

Look at it the Wright Way



"Everybody's guilty, I'm talking 'bout you and me."

Those words from Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee's blues tune, "Big Wind," echo in my mind every-time I think about the Iranian hostage crisis. You can draw your own conclusions about your guilt, but mine started in the spring of 1973.

In fact, I can pinpoint the exact instant: when I dropped the leaflet an Iranian student had handed to me into the trash can in front of the Kansas Union, giving the matter no further consideration. I can think of several excuses why the leaflet's tale of false imprisonment, torture and summary executions failed to penetrate my conscience: my struggle to survive Spanish II, my disintegrating marriage and my running battle with the Veterans Administration, for examples.

But the underlying reason was I believed the people in Washington whose job it was to keep an eye on such things to be basically decent, honorable people who would be screaming bloody murder if anything like that were really going on in Iran. By my inaction, I violated the first rule of responsible citizenship: Question Authority.

When the U.S. embassy in Tehran was violated and the hostages taken, we were uproariously outraged--and justifiably so. But if Americans had shown one-tenth that outrage over the treatment tens of thousands of Iranian citizens were

LETTERS

Just in case you missed it the first time around, reprinted below is a letter to the editor of the Journal-World which ran on Monday, March 30. It appears herein with the permission of the author, and corrected slightly at his suggestion, with typos removed.

Editor, Journal-World:

Ex-candidate Amyx is to be commended for sounding the alarm, and for so gallantly renouncing his own political aspirations for the salvation of our society.

The stark reality is that the common people might actually win. Pity the poor box-type "housing" contractors. And our own home-grown architectural "firms."

To the polls, all Right-minded citizens!! And help beat back this latest assault by the forces of common sense.

George M. Kaull
105 N. Eighth

To the voters of Lawrence,

As an observer of Lawrence city politics, I agree with Commissioner Barkley Clark that there is a disturbing trend in the current city election campaigns. However, I disagree with Mr. Clark as to the reasons behind this development.

I attribute this trend to recent actions by a City Commission that Clark informally leads. By ignoring general citizen participation and by catering to the financial needs of elite interest groups, Professor Clark has shown a sophisticated disdain for the general public interests.

Now, Barkley Clark is trying to build a straw man to knock down by claiming the neighborhood associations are the bogey men who are polarizing the city. Clark knows that neighborhood associations are prohibited from any partisan activity in a political election.

As a candidate in 1977, Clark's slogan was "I have no ax to grind." His dropping that policy for this campaign shows there is, indeed, a disturbing trend in city politics.

Steven D. Treaster
1029 Delaware

subjected to by minions of the Shah, the hostages might never have been taken and our political and economic ties with Iran might still be intact.

The Shah and his heirs might or might not have remained in power. In either case, could they have been any worse off than they are now?

There is no way to justify the militants' takeover of our embassy and the subsequent imprisonment of our diplomatic personnel; but neither is there any way to justify the use of American tax dollars to train and equip the Shah's secret police and military, whose primary function was to suppress those political and civil rights we hold so dear. But it was all necessary, the State Department says, to maintain political stability in Iran and preserve the flow of oil into our energy-greedy society.

Oh, really? Well, how politically stable is Iran today? And how much oil is Iran sending our way now? And answer me this, all of you: For how many barrels of oil would we have allowed the 53 American hostages to remain in Iran to face trial and imprisonment?

The principles underpinning our democracy are good ones. For proof, just count the number of people trying to make their way into the USA, and contrast that to the number of Americans seeking refuge behind the Iron Curtain. (There are a few headed the other direction, but not too many we're sorry to see go.)

The core of these principles is to be found in our Declaration of Independence, which holds that all men are created equal, endowed with unalienable rights and, most important, that the main purpose for the institution of government is to secure those rights. These are worthwhile principles, and every time we act contrary to them we run into trouble, as individuals and as a nation.

"...all men are created equal..."

A simple enough phrase; yet, in the 200 years since it was penned, the United States of America has suffered a bloody Civil War, martyred her most courageous political leaders and fought bitter battles in her classrooms and courts to determine the degree of that equality and the scope of its application. To this point, we have determined that equality to be complete: that each American has the same right to access to the true riches of life, regardless of sex, age, race, religion or degree of education.

Getting the Most

From Your Vote

Several attempts have been made to explain the principle of selective voting, or why a voter might want to vote for fewer than the maximum number allowed in a multiple election. Most have failed because they tried to teach the principle directly.

Once, long ago, a person suspected of being a philosopher said, "Live by principle, teach by example." So, let's look at a "for example" ballot, listing the six finalists for the three vacant city commission chairs by order of their finish in the primary. Here's how the selective voting principle might be applied.

First, the ballot instructions say you can mark up to three boxes, and you can. If you see three people you like, each of whom would do things the way you like to see them done, then you should quickly mark those three boxes and go grab a cup of coffee before you go back to work. Let the chips fall where they may.

Let's say that, after studying the record and the qualifications of the candidates, you decide that Nancy Shontz is the one candidate who would best represent you on the city commission, so you fill in her box. With that decision tucked under your belt, you look for someone else who you might like to see win a seat.

The next four picks don't impress you, but at the bottom of the ballot you see Mike Amyx, that clean-cut young man you heard at the Oread Neighborhood Association forum before the primary. You haven't heard much from him late-

ly, but you liked the way he combs his hair so you think you might like to vote for him. But is there any reason you shouldn't?

Well, if there were any possibility that Nancy Shontz, your first choice, would be bumped out of a seat by Mr. Amyx, then you should not mark a second box. However, the results of the primary election indicate that it is quite unlikely anyone will finish ahead of Shontz. In fact, you know Mike would be surprised to finish in the money; so it's safe to mark two boxes.

But suppose you don't agree with the majority of the voters in the primary, and decide that Nancy isn't for you. In the second and third spots on the ballot, you see the name of two men who are known attorneys. Normally, you might not vote for either; but it's apparent that at least one of them is going to win a seat, so you decide to vote for both and get two opinions for the price of one.

What about marking a third choice now? Nope. Just because you didn't vote for her doesn't make it any less likely that Nancy Shontz will finish on top. So any seat your third pick might win would be at the expense of Tom Gleason or Barkley Clark, your two preferred candidates.

Rumors of alliances between candidates persist; but if you follow the principle of selective voting, that shouldn't bother you at all. Let's say that you vote for Schumm and Hambleton (just to mention all six candidates). It shouldn't matter to you one iota if collusion between them and their supporters is going on. If your special interests would be served by either of them, you should welcome any plot that puts both of them on the commission.

Selective voting isn't a gimmick or a ploy or anything unusual at all. It's a tool every voter can use to insure that his true intent is reflected accurately by his ballot.

And that's the way it's done, Junior.

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