

The Purple Martin

Part one of a two-part series

by Mr. Martin

What goes Spick-Spack-Spitter-Spee-Spack and is controversial?

The Purple Martin.

When these birds return from their usual winter grounds in Brazil's steaming jungles, they find that a whole new world has opened up for them in Pennsylvania—and in fact, the entire country.

The purple martin, on its broad knife-like wings, has soared to unprecedented heights in national popularity. The martin is the first wild species to be cultivated with the same intensity with which modern farmers cultivate domestic animals, operating on the assumption that there is good and bad housing for birds and varying degrees of quality in every other aspect of birds' care.

The purple martin, which has swooped into a pivotal position in the ever-growing pesticide debate in America, is ideally suited for its new job.

As far back as the story of man in America is known—either in legend or recorded history—the martin has been a friend of man. The Indians lured it to their villages with hollow gourds hung near their teepees for nesting cavities. More recent settlers have used crude wooden houses to induce martins to nest near their homes.

These birds have been treasured because of their voracious appetites for flying insects and their ability to drive hawks and

crows away from barnyards.

Purple martins, the largest members of the swallow family, are migratory birds that spend each spring and summer nesting throughout most of the United States and southern Canada. They live exclusively on flying insects and like to inhabit man-made houses.

Because of their amazing capacity to consume mosquitoes, flies, and other flying insects, martins make any neighborhood they colonize more pleasant. They have proved their effectiveness in natural insect control in a variety of locations—patios, parks, farms, orchards, resorts, city streets, lawns, and gardens.

The cases on file supporting the martin as a bug-killer are voluminous.

They are skillful, graceful flyers and their aerial antics furnish hours of entertainment for martin enthusiasts.

They are clean birds, being one the species that practice the peculiar trait of carrying waste sacs far from their nests before disposing of them.

The male and female are similar in appearance until the second year, when the male takes on a beautiful, shiny blue-black coloring. His average weight is about four ounces. The female is somewhat smaller, has a duller and less uniform color with pale gray breast and abdomen.

Next week: the martin's timetable and enemies.



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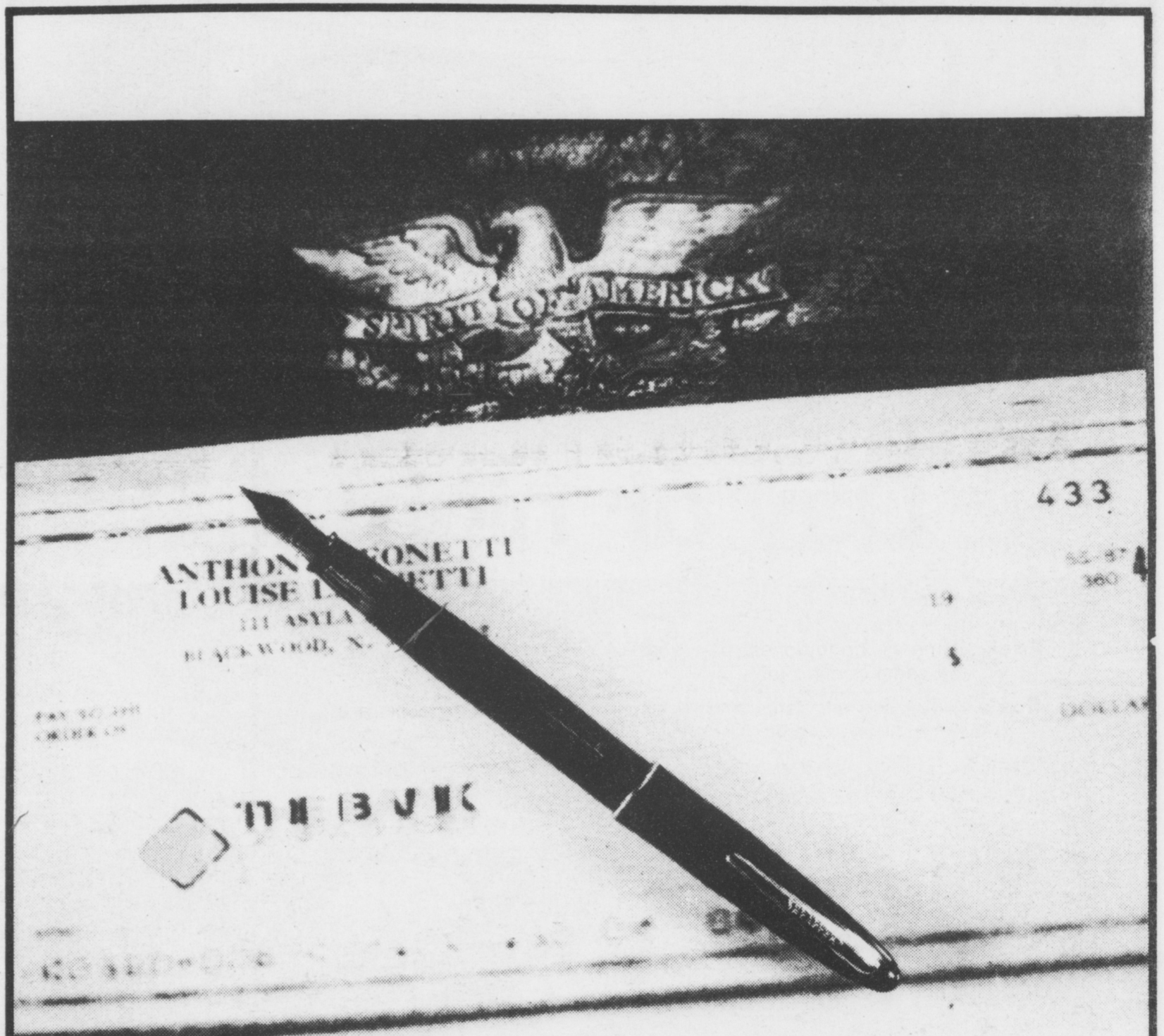
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An explanation

of the

constitutional amendment

you will vote on soon

Two state constitutional amendments will be submitted to voters during the May 16 Primary. One is a straightforward question: should the state Attorney General be elected? The other one is more obscure.

The question that will confront you in the ballot booth is, "Shall Article V of the Pennsylvania Constitution be amended to provide that persons appointed to fill vacancies in the office of justice, judge, or justice of the peace shall serve for a term ending on the first Monday of January following the next municipal election more than ten months after the vacancy occurs or for the remainder of the unexpired

term, whichever is less?"

What this means, according to the bill's sponsor, R. Budd Dwyer, is this: a "yes" vote is a vote for ending the term of judges or justices (who were appointed to fill a vacancy) at the ends of the terms of the people replaced. Those appointed due to vacancies would then have to be elected to stay in their offices.

In short, a "yes" vote is a vote for election of judges and against appointment, in a very special case.

Dwyer says he sponsored the amendment because of the legal confusion and resulting trials over the question which have happened several times.

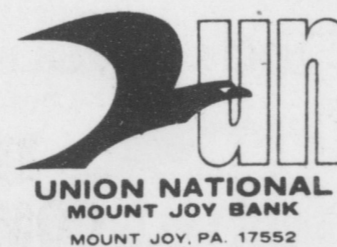
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