

Saving a vanishing species

By Garrison Keillor

It certainly does look like a quiet election this year. Of course, it's hard to say for sure since we hear so little about it. It could be a real hot and heavy one and we just don't know about it. But it certainly does look like a quiet election.

The Republicans are especially inconspicuous. The other day I tried to think of the name of the Republican candidate for state treasurer and couldn't. Normally I would know that. This year I can think of only four or five Republican candidates for anything. In fact, I know only about 10 Republicans, period. And most of them could be Democrats if they put their minds to it.

The fact is that the Republican population is declining in this state. A survey printed in the Tribune last spring showed that, of 600 people interviewed in

the privacy of their homes, only about 20 percent were willing to say the word "Republican," or about half as many as when Ike was president, while 42 percent said "DFL," and their voices were almost 60 percent louder.

It wasn't so long ago that we read a lot about a New Republican Majority, but that majority seems to have de-emerged, and now the market is good for magazine articles about the Republican Party: Can It Survive?

It has been a hard year for Republicans. They have not only had to figure out what to think from week to week, they've also had to try to think it.

Traditionally, Republicans have believed in tough law enforcement, swift conviction and stiff punishment, but with Watergate, they had to turn around and come out in favor of pres-

umpton of innocence. It was a strain, and many of them couldn't manage. Then Nixon resigned, and they were supposed to be happy that the system had worked.

Then the system worked to give him a pardon, thereby assuming him guilty, which, since he had not come to trial, presumably he was not.

And throughout the whole Watergate story, the most fascinating serial drama in American political history, Republicans were supposed to think that the country was tired of it and wanted an end to it.

This is like saying that people are tired of dirty movies. Maybe so, but they're not so tired they can't stay awake through them.

It wasn't the country that got tired of Watergate, just the Republicans. And no wonder. Anyone who had to presume Richard's Nixon's innocence, while holding down a regular job on the side, would have been exhausted after a few months and is in no shape to run a hard campaign now.

I just can't understand why they wouldn't let Charles Stenvig on the ticket. He was fresh, having been an independent all these years and unencumbered by Republican thinking, and he was willing to run for something. What's more, he's the sort of man who, when he runs, people are generally aware of it.

Apparently they turned him down because they weren't sure that his conversion was sincere, that he was a real Republican. Right here is one of the big differences between the Republican and Democratic parties.

The Democratic Party includes a lot more than just Democrats. It includes people who would spend us into bankruptcy, and people who would destroy the family, and others who would allow criminals to roam the streets at will and render us defenseless by confiscating our rifles. These people help to create excitement and interest in the party.

Decent, hard-working citizens like myself, we enjoy attending Democratic conventions because there we get to see the people who are trying to subvert everything this country stands for. But at a Republican convention there are only Republicans, and the only ones who get nominated are Republicans.

Of course, they offer us effective, economical and

responsive government, but we have gotten along without that for so long that it isn't considered a priority item.

Some people think that Republicans can be preserved through our free-enterprise system and do not require any government subsidy, such as being elected to office. I don't think that. I believe we have got to elect some Republicans, if we can only find out who's running.

Maybe they could put up a large sign along Interstate Hwy. 94 between Hwy. 280 and the Hennepin Av. exit. A lot of us drive that route, and we would be sure to see it.

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Facing in

By Walter W. Heller

This month of summity has led to a new candor in facing up to the grisly facts not just of stubborn inflation, but of a menacing recession. Granted, it is upsetting to the public and even to the stock market to face the dismal facts of economic life. But that's an essential first step to a solution.

The Federal Reserve has backed off a bit. But without throwing restraint to the winds, it should back off still more.

One mini-summit after another emphasized that the present degree of monetary tightness is both painful and dangerous. It is strangling the housing industry, threatening financial institutions, pinching small business, starving public utilities, devastating the stock market, squeezing foreign economies, endangering capital expansion, undermining consumer credit and choking off economic recovery.

If that's not tight money, it doesn't snow in Minneapolis in the wintertime.

The summit has borne in on both the White House and Congress the vital need to broaden the scope of the inflation program, to recognize that the inequities of inflation are even more damaging than its economic inefficiency.

Tax and budget relief for those (especially the poor and the elderly) who have been victimized by exploding food and fuel prices and for the casualties of fiscal-monetary austerity (like the jobless and the housing industry) not only



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In the good old days, people thought kindly, even longingly, of the future. The future, after all, was far enough away so that we could invest it with all our impossible dreams and last, best hopes. We could say with the confidence of total ignorance, "Tomorrow will be better."

Today we are not so sure. Indeed, there is a feeling that we already have plunged headlong and unprepared into the future. The past seems irrelevant. For the young, struggling with the exponentially growing mass of new knowledge, the past never existed. And the present is merely a chaotic second in time.

Still, in spite of a creeping pessimism, the future remains an eternal fascination, a tantalizing mystery that tests and stretches the imagination. How much can the future be shaped and structured to a human design? And what should that design be?

Those questions were among hundreds that occupied—and preoccupied—about 80 men and women who met in the rustic, tall spendor of Minnesota's Itasca Park to discuss the future of institutions. Mostly from the Twin Cities area, the diverse group included business executives, politicians and social-service professionals. The meeting was sponsored by Northern States Power Co. with support from eight other corporations and included a mind-fracturing 11 speakers in four days. There were enough ideas, predictions and controversial assumptions to design several futures. Or none at all.

From Orville Freeman, former Minnesota governor, U.S. agriculture secretary and now head of an international consulting and research firm, came the generally accepted statement that outmoded international institutions—including an archaic monetary system—prevent global problem-solving, but he also called for more production and a pressing idea to those who buy the limits-to-growth arguments.

Overproduction, overconsumption and overpollution of developed countries merely add to the world's problems, said Hazel Henderson, a self-educated public-interest advocate whose articulate use of the futurist vocabulary was awe-inspiring.

In no uncertain terms, the audience was told that the need for change begins with changing outmoded American attitudes that more is better, that the United States is the shining example for other nations and that tech-