

J.W.J.

John W. Johnson

## 'Violence of factions' damages democracy

is, rather than "this is who I am and what I believe."

To avoid offending single-issue advocates, the stock reply by most national and state candidates is to say "I've provided a (ponderously difficult to read) plan" for X Y or Z issue. In essence, both parties are afraid to take positions and, except in politically polarized areas, this is true at all levels of election. This political reality was called "the violence of faction" by our fourth president, James Madison.

On the one hand, this violence of faction has created all-things-to-all-people candidates, in turn causing the average voter to perceive no difference between party or candidate, and further, to throw up his or her hands and declare: "it makes no difference how I vote, if I vote at all."

On the other hand, single-issue advocacy in polarized areas has all but choked our political process and is taking away from critical areas of government because voters are rushing to the polls ignorant of all but the hot button issue espoused by their candidate. Put another way, how many of you would hire an electrician to fix a toilet? And yet single-issue voters will elect candidates based on single issues (like abortion here in Pennsylvania) regardless of whether the candidate knows virtually anything else about the political process, representative government or can even balance a checkbook, much less a multi-million dollar budget.

So we now have those who believe it's pointless to vote, and others who can't wait to vote, but only for one reason.

It's true that single-issue advocates have been part of our political process right from the beginning. It was to moderate the effects of single-issue advocacy that the constitution was written in 1787. Our constitutional form of government was formulated to "break and control the violence of faction," according to Madison.

Madison defined faction as a "number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse or passion, or of interest adverse to the rights of other citizens, or the permanent

and aggregate interest of the community." He was, of course, perfectly describing balanced budget devotees and anti-choice proclaimers we see most prominently in the political process today.

What Madison hoped for, and what came to pass with adoption of our constitution, was that federalism, a bicameral congress (House and Senate), the separation of powers among the three branches of government, and the diversity of a complex nation would prevent any one faction from undue influence unless it developed a visible coalition or appealed to a shared sense of the common good.

Madison never counted on television, a judiciary, which since the Dred Scott slavery decision in 1857, has been effectively both passing and interpreting legislation, or the context in which single-issue advocacy takes place today.

Computerized mailing lists, national advertising campaigns, and other techniques, have made it possible for any and every single-issue cause to be represented by any organization which has money and a staff. And this is true, even if that organization has no real membership, but just financial supporters.

Government's expanded role has also changed single issue advocacy. Government affects all aspects of our lives today. When this nation was young, the checks and balances system worked well. Today, most decisions are not made in the public light of a check and balance system. Decisions are made by unelected bureaucrats in congressional committees, or are made by the judiciary under pressure from well-heeled single-issue groups.

We now have, in essence, government, so far removed from its initial concept, that it would be unrecognizable by our founders. And those founders understood a basic truth essential to true liberty.

True liberty finds its foundation and its strength in considered deliberation within a diverse forum, rather than in the screams of single-issue advocates of any stripe supplanting reasoned judgement—remember in November.

As I was saying



Jack Hilsher

Last week, extolling the benefits of seniors having dogs, I told you ours was a Westie. We have had other terriers in the past but we picked the West Highland Terrier for our current dog because it was always described the same way in dog books: "affectionate, self-reliant, intelligent," while under "any drawbacks" Westies would read "none."

They are often confused with Scottish Terriers (I hear this a lot: "Hey look, a white Scottie!") which is natural because there is a family resemblance. In fact, the short-legged terriers of Scotland - Scottie, Skye, Cairn, Dandie Dinmont and Westie - all share similar characteristics and undoubtedly have descended from the same family tree. They were valued as hunters of "varmits" and small game; their coat colors ranged from black to red to cream or white.

A Colonel Edward Malcom of Poltalloch, Scotland, had a reddish dog mistakenly shot for a fox. He decided right then to breed only for an all-white dog that could be readily identified, and so Westie development began. It eventually became a distinctive breed by itself, with its own personality, and was listed officially as such in 1907 at a dog show in England.

Robbie McVicar, our Westie, had a champion grandfather named Keniyell Krackerjack from the U.K. His dad was Glenabby Sir Alex Stergo from Canada. (Pedigreed names must be unique so they cannot easily be duplicated.)

Westies, trainable and friendly, have amazing memories. It is not unusual for them to remember someone they knew many years ago. Most dogs would forget much sooner. They are stubborn at times, showing you they have a mind of their own, and think nothing of forcing their way into your lap, particularly when you are reading a book. A yard is

## The joys of Robbie dog, and how to get your own

heaven to a Westie, but they also make great apartment dogs, as long as they have a window to look out and they can be satisfied with that for hours.

Now before you look at pet store prices, I must warn that pedigreed Westies can run from \$300 up, so if your budget runs scared there is another consideration: the Luzerne County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (S.P.C.A.) sometimes has a Westie available, and will take an "Adoption Request." This is a form you fill out showing details of the pet you desire; when one becomes available they will call you. Call them at 825-4111 to request a form.

Of course, it doesn't have to be a Westie - any of the other terrier breeds mentioned are good, and there are many other types. You should look over their "borders" carefully, possibly more than once. They are on Fox Hill Road in Plains Township.

But if I have sold you, and your heart is set on, a Westie, here is

another helpful organization. Sponsored by the William Penn West Highland White Terrier Club, this "Rescue Group" has member reps in five areas: Willow Grove, Philadelphia, West Chester, Bucks County and New Jersey.

By calling Chairman Patti Marks, (215) 657-6085 or Svea Pugh, (215) 696-0109, you can find out what is available or go on their waiting list. This active and conscientious non-profit group accepts dogs whose owners must give them up for any reason, and places them in homes. They do not charge for this work but will accept donations, which average \$50. The dogs, if ill, are first nursed back to health, and in less than nine years they have been able to accept and place over 100 Westies, some of whom were near death from failed "puppy mills."

So if you have decided that a Westie, or indeed any other breed, should enrich your life, treat him or her with patience, love and respect.

You'll get it back ten times over.

In less than two years, the next presidential campaign will be well underway. What you won't see are candidates campaigning in this newspaper. That died twenty-two years ago following the 1968 presidential election. That election brought more than bleeding heads in Chicago—and broken dreams with RFK's assassination in Los Angeles. It also signaled the end of local party politicians in all but local politics.

Have you seen a campaign pin, heard a spot on local radio, or seen any presidential advertisements in this newspaper in recent memory? No you haven't. Television has taken over as the exclusive medium through which voters elect most national officials.

Concurrent with an end to local involvement in national elections has been the decline of local party machinery. That was back in the 'good ole days' of political patronage. You remember those days, the days when local politicians handed out government jobs in exchange for political support. Patronage is essentially now dead. Along with its funeral has gone the incentive for local individuals to 'get out the vote', or to do the many other things which kept the two-party system vibrant.

Many, in fact, suggest the two-party system is also dead: that there has been really very little difference between the recent presidential hopefuls. For the most part, that's superficially true.

And perhaps this has been no more influenced than by single-issue advocates gaining unaccountable access to the electoral and legislative process. As this has occurred, and as both parties at a national level end up standing for very little that is distinct one from the other.

To be sure, there remain philosophical differences between Republicans and Democrats; but those differences become blurred in the 30-second sound bite, or television ad; a blurring which finds elections now focusing on how horrible, the other candidate

## Erica Gosart sets school records in basketball, track

Erica Gosart, daughter of Fred and Myra Gosart of Harrisburg, has set five school records in two school sports at Linglestown Jr. High, a part of Central Dauphin School District. Gosart, a starting guard for two consecutive seasons led her team to two Division Championships with season records of 16-2 and 17-1.

Setting school records of highest scorer for two consecutive seasons, most steals for two consecutive seasons and overall rebounds and assists both seasons,

Gosart was named to the five member All Tournament Team at the Cougar Hoop Tournament sponsored by Palmyra Jaycees in February.

Erica's fifth school record was set this spring as she broke the

school's high jump record in her first attempt at the sport.

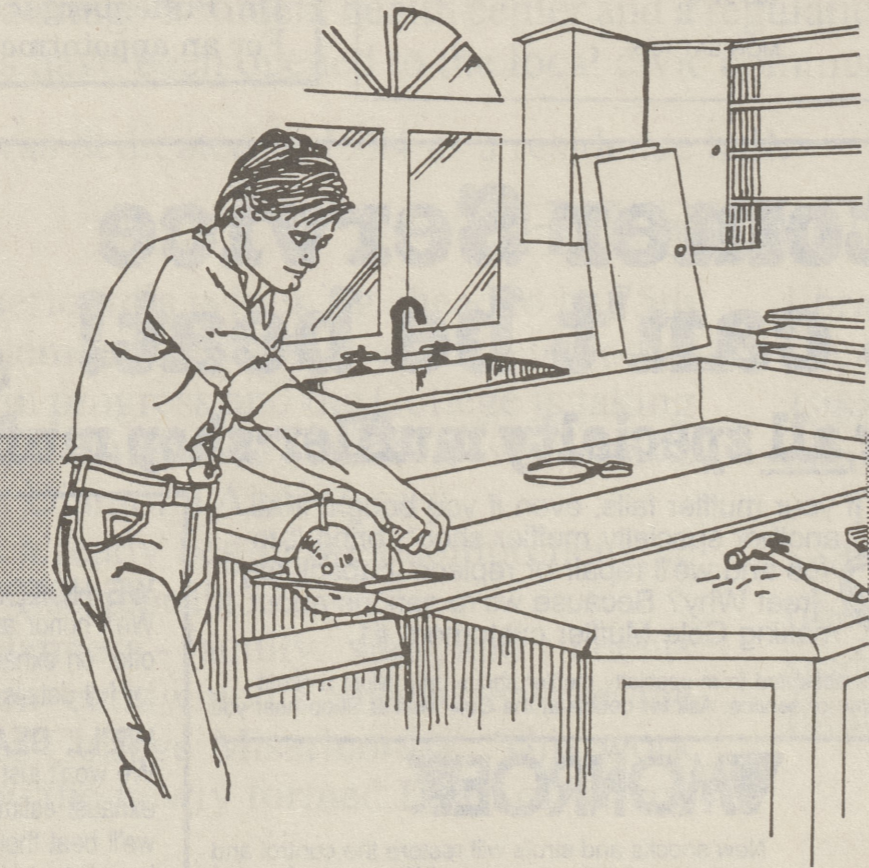
Erica was undefeated in the high jump until placing second to the divisional record holder in the last meet of the season.

The granddaughter of Betty

Gosart and the late John Gosart of Shavertown and the late Mayor and Mrs. Nort Bertl of Dallas, Erica has played for the Linglestown Softball Association for seven years and Lower Paxton Soccer Association for six years.

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