

money and luck essential in election

Landis said that although it was easy to find people that supported him, it was difficult to find volunteers who were politically experienced. He said campaigning is also fun.

"Even when you're licking envelopes there's a sort of camaraderie," Landis said.

Sometime, usually during or shortly after the formation of a political base, the prospective senator makes his candidacy public. He or she makes an announcement to the media and files for office.

The technical aspects of becoming a candidate are simple. The candidate filing form consists of one side of a piece of paper. The candidate enters his or her name, address, how he or she wants the name to appear on the ballot and, in the case of a legislator, a check in the box for non-partisan.

The candidate must pay a filing fee equal to one percent of the salary the candidate will receive if elected. For a legislator this is \$48. The fee is paid in the candidate's home county and the form is forwarded to the Secretary of State's office.

He or she is now an official candidate for the Legislature.

Biggest problems

Time and money were consistently the biggest problems the senators mentioned.

Landis said asking people for money was the hardest part of his campaign. How does one deal with it?

"Ask somebody else to do it," Landis said.

He said friends and family find it much easier to ask for contributions.

Just over half of Landis' campaign was financed by contributions of less than \$100. The balance came from political action committees and individual contributions of more than \$100. Landis said the contributors were people he had met or who knew of his ideas. Most campaign expenditures were for general mailing, Landis said.

Landis said the Accountability and Disclosure Commission — commonly known as the Sunshine Commission — was a good concept but questioned its value.

He said that on a cost/benefit ratio the time, money and state bureaucracy used gave little benefit to the voters.

He said he doubted that there was "a single constituent from his district who went through the records."

The director of the Sunshine Commission, Thomas Burke, said most candidates for elective office must file with the commission. Burke said that if a candidate collects more than \$400 for his campaign he must form a candidate committee with a designated treasurer and establish a separate bank account for campaign funds. The candidate committee may be the candidate's political group, such as "Citizens for . . ." and the candidate may be treasurer.

If a candidate raises over \$1,000 he or she must file six reports with the commission. These include how the

campaign is being financed, a list of contributors by name if they give over \$100 and an itemized list of expenditures.

Burke said most senators pass the \$1,000 plateau. He added that the public does ask to see these records.

Others file

Candidates for county and state offices also must file a statement of financial interests. Burke said this form does not include dollar amounts but asks the candidate to list where he or she works, business associations, any real property, the names of institutions where he or she has accounts and any debts. He said the media are virtually the only people who ask for these documents.

Fowler, whose campaign against Jerry Sellentin set new records for campaign spending last year, said he hoped some limit could be found.

Fowler said raising funds was the "most painful" aspect of his campaign.

However he said that because of the growth of political action committees and direct-mail solicitation, funds are raised fairly quickly now.

"When the money's available there's a situation where the candidate can't say he won't spend it," Fowler said.

By contrast Hefner's campaign had one of the smallest budgets in the 1980 election.

Hefner said most of his campaign money came from personal contributions and fund-raising dinners. He added that he would not accept contributions of more than \$100.

"I am a conservative," Hefner said. "Rather than do a lot of advertising, I did a lot of personal contact."

He kept his expenses low by advertising in small town weekly newspapers that are usually well read, he said.

Hefner said the Sunshine Commission should be done away with.

"A lot of local people won't run because of financial disclosure," he said. "The voters will take care of an elected official if he pulls too many shenanigans."

Hefner said he had no problems with the commission forms but would like to see it under the Secretary of State instead of a separate commission.

Marsh said campaign costs have tripled since she first ran in 1971. She said she doesn't like to spend a lot of money campaigning so she uses volunteers to talk to people in her district.

"And I'm still ringing doorbells," she said.

She added that she was supportive of the Sunshine Commission and it had caused no problems in her last two campaigns. The commission did not exist during her first campaign.

Ask people

Wesely said he didn't like to ask people for anything during his campaign.

"You felt guilty having to ask for help," he said. "But you have to realize that everyone's got a stake in

democracy and wants to get a good person elected."

He said inflation had increased campaign costs and he is planning to spend \$30,000 in his next campaign.

"You don't think it's a lot of money until you start asking for it by \$20 donations," Wesely said.

Wesely said he liked the idea of disclosure but there was no way to have complete knowledge of campaign spending. He said disclosure gives people a sense of what's going on and where the money is coming from.

He said many politicians don't like the financial disclosure because they have a lot of money or assets. Wesely said it was an embarrassment to him also, not because he had so much but because he had so little.

All the senators agreed that time was an important factor in getting elected. Finding time to meet people face-to-face was the problem mentioned most often.

Hefner said his large district made traveling a big part of his campaign. He said he spent a great deal of time going from community to community talking to his constituents, and started his campaign in early March.

Wesely said the amount of time and effort spent in getting elected doesn't stop when the candidate is in office. He said a senator must stay in close contact with the people who elected him in order to do a good job. He said the campaign is not separate from the office and it is easy to keep in touch with members of the group who were in the campaign organization.

Landis said that although a candidate has many demands on his time, stress is a more important concern.

"There's a constant fear of some incredible blasting statement about you across the front page of the paper," he said. "But it's part of the business. You learn to suffer through the agony of living a public life."

Voting motives

But for all their time and money spent, why do we, in the final analysis, elect them? There has been a great deal of speculation and several studies on what people actually vote for.

Fowler said the reasons people vote for a candidate really haven't changed. He said it is a blend of three things: the name, the vague thing called image portrayed by media and a candidate's position on issues.

He said campaigns and voters are more issue-oriented than they were 15 to 20 years ago.

Marsh said that although the media play an important part in any campaign, nothing can take the place of face-to-face meetings with constituents.

Hefner said that because of the nature of his district, name recognition was very important. He said image is more important to people who are not in special interest groups which are concerned with specific issues.

Wesely said that he found during his campaign that people wanted an idea of who he was and what he believed first and then his stand on specific issues.

"I'd like to think people vote on issues," he said. "But issues alone won't get you elected."

Democrats growing despite money restrictions

By Eric Peterson

Democrats in the state are reorganizing at the grass roots level for the next election, said DiAnna Schimek, state Democratic chairperson.

"I think the 1980 election was something of a shock, but in the long run we may be stronger because of it," Schimek said. "The results forced us to reorganize at a more basic level, and re-evaluate some of our positions and strategies—to just sit back and look at the situation for once."

Schimek said the Democratic Party has had better than average success in the Lincoln area by building up a following for Lincoln Democrats in the Nebraska Legislature.

"Part of the reason is that the activists, the people who are most deeply involved, tend to be conservatives in the Republican Party, while Democratic activists tend to be liberal," she said. "And Lincoln is perhaps the most liberal spot in the state."

Schimek said another reason for the Democrats' strong base in Lincoln is that the state government is located in the city.

Francis Moul, state Democratic vice chairperson and director of Maverick Media, a group of newspapers in the state, agreed that Lincoln is of increasing importance to the Democratic Party.

"It's interesting that for the first time we've raised more money from Lincoln and the first congressional district than from Omaha," Moul said.

Area meetings set

Schimek said 18 area meetings are scheduled through-

out Nebraska to update local Democrats on state-level activities, suggest party activities for counties, distribute information on precinct organization and formulate new strategies.

The first series of such meetings was last spring. Lincoln and Omaha areas meetings were in October, Schimek said. The final series of informational meetings will be in February and March.

Schimek said college student involvement is very important to the Democratic Party.

Several Nebraska students will go to the Hubert H. Humphrey Student Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., Nov. 20 through 22, Schimek said.

The conference will feature training about political campaigning with a series of workshops on issues, organization and campaign strategies. Schimek said people interested in the conference should call the state Democratic office at 475-4584.

The Democrats are the only party to have a candidate search committee, Moul said. The committee is responsible for finding candidates for legislative district chairpersons.

Schimek said the committee started earlier than usual, right after the election, to gain more ground.

Conference upcoming

Moul said a list of potential and interested candidates is compiled, after which the candidates are contacted, and shown what services the party can provide. Moul said there will be a conference Dec. 5 in Lincoln for all potential candidates.

Money is the greatest difficulty facing a Democratic candidate in the state, Moul said. "We just don't have

the access to the sources of funds the Republicans do."

Moul estimated that Gov. Charles Thone, a Republican, will spend \$1 million on his re-election campaign. Moul said the Democratic candidate who emerges from the primary will have only about half that much to spend at best.

The state Democratic organization doesn't have a great deal of money, so candidates basically are responsible for raising their own funds, Moul said.

The Democrats have launched a direct mail appeal in Lancaster County, but for the most part have to rely on more traditional activities such as the Jefferson-Jackson Day dinners, Moul said.

Moul agreed with Schimek that the Democrats are rebuilding. "The Republicans don't have to rebuild. They've got all the money and all the offices right now."

James L. Roberts, UNL English instructor, is the only faculty member on the Democratic state central committee. Roberts said the committee is made up of one man and one woman from each legislative district.

Farm programs and policies according to the Reagan administration will be the major Democratic issues in the next election, Roberts said.

"I think that it is natural for us to attach a high priority to the major state university," he said.

Roberts said his state senator, Steve Fowler of the 27th District, has consistently worked for UNL in the past.

"In the last election, Steve Fowler's opponent got large donations from special interest groups, but Steve Fowler's were mostly in the ten, fifteen, twenty dollar category," Roberts said the rise of special interest politics in the state is especially disturbing to Democrats.