

# Having two sides crucial in an election-year debate

"What d'ya say now, Zweifel?" the voice on the phone said last Monday morning.

The call, the first of many I received during the week, was in reference to my column last Sunday that said, among other things: "We've joked in our newsroom over the years that the devil himself could run against (Bob) Kastenmeier in Wisconsin's 2nd District and The State Journal would still find an excuse to oppose the veteran congressman."

Come Monday morning The State Journal made a liar of me.

For the first time in 32 years and 17 elections the newspaper's bosses decided to abandon the Republican candidate for Congress and urge the re-election of the Democrat, Kastenmeier. Ann Haney's supporters must be devastated. You can say what you want about Ann, but she sure isn't the devil.

I've been on the offensive with all those callers, though.

"What do you mean, what am I going to say?" I've retaliated. "That's easy. It took a Capital Times column on Sunday to finally convince them of the error of their ways."

While the two newspapers have been able to agree on Kastenmeier this year, we continue to have a number of major disagreements.

Foremost, of course, is the race for president. We remain firmly convinced that Michael Dukakis will make an immensely better president than George Bush. The State Journal's choice, Bush, in fact, scares us.

Aside from the deep philosophical differences we have with the vice president on the issues, there's a side to this former director of the CIA that is more than just bothersome. His role in the guns-for-hostages scandal and the Panama-Noriega drug fiasco are being kept carefully under wraps until the balloting is history. It's not all that unlike what Richard Nixon was able to do with Watergate during the 1972 campaign.

The extent of Bush's involvement will become known in early 1989 when the Oliver North contingent is finally brought to trial. The revelations that come from that trial will become major distractions during the first part of a Bush presidency, distracting Zweifel is editor of the Capital Times.



DAVE ZWEIFEL

tions that will hinder his effectiveness and place a cloud over his credibility at the very beginning.

There's also the story making the rounds about Bush's role during the 1980 election campaign in convincing Iran's Ayatollah not to release the American hostages until the very end so Jimmy Carter couldn't take credit. The story has several holes at this point, but it does fit a pattern that wouldn't be out of place in the way George Bush has operated through the years.

It is that pattern that concerns us. Profile after profile of Bush has documented his affinity for covert actions, his desire to keep things secret. The way he has run his campaign — insulating himself and his staff from regular probing questions — is yet one more sign of how a Bush presidency may well be rife with attempts to keep the public's business out of the public view. That is a danger to democracy.

The Capital Times has also endorsed Herb Kohl for the U.S. Senate while The State Journal has chosen the GOP's Susan Engeleiter. We've been impressed with some of Engeleiter's stands on the issues, but we're convinced Kohl will make a better U.S. senator. He may not be a fireball, but neither was William Proxmire.

Kohl's insistence that there are savings to be made in the defense budget, that the wealthy in this country ought to pay a few more taxes than they do now, and that everyone needs to be protected by some form of health insurance are all positions that set him apart from Engeleiter. Kohl promises to represent Wisconsin in much the same fashion that Proxmire has these past 31 years. There's nothing wrong with that.

Locally, a major disagreement between the two newspapers is in the state Senate race that includes eastern Dane County, northern Rock County and most of Green County. The Capital Times feels strongly that

incumbent Charles Chvala has been an outstanding legislator and deserves re-election. The State Journal has endorsed Democrat-turned-Republican Michael Blaska.

We're suspicious of the motives behind Blaska's race. Gov. Tommy Thompson, who has had several political run-ins with Chvala over the years, was one of those behind the move to convince Blaska, the scion of a longtime prominent Dane County family of Democrats, to make the race against the incumbent. Chvala has taken gutsy stands on several issues, including the move to clean up the Yahara River watershed.

An irony in this race is that Blaska is trying to paint the Democrat as a big spender who voted to override a \$300-million Thompson budget veto. The governor's veto included several million dollars in property tax relief that — had Chvala prevailed — would have helped the farmers and homeowners in his district.

But, regardless of which side you take — and in Madison we're still lucky to have two sides — do go vote Tuesday. There are those who insist it doesn't make a difference, but don't buy that line. Everyone's life will be affected by the winners of this election.

A democracy can exist only if the people take an active role. If it makes no difference who wins, then how long will it be before someone decides we don't really need all this democracy?

# We need academic cures

By Jerry E. Smith Jr.

I am providing this perspective on the academic achievement of black students in the Madison School District because Professor Van R. Potter's Oct. 30 guest column headlined "Teen pregnancy perpetuates black 'plight'" raised some important issues.

First, as a lay citizen, I would have expected that the professor's insight into the academic achievement of black students in the Madison public schools would have provided real-life solutions.

Second, the figures reflected in the recent Madison Urban League report on the academic achievement of black high-school students in Madison did not include students who are pregnant. So what do we do with these academically poor achievement black students — students who are not pregnant yet in need of successful academic and social strategies?

Third, teen pregnancy is not a cause of poor academic achievement but a symptom that can be used to mask the real culprit. It is my belief that society has done much to create the type of person who is not the responsible parent or individual. We must continue to work with these persons so that we can save the children and, in turn, save society.

Fourth, because students are receiving services does not necessarily mean that the service is effective. Evidently, the statistics prove that our education strategies are not as effective as we desire.

Fifth, I am a black male and I don't feel the black culture promotes a "macho-morality." I feel that this attitude may exist because it is a learned behavior that is an alternative to success.

As a member of the Madison School Board, I have promoted the following actions (not rhetoric) to address

Smith, who works for the state Department of Health and Social Services, was elected to the Madison school board in 1986.



Smith

## GUEST COLUMN

the issue of black student academic achievement:

- ✓ Provide educational staff that is effective in helping at-risk and diverse students in achieving.
- ✓ Monitor and analyze student performance and implement corrective action.
- ✓ Ensure that all programs include evaluation component and parent out-reach initiatives.

✓ Require all parents to attend at least three conferences: one prior to the beginning of school, another mid-school year and one at end of the school year. At these conferences, the parent and the student will be provided an assessment profile of the student's academic and social development level and a plan to guide and support the student in attaining prescribed achievement expectations. This effort would take place in consultation with the parents, and advisers would be provided to parents at their request to help them understand and feel comfortable with the process. The parents would have to approve this education development plan.

✓ Require all students who are performing two grade levels or more below their age group in an academic subject to attend summer school.

✓ Require parents to attend in-school suspension programs with their child, where the parent will provide the student assistance in doing school work.

✓ Establish Dane County Social Services satellite offices in some schools.

✓ Tighten the movement of students from one grade level to the next.

Our society needs and must have effective and courageous leadership that is willing and capable of promoting solutions for people and our institutions — not just efforts to identify symptoms or clarify the accused. We must be able to shape a vision for all of Madison that provides reassurance that our resources will be used wisely and help advance the quality of life for all citizens. That is the only way that Madison can remain a quality place.

# Welfare rules need to be tightened

With reference to the recent article on the plight of a welfare family, I commend Earley Benton who left Chicago with her 10 children to escape an abusive husband and a gang-infested neighborhood. However, I must ask why she chose to come to Madison, where she knew no one, instead of fleeing to any other number of Illinois cities to apply for welfare in Illinois?

I understand that the ease of procuring welfare in Madison is a joke to those who know the tricks of the game. Welfare should be available to those who truly need it, but it is an expense Wisconsin taxpayers should not

have to assume unnecessarily.

Perhaps someone should investigate initiating a program that would secure equal benefits nationwide. Dane County welfare rules are far from rigid.

— P. Lewis, Madison

## Medical clinic undaunted

As the site manager of Bread and Roses Women's Medical Center, I would like to clear up some misinformation that was printed in the Sunday edition of The Wisconsin State Journal under the headline "2,212 abortion foes arrested."

We had originally planned to open

the clinic on Saturday, Oct. 29, but canceled the clinic when the doctor was unable to work as scheduled that day. The closing of the clinic on Saturday had absolutely nothing to do with the fanatical demonstrators. We are not, and will not be intimidated by a group of narrow-minded protesters. Bread and Roses will continue to provide quality reproductive care for women regardless of any pressure exerted by any right-wing faction.

— Karen J. Hall, Madison

## Red lights and sirens

Regarding the DeForest ambulance driver who was ticketed: It's a

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law to get your vehicles out of the way if flashing lights are coming toward you. If the driver who was hit didn't hear the sirens, he should have been alert enough to see the lights. In the recent ambulance-car accident in which someone was killed, there were no tickets issued.

— Lisa Johnson, DeForest

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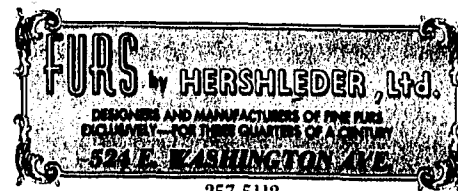
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