

A Speechless High



PR man Hal Evry . . .

By Joseph A. St. Amant

United Press International

LOS ANGELES—Pat Milligan was an unknown attorney, but he got elected to the Water Board of San Bernardino County. He did it by following the advice of this public relations man and keeping his mouth shut.

The public relations man is Hal Evry, who runs ads in the Daily Journal, a local newspaper published for lawyers and judges.

One ad read: "You Can Be Elected State Senator. Leading public relations firm with top-flight experience in state-wide campaign wants state senator

candidate." Evry charges \$20,000 to run a campaign for a state office, but only \$10,000 for Congress.

When Evry finds his candidate, he does two things: he insists that the candidate keep out of the public eye as much as possible. No speeches. No doorbell ringing. No debates. No campaign statements. No discussion of the issues. And he struggles until he finds a catchy campaign slogan for the candidate. It can be corny.

'Three Cheers Milligan'

THE SLOGAN he picked for Milligan was corny: "Three cheers for Pat Milligan." It appeared on billboards throughout the county and cards bearing the slogan were widely distributed. On the other side of the cards was a schedule of televised major league baseball games.

"A few nights before the election, Pat began to get real worried because his friends were advising him he should get out and campaign," says Evry. "I took him to a bowling alley and we bowled for three hours. That got it out of his system.

"After he won the election, I went around to a lot of people and asked why they voted for him. They said they liked 'Three Cheers Milligan.' That's the name they gave him although they didn't know him personally."

In 1958, Evry engineered a successful low-pressure campaign to elect George Kasem to Congress in a Los Angeles County district.

"Every time George wanted to make a speech, I'd give him tickets to Disneyland and tell him to take his family there for the day," Evry says.

Evry set up what he admits was a corny poster for Kasem. It showed the candidate talking to a little girl and saying, "Hi, honey, I'm George Kasem. I'm running for Congress because, like your Mom and Dad, I want you to grow up in a fine community."

Once in office, Evry says, Kasem decided that he didn't need help for reelection—and lost his seat.

Evry, a veteran in the field of political research and public relations, believes that—contrary to tradition—most candidates should keep out of sight, shun public gatherings and let a professional manager handle the campaign.

"Somehow," he says, "a myth has sprung up that a candidate must get out and meet the voters. This idea has been foisted on candidates who have absolutely no ability to talk to groups and as a result they do themselves more harm than good.

"If a candidate is articulate and wants to talk, maybe it's all right. But

road to the Hill

often it doesn't pay. He makes a speech and then exposes himself to foolish questions from some nut who makes him look bad. Suppose he goes ringing doorbells. Fifty per cent of the people he talks to may like him, the other 50 won't, so it's a waste of time."

35 of 39 Were Winners

EVERY SAYS he has put his theory to work 39 times in the past ten years and has been successful 35 times. He is head of a group called the Public Relations Center and its affiliated Western Opinion Research Center. He does a lot of poll-taking which he says bears out his theory.

"Eighty per cent of the people don't even know the name of their Congressman," he said. "Ninety nine per cent don't know whether an incumbent running for re-election has kept his earlier campaign promises. Almost one-third of the people eligible to vote don't even register. Many of those who register don't vote even though news media exhort them repeatedly to go to the polls."

Evry does not take a moral stand on voter apathy but he feels that his campaign techniques will result in better qualified candidates.

"Many qualified people," he said, "would run for public office if only

they weren't subject to harangues and hassles by party workers and others who add to the tension of what already is a volatile project."

Although he advises most of his candidates to avoid public appearances, Evry says they have to communicate with the public in other ways. So he sets up catchy billboards and arranges for newspaper publicity to get a message to the public. He likes "earthy, meaningful slogans."

For example, he says, "Stop the parking meter racket" would be a fine slogan for a candidate, explaining, "Everybody hates parking meters."

Just Facing Facts

SOME critics accuse Evry of being cynical. "I'm not," he says. "I just face the facts. I don't think the voters are boobs but I know most of them have little knowledge or interest in politics."

He doesn't believe volunteer party workers are very effective in a campaign. "Take the Young Republicans," he says. "One of them told me they have 13,000 members in California. That's only four-tenths of 1 per cent of the eligible voters. I'll take the other 99.6 per cent and elect a candidate. It's the same with Democratic Party clubs. They just talk to each other. They don't reach the public."

You Can Be Elected State Senator

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with top-flight experience in
state-wide campaigns wants
state senator candidate.

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Relations Center - 1640 Wilshire
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... PR man Evry's ad.

Periodically, Evry places his advertisement in the Daily Journal, peddling his services. This is not an especially new technique, Evry points out. Years ago a young attorney named Richard M. Nixon answered such an ad and was selected by the County Republican Committee to run for Congress.

"He did all right," says Evry, "but of course, as everyone knows, he made his biggest mistake later when he agreed to debate John Kennedy. He wouldn't have done that if I had been managing him."