

Cuomo strikes line drives in New York

It is spring-training time in Brooklyn and the phenom is taking batting practice, smacking line drives off the fences. Mario Cuomo is a former minor-league centerfielder, currently is a major-league governor, and (according to the boys in the press box) is a can't-miss candidate for the politician's Cooperstown.



George Will

Today he is in the Brooklyn Supreme Court building, seated beneath a sign that says "Vox Populi." Evidently Latin is big in Brooklyn. Cuomo certainly is.

He is taking questions from the bleachers and the natives are not restless. The questions are what baseball people call meatballs — soft tosses grooved over the heart of the plate, letters-high. Such questions ("I want to begin by thanking you, governor, for all you have done for . . .") do not give Cuomo a chance to be impressive, but the questions say something impressive about his governance.

Ebbets Field, home of the Brooklyn Dodgers before Los Angeles' larceny, was never a garden of shrinking violets. Brooklynites, ever more

than normal New Yorkers, are vocal about their grievances. But the only serious grievance voiced in two and a half hours of Cuomo's open meeting is that Brooklyn deserves a new stadium and a team to romp in it.

The main argument between Cuomo and New York Republicans is how big the tax cut should be. Republicans want it bigger than Cuomo's proposal. They say he is underestimating revenues. Cuomo promises that the cut in personal income taxes is just the start of a "pattern" of cuts that will include business taxes. This, in the Peoples Republic of New York? Yep, and it is like many other states: The two most popular politicians are the President, a Republican, and the governor, a Democrat.

Cuomo came to the nation's attention at the 1984 Democratic National Convention with the keynote speech that proclaimed: "We can do it again." The antecedent of the pronoun "it" was approximately this: We can use energetic government to engineer a more egalitarian society.

But William Schneider, a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, understands the Democrat's problem. Their ambitious social agenda depends, he says, on sustained and rapid economic growth to produce the economic surplus for egalitarian social engineering. However, such growth dilutes the sense of urgency for redistributive policies.

It is possible that — God and national journalism willing — Americans can come to find governors interesting. Governors have many more direct responsibilities than legislators have, and inevitably have more interesting records. It is hard to be ideologically monochrome when administering education and health systems, settling strikes and prison riots, and balancing budgets — as governors are required to do.

Schneider notes that recent Democratic nomination contests have not been left-versus-right contests, or young-versus-old contests. Rather, they have been "insiders" versus "outsiders."

The modern history (and the decline) of the Democratic Party began in 1968, in Chicago. There, Hubert Humphrey (assisted by a protege named Walter Mondale) defeated forces outside the party establishment — actually outside the convention hall, in the streets. In 1972 and 1976, the nominations went to outsiders — George McGovern over Ed Muskie and others, Jimmy Carter over Scoop Jackson and others. In 1984 Mondale, the insider's revenge, defeated Gary Hart, whose new idea was that insiders are burnt-out cases.

A governor, especially of New York, is an interesting blend, being outside the federal publicity machine but inside the game of governance. But Cuomo does not give the impression of wanting a presidential nomination in the con-

suming way that one must want it if one is going to get it. He says that the wrong question, constantly asked, is: Are you going to run for president in 1988? The correct question is: Are you going to seek re-election in 1988? He says that if his answer to the latter is "yes," (and it almost certainly will be), then the answer to the former must be "no." It must be, because he could not, practically or properly, begin, simultaneously, a second term as governor and a presidential campaign.

He often rises early, sometimes to write his diary, and occasionally he tunes in C-Span. He watches — can you imagine? — reruns of congressional proceedings. Is he inoculating himself against Potomac Fever, or measuring the opposition. Whichever, he has been warned.

When a New York reporter at the Brooklyn meeting asks Cuomo about the presidency, Cuomo groans. He is required to do that. The audience also groans. This is optional and interesting. They like him where he is, and will become more like New Yorkers — surly — if he starts acting like a presidential candidate. When he arrived in Brooklyn for his batting practice, a female constituent semi-swooned: "You're not as ugly in person as on TV." That was a New Yorker trying to be nice.

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Official says budget cut meant no extra dollars

The article headlined "\$100,000 More — Program Suspension Fills Research Coffers" on the front page of the March 5 Daily Nebraskan gives a false impression. In the article I was quoted as saying that the faculty research leave program was suspended because it was "too expensive" and that this meant an "extra \$100,000 in research funds for the university in the 1983-84 school year..."

There is no way elimination of a program can

generate extra money. The program was suspended because the Research Council budget had become inadequate to support the several long-term functions of the council. It was with great reluctance that the council, in 1983, suspended the research leave of absence program in order that the money might be spent instead on the remaining programs of the council. Those programs allow the purchase of equipment for research, the paying of hourly help for students helping in research, travel to obtain access to facilities unavailable at UNL, travel to scholarly meetings and paying expenses for visiting lecturers to come to UNL. In the last two years

before suspension of the Faculty Research Leave program, the fraction of proposals funded in these other categories had become so low that some action had to be taken. To imply that this had filled UNL's research coffers is to twist the meaning of words and presents a false picture of affluence.

It is correct, as stated in the first paragraph of the story, that the State of Nebraska contribution to the research council budget decreased by \$16,000 this year. In my interview we did not discuss budgets before the 1983-84 year, but it is worth mentioning that the state contribution to Research Council budget is down about \$53,000

from the 1981-82 academic year and down about \$141,000 from the 1976-77 academic year. It was budget cuts like this that made it necessary for the council to suspend the Leave of Absence program in order to fund more adequately our other obligations.

It may seem like a quibble to object to the phrase "too expensive" when describing the suspended Leave of Absence program. It would be more correct to say that the Research Council budget no longer allows us to afford the legitimate costs of such a desirable project.

James D. Carr
UNL Research Council

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