

PARR  
For The Course



Ray Parr has been writing about politics and people since his days as a student at OU, when he was a reporter and columnist with the Oklahoma Daily. As a reporter and columnist with the Daily Oklahoman, Parr has covered Oklahoma politics for three decades. He was recently honored for his achievements by his newspaper. Parr has an unerring eye for hypocrisy, for the pompous pose. He has a penetrating ability to get to the point. He finds humor, often devastating, in the serious. He has a healthy suspicion that where there's smoke, there is sometimes a smoke machine. Parr's weekly column, "Parr for the Course," in the Sunday Oklahoman, has a large, devoted readership. During the past weeks Parr has applied his needle with accuracy and customary humor. Portions of recent columns follow:

I'm about ready to vote for some program to plow under this surplus of politics before the whole dern country gets designated a disaster area.

I might suggest setting aside a soil bank of politicians, except they no doubt would start bellowing for grazing privileges and that could turn out to be more costly than these emergency feed programs for our drought-stricken cows.

You know, this oughta be a great Thanksgiving this year, on account we can all be so thankful the elections are over.

I hope by the time we all get full of turkey and pumpkin pie we will have returned to our senses.

If just half the things these presidential candidates are saying about each other were true, I'd be scared to vote for either one of 'em.

But somehow I got a feeling the country's gonna survive no matter who wins.

You know, I sure am disappointed we didn't get to vote on topless bathing suits in this presidential campaign. I had my bifocals all polished up for the television exploration of this vital issue.

Russia's got a new twist to the system. They start their smear campaigns after the election.

I wish I was bright enough to keep up with what's going on in the world. I didn't even know they were having an election in Russia.

You know, I believe we Republicans could beat Johnson if we didn't have to spend full time explaining Gold-water.

I somehow gather that President Johnson is a bit reluctant to give Bobby Baker full credit for originating the idea of an all-out war on poverty.

Wonder why the poor folks never run for president.

ON PENS  
AND  
NEEDLES

Ray Parr, Class of '32, views the political scene as reporter and columnist with penetrating wit. Politicians squirm and laymen laugh as Parr, armed with his pen and a passel of bon mots, merrily tilts with windbags and would-bes.

F. P. Gudger of Pauls Valley sends me one of "those books" so I can get mad about losing all my freedoms.

But those things get me all confused. The trouble with the current crop of fiction writers is they don't like either the Republicans or Democrats, and I just can't stay mad at everybody.

I guess I could play it safe and vote for George Washington, except he isn't running this year.

But those guys can't scare me. I still think this is a pretty fine country and do not have any intention of moving to Siberia or Los Angeles.

You know, these Democrats can be plumb brutal when they quit fighting each other and start concentrating on the enemy. But I did not consider it quite cricket for 'em to leave the first string in the full 60 minutes, with the score what it was.

I guess Goldwater was about the greatest thing to happen to the Democrats since the 1930 depression. If I were a Democrat, I'd try to keep him active the next four years. You know, Barry might have been better off if that silent vote he was banking on had remained silent.

But I hope President Johnson doesn't get the idea he was the unanimous choice of all those who voted for him. The way I analyze it, this vote should not necessarily be taken as a mandate against having two television stations in Austin, Texas.

You ever notice how the conservative politicians never fight these big spending programs too hard, when they are getting in on 'em. This economy business in government is all right as long as it just applies to the other fellow.

It strikes me maybe Bud Wilkinson oughta switch back and try it on the other ticket next time.

I thought he did real good, considering the handicap of being a Republican this year, but just imagine how he would have done if he had been flying all the way with LBJ and Red Andrews.

I sorta suspect that Bud attended so many Tulsa coffees during the May primary he may have picked up somewhat of a distorted view of what we refer to in Oklahoma campaign years as "just plain folks."

I gotta get that boy out to Granite for his next spring training camp.

You know, after sitting up all night trying to figure out these election returns I'm about ready to go back to the old system where we just let Gov. George Nigh appoint our U.S. senators. That saved a lot of wear and tear on political writers.

I got to concede the national Democratic landslide was a big factor in Oklahoma's U.S. senate race, but I wish just somebody would give Fred Harris a little credit.

From some of the post mortems I have been reading you would think he just sneaked in without even being on the ballot. You gotta admit that guy, along with his wife La-Donna, went out and worked for those votes. It made my feet ache all year, just reading his schedule.

But he had his share of luck, too. I guess you could say he was one innocent bystander who didn't get hurt even a little bit in that J. Howard Edmondson-Raymond Gary fight.

I think it is rather remarkable that any man could survive one Oklahoma race for governor, two Democratic primaries and a general election for U.S. senator and still not be charged with any more heinous crime than parting his hair in the middle.

As a matter of fact, I figure the political fashion experts were wrong about his hairdo, too, and by golly I'm gonna start parting mine that way, just in case I get the public service urge again.

It won't be much trouble for me to make the change, on account I already got a good one started on top.

I wish Gov. Bellmon would quit going around telling everybody he has reduced state payrolls by 1,600 employes if you don't count the new ones. That's about like saying we had an all-victorious football season if you don't count the games we lost.

I am about as hard a loser as anybody and I got to agree this year's football season has been somewhat disappointing.

But I can't help but feel that this suggestion of Dr. George Cross that we tear down Owen Stadium is carrying things just a little bit too far, and could lead to a charge of over-emphasis on winning.

That's more drastic than firing Joe Don Looney after last year's Texas loss.

George says he needs the space for more parking, but it appears to me it might be cheaper just to tell some of these kids to leave their cars at home.

Well, for gosh sakes, can't we have a little reapportionment without turning it into a massacre of my beloved state senators?

Now I know how Custer must have felt. The embarrassing thing about it, we didn't even make much of a last stand.

First thing the senate oughta do next session is hold memorial services for those reported missing in action and presumed lost.

I figure the biggest handicap my senators had was running against a bunch of unknowns.

If it turns out Gov. Bellmon gets the honor of casting the deciding vote in this contest for president pro tempore of the senate, I guess you could say his luck has finally run out.

There is nothing more awkward than claiming credit for some guy you later want to blame on the Democrats.

Of course if Gov. Bellmon's new precedent of making public disclosure of his financial affairs catches on, we could come up with an acute shortage of candidates next time.

If they're gonna start that silly business, I'm gonna withdraw right now. That sort of extremism could threaten our entire free enterprise system of public service.

You give me two years in public office and I'm not gonna breathe a word about my finances to anybody, except maybe the federal income tax boys.

I figure if you are doing so poorly in office you don't care who finds out about it, you might just as well quit and take up working again.