

In local politics, familiarity is the quickest path to office

Political pundits and candidates like to think that issues are what decide elections. But Tuesday's primary proved again that candidates can wax as eloquent as they want about crime and the environment, but the ones who have been running longest and hardest are likely to be the winners.

Theodore J. Sophocleus proved this in his decisive trouncing of Robert D. Agee in the race for the Democratic nomination for county executive. So did big vote-getters like John R. Leopold in legislative District 31, John C. Eldridge Jr. in legislative District 30, and Bill D. Burlison in councilmanic District 4. None of these candidates promised dramatic cuts in taxes or offered unique solutions to crime. Some of them even lacked party support. But they pounded on doors relentlessly for years, held signs on street corners, and dropped literature like it was confetti.

This sort of trench warfare is often underestimated as a factor in local politics. Voters may deal with gubernatorial candidates by analyzing their stances on issues, but when it comes to local candidates, they want someone they know. Key battles in local politics aren't fought on

ANOTHER LOOK



By TOM MARQUARDT

podiums, they're fought on doorsteps.

Mr. Sophocleus was making his second bid for county executive. His name recognition, reinforced by a stint in the legislature and campaigning that never really stopped after his loss to Robert R. Neall four years ago, had not eroded.

Mr. Agee, on the other hand, was just not remembered. After a career spent mainly in the shadow of former county executive O. James

Lighthizer, Mr. Agee had no broad base on which to found his campaign. He hadn't run for political office before, he was not a leader of any special-interest group like environmentalists, and he had not been steadily campaigning for the post prior to his formal announcement just a few months ago. Without a strong anti-incumbent mandate, he simply could not, in a few months, match the name recognition his opponent had built over a decade.

Mr. Agee's campaign was still well-thought-out. He peppered the press and the public with well-researched and innovative plans for everything from improving city-county relations to solving crime. He had more vision and more ideas than Mr. Sophocleus who concentrated more on public appearances and door-to-door campaigning. The voters just didn't want to plow through the rhetoric to get to know Mr. Agee.

Mr. Agee's fatal mistake: For most of the campaign, despite the pleading of many of his supporters, he chose not to attack the front-runner's role in the pension scandal. Mr. Agee had his own role to defend, but he also thought

his road to victory was paved with more substantive initiatives.

But when it became obvious he wasn't closing the gap fast enough, Mr. Agee took on his opponent's pension record in a debate before this newspaper's editorial board. The gloves were off, but it was too late for Mr. Agee to inflict serious damage. As soon became obvious at the polls, Mr. Sophocleus had accumulated enough forgiving followers to survive a hit on his character.

Mr. Sophocleus has the same sort of Teflon coating that protects Annapolis Mayor Alfred A. Hopkins. Both men have enormous depth of support in their communities, stemming from years of constituent service. Both are nice guys who come from humble backgrounds and whose fatherly personalities are becoming to them. Neither has particularly profound ideas or a unique vision. They gained the voters' trust with warm personalities, not intellect. This probably frustrates the likes of Mr. Agee and mayoral candidate Larry Vincent, who believe political victories come from winning stimulating, intellectual debates.

And now comes a new challenger for Mr.

Sophocleus. Republican John G. Gary Jr. predicts that issues will carry him to victory; and it even appears that his opponent will shift strategies to put more stress on issue-oriented debate. But there are strong indications that once the issues have been debated, the voters will focus more on candidate behavior.

Mr. Gary will pick up on the pension issue where Mr. Agee left off. Mr. Sophocleus, now alone in the pension quicksand, will in turn attack his opponent's personal business failures.

Voters react to issues like pensions and unpaid bills because they can relate to them. Everything else, regrettably, tends to be dismissed as political bull. Voters want elected officials like them — hard-working, middle-class people who pay their bills on time, earn their pensions and talk common sense. Perhaps intellectuals should run the state and the country; but friends and neighbors should run the city and the county. Like it or not, that seems to be the message. If you want a life of politics, start pounding the pavement.

Tom Marquardt is managing editor of The Capital.

Barry draws strength from 'unlikely voters'

I was as surprised as anyone else at the margin of Marion Barry's victory in his seemingly unstoppable drive to reclaim the mayoralty of the District of Columbia.

I pretty much believed the polls. Oh, I thought Barry's strength might have been understated by 3 or 4 percentage points because a lot of his middle-class black supporters might have preferred to lie to pollsters rather than be thought ignorant for backing a convicted drug abuser. But I believed that the former mayor and his chief rival, at-large City Council member John Ray, were running pretty much neck-and-neck for the Democratic nomination — and that *The Washington Post's* editorial endorsement of Ray might make the difference.

As everybody knows by now, Barry outdistanced Ray by a full 10 points — 47 percent to 37 percent — leaving the incumbent, Sharon Pratt Kelly, in the dust at 13 percent.

What happened? A number of things, of course, including the widely held view that Kelly "didn't get it done" during her four years in office and, therefore, didn't deserve another term, and the equally prevalent view that Ray's principal asset was that he wasn't Marion Barry.

The lack of passion for Kelly and Ray made the race essentially a contest between people who adored Barry and those who either loathed him or found him an embarrassment.

And Barry got his people out. He got out the secret supporters who (I'm told) helped him financially, even while declining to endorse him publicly. He got out the church folk, who resonate to the notions of redemption and forgiveness. Most of all, he got out the "community" — the "little people," as they used to be called — as door-to-door campaigners, as bill posters, as tireless workers in whatever capacity. And on Election Day, he got his people to the polls.

This was, as *Washington Post* pollster Rich Morin put it, an election by the "unlikely voters." The reference is to the attempts of opinion samplers to determine not merely which candidates voters prefer but also the probability that they'll actually vote — asking them whether they voted in the last election, for instance, or if they know where their polling place is. By voting pattern, by demographics, by most of the usual criteria, the people — many of them newly registered by Barry — who swept Barry to victory were "unlikely voters."

But they voted, and by doing so made Barry's victory their own.

That's less obvious than it might be. I've just finished talking to an out-of-state radio talk-show host who wants to know what "message"



William Raspberry

it sends to young people (he clearly meant young black people in the category we euphemize as "at risk") that Washingtonians are well on the way of restoring to the mayoralty a man who has done time for doing crack.

The answer is that it sends them a message they hear all too seldom: that they matter.

I don't want to oversimplify Barry's victory — after all, he carried not just the hard-pressed section east of the Anacostia River but also some of more affluent wards of the city — but the people who put Barry over are the people who normally don't figure prominently in politicians' plans, being "unlikely voters" and having no money to give. It's a mistake to see them as dupes, conned by a smooth-talking politician. They are self-interested people who voted for themselves.

They are the people (fast becoming a majority in this and other American cities) who are personally familiar with the criminal justice system — its cops, its courts, its probation and parole officers, its jails and prisons — or who are close to someone who is familiar with it. They are not shamed by Barry; they are redeemed by Barry, and by their redemption of him.

For many of these voters, Barry is less the "comeback kid" the media see than the "prodigal son" who represents their own hope.

An important element of that hope, says the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, is that Barry "never lost the appearance of strength — even when he was begging forgiveness."

To folk like me — middle class, comfortable and skeptical of charismatic politicians — it may appear that Barry got away with a big one.

Got away with what? As Jackson notes, Barry "got caught, humiliated, dethroned and jailed."

And now, to the chagrin of those who were scandalized by the behavior that landed him in jail, he appears to be riding a juggernaut back to power.

It must be very heady stuff for the people who put him there.



"I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF THE INDICTED STATES OF AMERICA..."

Ten-Mile Run benefits the community

By SUSAN BRIERS

As race director of the 1994 Annapolis Ten-Mile Run, I would like to thank everyone who was involved with the race this year for their efforts and hard work. This year's race proved to be in keeping with our reputation for having one of the best races in America.

For those unfamiliar with the race, I would like to touch on a few points that have been misunderstood or miscommunicated.

The Annapolis Striders manage and direct the Annapolis Ten-Mile Run and have done so for 19 years. The race has traditionally benefited the American Heart Association; last year the organizers presented a check for \$10,000 to the Anne Arundel County chapter of the AHA.

This year's race benefited the community even more by including the Anne Arundel Medical Center Cardiac Rehab Program as a designated charity, along with the AHA. The event will contribute more than \$12,000 to these programs. The race also provides financial support for other programs the Striders organize, including our summer youth program.

Organizing the event — the finest 10-mile race on the East Coast and probably in the country — takes a full year of effort by a totally

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volunteer board, with the help of more than 500 other volunteers. This year we were voted "one of America's top 100 races" by *Runner's World* magazine.

Realizing the benefits the race brings to the city, we work through the year with Loews Annapolis Hotel and the restaurant community to guide the runners toward Annapolis businesses. This has proven to be a tremendous financial boost to the area's economy, according to the reports we receive from local merchants.

In addition, a race official works with state, county and city police, and community and church leaders, to minimize the impact the race has on Sunday morning traffic. All of the churches along the race route have an avenue of approach for their parishioners. Also, race officials work diligently to ensure that churches are reminded of the race well in advance, so they can notify their members.

Contrary to what was stated in a recent editorial (*The Sunday Capital*, Sept. 4), the race route was not completely closed to traffic from 8

to 11 a.m. This year's race route was effectively cleared by 10 a.m.

The Capital has worked very hard with us to post the road closings for the race and, in fact, published the information over three days prior to the race in four different sections, so as to reach everyone. Also, the race committee conducts a neighborhood walk three days prior to the race to notify more than 750 residents on the race route of the ensuing event.

The race has received tremendous community support from the neighborhoods that are most affected. In fact, one of the leading reasons the race is so popular is reflected by the common comment by the runners that "people along the course are so friendly."

The Annapolis Striders has continued enthusiasm for the race as a showcase that puts our city in a very positive light. Hard work maintains this city's fine reputation, and preserves it among the "tourist" runners who visit our city once a year for this race.

We again want to thank the Annapolis community, the police and all involved with this successful event.

The writer was director for the 1994 Annapolis Ten-Mile Run.

NAFTA has hurt us, but new treaty would be worse

That \$30 billion crime bill is not the last demand Bill Clinton intends to make on this Congress.

Last weekend, the White House leaked word it will try to ram through Congress, by mid-October, the huge trade treaty known as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Since GATT need not be passed until a mid-1995 deadline, why are the Clintonites so desperate to act now?

Answer: They are terrified GATT cannot survive more scrutiny. Pointed questions are being asked about the surrender of American sovereignty to the World Trade Organization, or WTO, that is created by the treaty. In the Aug. 28 issue of the *Wichita (Kan.) Eagle*, Sen. Robert Dole, R-Kan., wrote:

"Calls and letters have been flooding my office ... on the subject of implementing the WTO ... My office in Wichita is receiving more calls in opposition to this trade agreement than we received on the North American Free Trade Agreement ...

"People have a right to know how the WTO will function, what powers it will have ... what authority it will have to tell the United States what to do." Dole suggested holding off approval of GATT until "we know what awaits us at the finish line. There is no reason we cannot address this important issue next year."

Another reason the White House is nervous



Patrick J. Buchanan

— and the GOP should take a second look — is that the early returns are just coming in from the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA. And they are anything but what was promised and predicted.

Even before Mexico's 10 percent tariff on U.S. products began to fall, Mexico City devalued its peso 9 percent, wiping out the U.S. benefit. *The Economist* magazine predicts a further devaluation of the peso by 20 percent to 30 percent. That will make American products that much more expensive in Mexico, and Mexican products that much cheaper in the United States.

Already, our \$5 billion 1992 trade surplus with Mexico, which the NAFTAcrats pointed to in winning passage, has been cut 60 percent. And our trade deficit with Mexico in high-value manufactured goods is soaring. From January to May of this year, our deficit in vehicles and parts rose 30 percent; in optic, photo, medical and surgical equipment, 87 percent; and in electronic machines, and sound and TV equip-

ment, it rose 127 percent.

In the first eight months of this year, 224 U.S. factories — a factory every single day — laid off workers or shifted production overseas as a result of NAFTA. And these are only the factories that formally applied for training or relocation aid for U.S. workers.

From January through May, U.S. car-makers did ship 16,957 vehicles to Mexico (vs. 2,672 vehicles for the same period of 1993). But the United States imported 154,302 vehicles from south of the Rio Grande, an increase of 16,779 over the same period in '93.

And NAFTA has ignited an automotive investment explosion south of the Rio Grande. After NAFTA passed, Honda announced its next factory would be built in Mexico. Volkswagen, Nissan, Chrysler, Ford and General Motors are all expanding production in Mexico.

"By the end of next year, a band of new assembly plants and parts factories will stretch from Mexico City almost to Monterrey, northern Mexico's industrial capital," exults *The Wall Street Journal*.

Mexico, not Michigan, is the future automotive capital of North America. Fifty thousand new autoworkers will be hired there by 1996, in addition to the 150,000 already at work.

By 1999, Mexico's annual production of cars and trucks will be up to between 2 million and 3 million vehicles. Since labor there is only 15

percent of the cost of U.S. labor, cars made in Mexico will not only capture a vast share of America's market, but Mexico's market, and markets to the south, as well.

"The average Ford worker in Hermosillo (Mexico) earns \$6.35 an hour in wages and benefits vs. about \$40 an hour for a Ford worker in Wayne (Mich.)," says the *Journal*. But the Hermosillo plant has "slightly better quality and productivity." Any doubt where your next Ford Escort is coming from?

Has NAFTA slowed illegal immigration? Again, check the numbers. In 1991, the Border Patrol apprehended 969,000 Mexican illegals crossing into our Southwest. Last year, 1,212,000 were caught. And when U.S. farm products flood into Mexico, driving 40 million peasants off the land, expect new arrivals — in the millions.

NAFTA has put American workers into competition with 80 million Mexicans making \$1.52 and \$4 an hour. GATT will force them into competition with 4 billion Chinese, Indians, Asians, Latins and East Europeans, some of whom work for 25 cents an hour.

Once we Americans prided ourselves that our workers were the highest-paid in the world. Now, we relish the idea of forcing fellow Americans, in the name of "global free trade," into dog-eat-dog competition with Third World peoples who will work for pennies. What happened to our values? What happened to the older America that put people first?

YEARS AGO ... FROM THE PAGES OF THE CAPITAL

25 years ago this week

Sept. 18, 1969: Plans are unveiled for "Russett Centre," a miniature city — including apartments, homes, a golf course and two shopping centers — on a 641-acre tract near Maryland City.

50 years ago this week

Sept. 18, 1944: The biggest source of emergency labor to help get in county crops is the prisoner of war camps at Fort Meade. The second-biggest source: the Bahamian labor camp at Harwood.

100 years ago this week

Sept. 18, 1894: Residents of the thriving village of Eastport as yet show little inclination to become part of Annapolis. One reason may be the city's taxes. Eastport taxpayers pay \$1.17 per \$100 of assessed value; Annapolitans pay 80 cents — plus the 87-cent county tax.

— Compiled by Glenwood Gibbs