

Editorial

We have it good in this 'dismal, drab government town'

In the search for a middle name for our fair city, the Lincoln Star and Lincoln Convention and Visitors Bureau received nearly 1,300 entries, one of which called Lincoln a "Gray, Drab, Dismal Old Government Town."

Well, this government town has a lot to say for itself. It may not be the most dynamic, entertaining, intellectual scenic spot on the map. But it ranks right up there for a city its size.

Now take Chicago — sort of an appealing, busy, populous culture center that attracts visitors, businessmen and academicians. It certainly has its tradition as an "old government town."

Lincoln and Chicago have one thing in common. They are both caught up in mayoral election campaigns. The candidates' approaches and campaign tactics, are thankfully, as far removed philosophically as they are geographically.

We should be glad that Lincoln's mayoral hopefuls stick to relatively harmless, if distracting, ways to grab our attention. As reported in Monday's Lincoln Journal, "motorists are being bombarded by political signs touting candidates in the April 5 primary election."

Turn the page and you'll find that Chicagoans aren't leaving their political endorsement signs in their yards — but maybe that's because half of them don't have yards. It's also partly because Chicago's mayoral candidates have resorted to disruptive, rattle-tale, wishy-washy strategies to win over those previous votes.

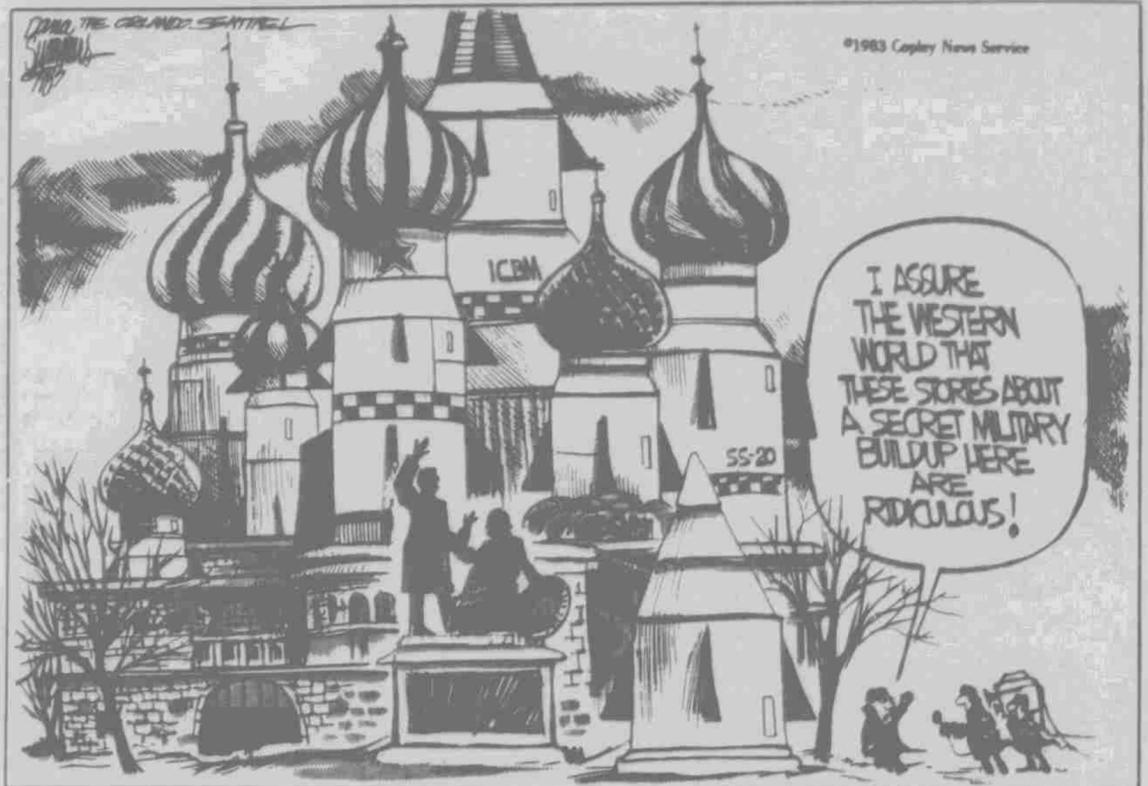
Chicago Mayor Jane Byrne after losing in the Democratic primary last month, endorsed Democrat Harold Washington, a black congressman. Then Byrne changed her mind, withdrew her endorsement and planned to re-enter as a write-in candidate. For this she was criticized by public officials such as Richard Daley, who in Newsweek called the move "an appeal to racial divisiveness."

Then, one week later, Byrne again changed her mind, decided to drop from the competition, and decided against re-endorsing Washington.

Meanwhile, in the midst of holy week preparations for Easter, Washington was driven off the steps of St. Pascal's Roman Catholic Church in Chicago by hostile demonstrators. They were proclaiming their support for Washington's Republican opponent, Bernard Epton.

Epton has relief largely on mudslinging to undermine Washington. Epton continually brings up the fact that his opponent was convicted for income tax evasion more than 10 years ago. Washington has refuted many of the charges and claims he has paid his dues.

Lincoln is not a part of such a whirlwind of political activity. Our candidates prefer to publicize themselves a little more subtly. We may have to put up with a few "obtrusive" signs, but they should remind us how good we have it in this "Gray, Drab, Dismal Old Government Town."



'Park it your way' at Grad-Park

Not long ago, in this galaxy, in this city, on this campus, I ventured out after dark alone. I rarely do this because, first, I have no guarantee that I'll find a parking place, unless it's after 11 p.m. Second, I don't feel safe walking a long distance from my car to the residence hall.

I usually park in a distant lot or side street. If I'm



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really lucky, I find a place in the Cather-Pound lot, kind of like discovering gold ore. Even that lot is scary at night.

When I returned to campus that evening, I drove around looking for a parking spot and saw the only vacant one in front of my hall. Legally and properly, I pulled up beside the vehicle in front of the space. I began backing into the much-envied parallel parking stall. Suddenly in my rear-view mirror, I saw two headlights swerve into my spot. At first I thought I was just in need of chocolate and having hallucinations. There was, indeed, a car in my space and it was a big one.

I double-parked my auto right there and was planning to settle the matter immediately. I frantically knocked on the driver's window yelling, "How dare you do this?!" The female driver looked straight ahead and ignored me. I knocked again saying I was there first and she had weasled in illegally. "Why don't you answer me?!" I screamed. She sat in the car, still ignoring me. I could have ripped off her antenna and chastised her with it but someone had beaten me to it. She got out of the car and as she passed me, flipped me off and mumbled something that sounded like "fish for bass."

The University Housing Office has spoken recently of plans to develop parts of residence halls into guest rooms as enrollment declines. One report in this paper indicated that the south end of Selleck may be the designated place for housing guests in the future. I have a suggestion. Why not consider making it a three-story parking garage instead? You've all heard of Rampark. This could be Grad-Park. (Park while you wait to graduate.)

A parking garage on campus could increase requests for on-campus housing. I propose that the parking spaces be sold to the highest bidders. The continued revenue should offset the lost room rent. Furthermore, campus police would lose their monopoly on parking and may have to compete with the high-rise parking garage. They may resort to putting in three- and four-hour meters.

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Florida vacation an excuse for investigative research

Addled minds are the devil's playground — or is that idle hands are the devil's workshop? Either way, I knew I needed to be wary in my week away from school.

Having a healthy fear of the devil and his wily ways, I self-assigned myself a weeklong workload of intense investigative editorial research. It would be a weighty,



David Wood

unwieldy task; I only assigned me because I knew I could handle it.

To avoid giving myself away as a muckraker abroad, I disguised myself as a vacationer. I applied strokes of genius to this clever ruse. With quick thinking, I surmised that, if I attired myself like an idiot tourist bedazzled by Rand McNally, I could dangle my camera about my neck without incriminating myself. *Hey heh heh*, I admit I snickered.

Next I donned sunglasses; I brilliantly realized that these are another device for which a fancy is shared by tourists and investigators — or rubbernecks and gumshoes, as they are known in the trade. I adorned my feet with obligatory sandals, dug my clamdiggers out of mothballs, rolled a bottle of suntan lotion up in the sleeve of my Hawaiian shirt and practiced gimpy smiles in the mirror before embarking for Florida.

As you can look up in any sociology text, it is an unexplained phenomenological fact that college kids stream to Florida every spring break. Florida is downhill from most of the rest of the United States, and the centrifugal pull of the Earth's spinning surely has some bearing, too.

Some have speculated that the higher temperatures of the lower latitudes somehow incites the mass migration. Perhaps, too, it is instinctual, as it is in birds; explanations from this school of thought propose a mythic aspiration to be a few miles closer to the sun or a residual yearning to see alligators, the last living dinosaurs, and to leap into the briny sea, the soup we evolved from.

Still others conjecture that students take spring break in Florida because they were brainwashed at a formative age by the libidinous films of Elvis Presley and Annette Funicello. Clearly, the scientific debate continues.

Florida is a limp phallus of swampland that hangs off the corner of our nation in order to separate the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. Its chief function is to serve as a dock for Caribbean refugees and drug smugglers — bad company for the youth of America.

When I arrived, the state reeked of the heavy perfume from the blossoming orange groves. Neighborhoods were steeped in a litter of fallen grapefruit; lawns looked like the outfields of golfers' driving ranges.

Heedless natives drove expensive cars through boulevards dense with uncivilized magnolia, eucalyptus, banana

trees and the like. Residents were so sun-poached and la-de-da that they allowed birds, like herons, egrets and swans, to grow to outlandish sizes.

Sickened, I nevertheless continued my brave research. I quickly dismissed weather as a cause for the student migration. While I was there, TV meteorologists were agog about what they claimed was the lowest barometric pressure the state ever experienced outside the eye of a tornado; they issued a book of watches and warnings — though wind, rain and clogged clouds were all that came of it.

Alligators were out of the picture; I saw none in the toilets, none strolling the streets, threatening pedestrians. Beaches were out, too; I was lacerated by the shell fragments hefted in the surf and, when I saw dolphins jumping in the air nearby, I knew crazed sharks would be snacking on my bare legs if I kept my seaside folly up much longer.

Lots of rubbernecks were swarming to a place called EPCOT, I overheard oyster shuckers jiving one day. EPCOT, I found out, was the secret plot of Walt Disney, one of the most notorious escapist of all times. It is supposed to represent the world of the future and, in that regard, was somewhat insightful — a bunch of mickey mouse, pricey meals, endless lines, vast crowds and authoritative hands-off technology.

Florida is a tough nut that even I could not crack in a week. If I am to get to the meat of it, I need more time — another vacation, *heh heh*.