

Off Center

Sol Plafkin

1967

Here's the political line-up for 1967, so far: There will definitely be a special election in the City of Detroit, and probably the rest of Wayne County, in November. The primary will be held either in August or September.

One of the most interesting races will be for two Detroit Common Council vacancies. Possible candidates are: Walter Shamie, Mary Ball, Rev. James Chambers, State Rep. James Del Rio, Asst. Police Commissioner Hubert Locke, and State Sen. Coleman Young.

Shamie, the "grocers' friend," will probably run on an anti-crime platform and should garner a considerable number of right-wing votes. It is very unfortunate that "crime" should be an issue as such, but the city administration has done such a poor job of getting at the economic and social roots of it, that a "get-tough" platform will be able to elicit a lot of support.

This columnist would like to see a ticket of Jim Lafferty and Nadine Brown for those two spots. Lafferty, of course, ran an energetic race for U.S. Congress last year on a "Get out of Vietnam" platform. He received more than 6,000 votes, which while it was only one-seventh of his popular opponent's total, signified some political attraction and organizational acumen.

With comparatively less controversial issues in a city election I am sure that a young man of Lafferty's drive and persuasiveness could do very well. Since at least one white person will be elected to the Council, it might as well be one of the caliber of Lafferty, whose experience and understanding of the civil rights movement exceeds that of any 100 "phony white liberals."

Nadine Brown is the fiery Negro secretary of the First Congressional District Democratic Organization who has raised all sorts of hell at meetings of the Wayne County AFL-CIO and Michigan Democratic Conventions fighting for some true recognition of Negro interests.

There is already a natural reservoir of voters in the inner-city that would go for these candidates if properly informed of their background and program. It might take ringing a hundred thousand or so doorbells, but it is within the realm of possibility.

Other voters, who usually don't know what's going on, are very susceptible to individual promotions of candidates on a door-to-door basis.

Good organization can perform miracles. One of the leading liberal legislators in Lansing comes from a lily-white Detroit suburb—and he gets elected with the aid of an efficient political apparatus.

State Rep. Jackie Vaughn III also provides a good example of what organization can do. First, he was nominated three times for the Common Council over the opposition of the entire White and Negro power structure due to the existence of his grass-roots support. When he finally made it to the legislature, he received 92% of the vote, the highest percentage of any legislative candidate in 1966.

There is one vacancy in the Recorder's Court. Some of the "narco" defendants have reported that this criminal bench is a lot more humane than that of previous years and it would be nice to sweeten it up a little more. Perhaps, Rolland O'Hare, chairman of the Mich. ACLU who missed out last year by less than 1,000 votes, might be a good bet for that one vacancy.

There is also one vacancy on the Wayne County Circuit Court. No names have yet been mentioned for that.

The community college issue will probably be on the ballot again, either for one or two districts in Wayne County. Each district will elect six trustees without a primary.

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Rumblings around Wayne State: Why did Richard Strichartz, Cavanagh's former Controller, suddenly leave GM and take a hefty pay cut to become legal counsel for the University? Could he be the next dean of the Law School?

Did you ever notice those cars with little DPOA (Detroit Police Officers' Association) stickers on their rear window or bumper? Are these subtle suggestions to the cops on duty that the cars are owned by their colleagues and, therefore, shouldn't be ticketed? Perhaps, the Fifth Estate BOOK STORE should start selling imitations of these stickers so that we all can avoid getting tickets.

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