So with that excuse, and knowing the source for what bias you find, read on.

COMMISSION CHOICES

THIRTY-FIVE CANDIDATES are seeking a seat on the Shelby County Commission, the name given the County Court under the Tennessee Constitutional’s new local-government article. The amendment approved by the voters March 7 patterned county government structures across the state after Shelby, so the commissioner’s responsibilities will be virtually the same as those given the present squires.

The principal duty of those on a county legislative body is to control the purse strings. Theirs is the final say as to how much revenue will be spent and for what — and what the tax rate will be. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that those running for the commission talk about many of the same issue. All agree that taxes must be kept down and services kept up. All look to possible consolidation of many city and county services, if not all-out consolidation of local government, as a way to make tax dollars go farther in these inflationary times. All stress the importance of quality public education to fit this community for a prosperous future. And all see the need to attract business and industry and the new jobs they create, not only to expand the tax base but also to insure greater opportunity for every person who lives here.

The catalyst to reach these goals is leadership, the sort of leadership that serves community and constituent needs by attentions to detail as well as to the big picture. We have measured the candidates for County Commission against their potential to lead and to serve, and have found reason to hope along with some disappointment.

DISTRICT 1, POSITION 1 — As a member of the County
Squire Pete Sisson has been willing to ask hard questions. He loudly on the issue of county pensions and on Mayor Roy's appointment of former Asst. Chief Deputy Sheriff Dan Conn to a job at the Shelby County Penal Farm. But Sisson's service has been otherwise undistinguished, primarily because he reacts rather than leads. An opponent, D. Jack Smith, a former state representative, did distinguish himself in the legislature and, during this past legislative session, as a legislative attorney and the Memphis and Shelby County liaison to Nashville. He is familiar with the problems facing local government, and looks toward solutions that are progressive as well as prudent.

DISTRICT 1, POSITION 1 — We see some merit in his opponents' charge that Squire Walter L. Bailey Jr. hasn't spent enough time with County Court business. Nevertheless, Bailey seems the best man to bring about progress for constituents and for the county.

I will interrupt my kibbitz CA material here to put in a personal note. Dave Ellion, one of the other three candidates for this post, impresses me. This is one candidate I have met personally (for about 20 minutes) and liked. We had a mutual problem: he wanted to get an ad in the paper but though the paper needed the note. Dave Ellion, one of the other three candidates for this post, is a businessman with political ambitions, but he is not so ambitious himself to put an ad in the paper but though the paper needed the note. Dave Ellion gets his word to the people. While he favors holding down taxes — especially for the elderly, she also is one of few contenders with the courage not to come out for a tax-rate reduction before results are in on the county wide property reappraisal. Her opposition is nominal. She should be re-elected.

VOTER INTEREST in the primary races of state legislative candidates, from Memphis and Shelby County should be much higher this year than it was in 1976.

The issues are more dramatic — especially kthe issue of state spending. A number of younger candidates have come to the fore with energetic, person-to-person campaigns.

One of the dismaying results in past legislative elections has been that the voters, with limited choices, have put into office some candidates with intensely parochial views who failed to realize that they had a responsibility to the whole community as well as to their constituents. The local delegation has flirted away many opportunities to help all the county.

Where there are choices in this year's races, we have tried to identify candidates who would help the delegation overcome this historic problem.

In five of the contested House races, the primary votes will determine who will be elected because all opposing candidates are from the same party. Our recommendations for those races are:

HOUSE DISTRICT 98 — Democratic challenger Clarence Taylor is a promising candidate with a sound background for public office. But the incumbent, Rep. Harper Brewer, has been an effective legislator and has earned the respect both of his colleagues in Nashville and of local officials. During the Primary session, he was elected speaker pro tempore. While Brewer is clearly the best candidate in this particular race, it's to be hoped that Taylor will continue to be active in politics.

HOUSE DISTRICT 89 — Rep. Pam Gaia has been a refreshing addition to the Shelby County delegation in her two terms in the legislature. Her work for senior citizens, in particular, has won her well-deserved praise. Clayton Elam, her Democratic opponent, has run often and for different offices, and his candidacy has worn thin. On the Republican side, Aaron F. Tatum impresses us as having considerable potential for public office. He seems to be sincerely concerned about helping individual members of the district, and at the same time he takes a broad, informed view of the overall needs of state government.

O.K., now you know everything I know about all these people and the offices they seek. One more personal note — Pam Gaia gets my vote because so many people I like, like her. How's that for political accunm? As to the maps, you find that only those running for our particular districts are shown. There are dozens and dozens more, plus those offices that everyone votes on. Do go by and
get the 1978 Voter's Guide at the library or better yet, study the sample ballot that usually appears in the paper. Panic in the voting booth is an old friend of mine. I will never know who will have gotten my vote Carter or Ford, the last election. I got inside, looked at all those knobs and forgot to vote for a presidential candidate. I turned all the others but missed those! So don’t muffy inalienable right — STUDY THAT BALLOT.

Streets north of Vollintine lie in Shelby County District 2, State Representative District 89, State Senate District 28.

Streets south of Vollintine lie in Shelby County District 1, State Representative District 98, State Senate District 30.

The whole VECAA area is in U.S. Representative District 8.
"MOTHER’S DAY OUT"

The “Mother’s Day out” program at Evergreen Church is now open for mothers who’d like to leave their young children in a safe, loving environment while they go out and spend time with friends, play tennis, or whatever.

The program services are available to the public Monday through Saturday, except holidays. Mothers can bring their children to the program and then pick them up at 2:30 p.m.

Infants and children from 6 months up to five years of age are eligible for the program. Average attendance is now 35 children, but it is expected to grow to 55 during the summer when some kindergartens will be closed.

The cost is $3.50 per day, or $2.50 for a half day. For siblings, the full day fee drops to $2.50 per child. The Church provides a mid-morning snack and drink, and children bring their own lunches.

Directing the program is Mrs. Linda Harless, who herself has two boys enrolled. Possessing a master’s degree in elementary education with emphasis on early childhood, Mrs. Harless has been a kindergarten teacher and has organized a kindergarten in the Memphis Public School System.

Her goal is to provide not only loving, Christian care, but also a happy, stimulating learning experience for each child. To accomplish this, five other instructors help her with such planned activities as art, music, storytelling, finger plays, games and gym play. As a result, the program offers much more than just a babysitting service.

Evergreen Church is located at 613 University Street, at the corner of University and Tutwiler Avenue, across the street from Southwestern College. The “Mother’s Day Out” program is located in well-equipped, air-conditioned classrooms in the educational building west of the sanctuary.

For more information, call Mrs. Harless, the director, at 754-9024, or the Church office at 274-3740. Your call will be welcome.

Evergreen’s program is non-profit and has been organized by the Church as an effort to better serve the Evergreen community.

Like To Help People?

For the past nine years many adult volunteers and college students in the Memphis Community have had rewarding experiences working one-to-one with seniors in Carver, Melrose and NORTHSIDE HIGH SCHOOLS. Volunteers supplement the work of the school Guidance Counselors in post high school planning with the senior students. Interest and dependability are the qualifications for volunteer participation...training in specifics and continuing support are provided by Memphis Volunteer Placement. Each year large numbers of students apply for the service. WE NEED YOU. Please call Dot Bailery, Volunteer Coordinator, 774-7504 for information.

Dave Elion will work for an equitable county property tax system for City of Memphis property owners.

Dave Elion is for a strong city educational system.

Dave Elion was a Senior Citizens Employment Service to be set up by County Government.

Dave Elion will vote against “politician” budgets.