

**B** Section

THE PROVIDENCE  
JOURNAL-BULLETIN

WEDNESDAY  
OCTOBER 2, 1991



**BRIAN C.  
JONES**

## Next election will be tough on incumbents, voters

On my way up to College Hill yesterday, I cut through the city park in front of the post office. Somebody was stretched under a bright orange blanket, beside the statue of General Burnside.

Whoever it was, he was as good a reminder as any that politics ultimately has serious and disturbing consequences.

At Brown University, where I was headed, a good two-ring political circus was getting under way.

In the first ring, political scientist Darrell West — he's the professor with the curly hair and the matinee idol looks — was releasing his latest poll. The results: Rhode Islanders are going bananas.

Eighty-seven percent believe the economy has gotten worse; 67 percent are not very satisfied or worse with the legal system; 54 percent disapprove of what Governor Sundlun is doing.

Here's the real bombshell, and I quote from the poll:

"Generally speaking, would you say things in Rhode Island are going in the right direction, or have they gotten off on the wrong track? (Answer) 18 percent right direction; 75 percent wrong track; 7 percent don't know."

West says it's a standard question, but could be "explosive" politically: "Incumbents have a short time to clean up their act. If they don't clean up their act, they're going to have problems in 1992."

Across the campus green, in ring number two, Jerry Brown was considering whether to cause problems for one incumbent at the national level.

Jerry Brown has a reputation for





considering doing that again.

He bounced into a small auditorium a half-hour late (it's politically incorrect for somebody like him to be on time, it means he's not in demand), wearing a doubled-breasted suit of a vaguely unsettling shade of green.

A TV-like format had been arranged. There was a local "panel" that included community organizer Henry Shelton, state Rep. Ray Rickman and the Gray Panthers' Margaret Cann. I think the point was that "panel moderator" Brown wants to listen to America.

The panel members gave quick statements — Shelton probably said the most important thing — that lots of American children are growing up poor — then he and the five other panelists weren't heard from again.

Then, Donahue-like, Brown invited questions from the audience. But eventually, one student tired of this and said that since he was only 4 when Brown ran for President, he wanted to hear Brown's views.

Brown resisted, then relented:

"What I'm doing in my campaign for president is to limit any contribution to no more than \$100, to start there. If corrupt money is the problem, don't take it, just put a limit on it. And make the whole campaign not a campaign, but a cause, and make it depend on the American people claiming it as their own."

Brown did get into other issues, such as national health care and transportation, before his black-suited handlers moved him away. Later, Ross Cheit, a university professor who was on the panel, made an interesting observation.

Cheit said to me that the panel-and-question format allowed Brown often to avoid specifics.

It was a good show in both rings.

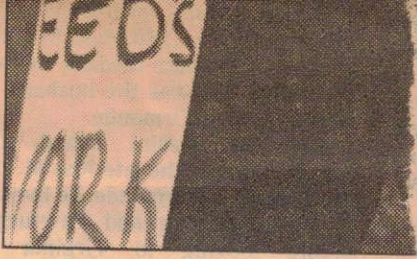
West says that locally, voters are dissatisfied and may be ready to make changes in personnel; Brown, although he's active on the national level, is an example of the kind of replacements available.

As usual, it's going to be tough on voters. Is Jerry Brown really listening, or just avoiding answers?

Those kind of judgments will have to be made, over and over.

On my way back from College Hill — it was now about noon — the man beside General Burnside was still asleep. He'd carefully placed his baseball cap on the grass next to where his head was covered by his orange blanket.

*Mark Patinkin is on assignment.*



Protesters show their feelings, above, while Maureen Segerson, right, hands a leaflet to a passing motorist.

## Leukemia patient

TIVERTON — Rebecca Bringhurst, who underwent a bone marrow transplant this year to treat leukemia, is home from Children's Hospital, her mother said yesterday.

Victoria Bringhurst said her daughter, 9, a fourth-grader at the Ranger Elementary School, has flu- id on her knees, a side effect of the transplant.

## New Shoreham

By RON CASSINELLI  
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

BLOCK ISLAND — Joseph J. Keane, New Shoreham's school superintendent for the last year, has resigned.

The resignation began to explain events two weeks ago, when the School Committee unexpectedly closed the island's school for a second "in-service day."

Committeewoman Lisa G. Sprague said at the time that Keane had gone on an unscheduled "vacation," adding, "We are not in a position to say anything. It is not to anyone's benefit for it to be made public at this time."

Committeewoman Rita Draper said yesterday the school was closed the extra day because the committee had to work out problems, such

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