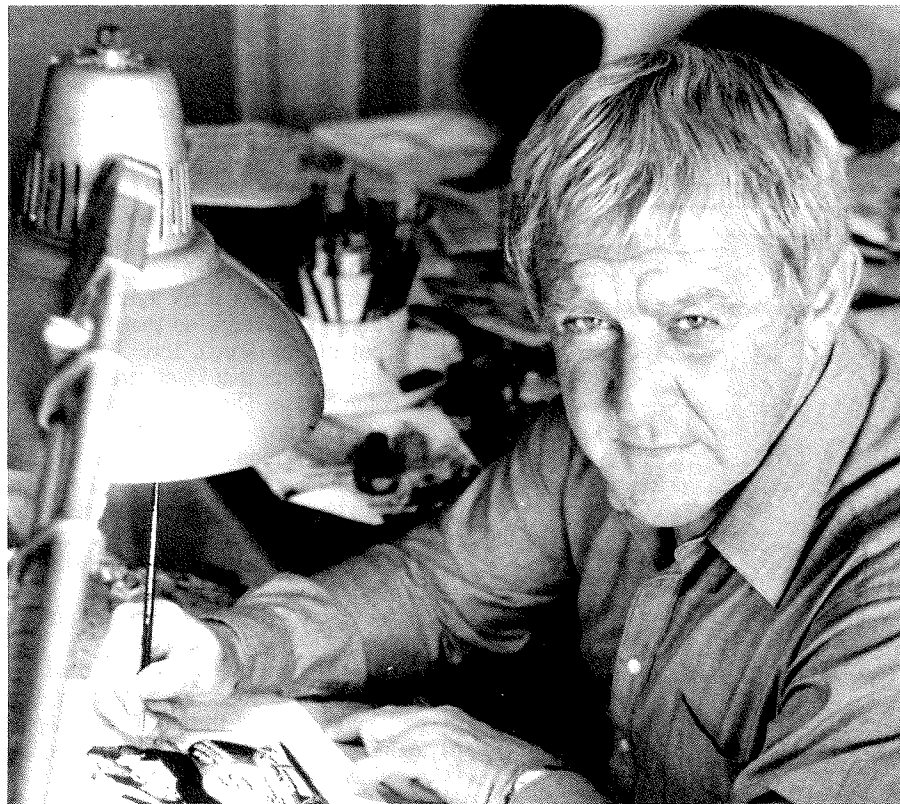


The Art Of Dissent

For Bill Sanders, the rules of political cartooning have changed



Back to the drawing board: Milwaukee Journal cartoonist Bill Sanders.

Bill Sanders, editorial cartoonist for The Milwaukee Journal, says he is still "liberal politically," although his newspaper no longer is. "I'm to the left of everybody I know." Born in Springfield, Tennessee, in 1931, he graduated with a major in English and is not ashamed of his writing. "An editorial cartoonist," he once told Newsweek Maga-

George Yukelich is the host of Wisconsin Public Radio's "North Country Notebook."

zine, "should be first an editorialist, and second a cartoonist. The only special quality about us is that we can draw. A good cartoonist should damn well be able to write a good editorial." He quarterbacked Western Kentucky's football team and in 1953 set an NCAA college division single season record with a pass completion percentage of .668. The Cleveland Browns offered him a tryout contract, but he opted for the U.S. Army, winding up in Korea. Then because

"anything was better than that," he started submitting cartoons to Stars and Stripes. In 1957, he joined Stars and Stripes in Tokyo as a civilian cartoonist and freelanced work to the Japan Times in Tokyo. He joined the Greensboro (N.C.) Daily News in 1959, moved on to the Kansas City Star in 1963, and to The Milwaukee Journal in 1967. His work has been syndicated in papers across the country and has also been published in the New York Times, Izvestia, The London Observer, Time and Newsweek. Married to Joyce, with whom he has four children, Sanders relaxes by fronting The Basin Street Saloon Band, a local Dixieland group of solid repute. In September, he will mark 18 years with The Milwaukee Journal.

"I don't necessarily wish I was at a different paper. I just wish I had the same freedom that I had when I first came here, which was quite different than it is right now.

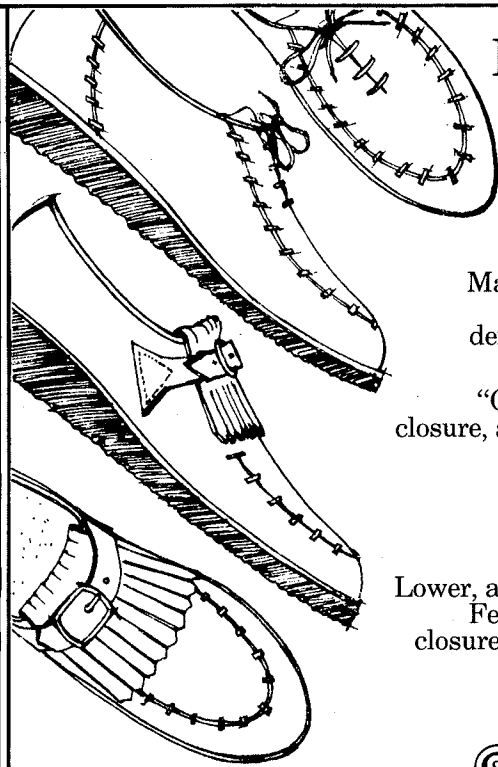
"When I first came to *The Milwaukee Journal*, I don't think anyone would have classified it as anything other than a 'liberal' paper, meaning a little to the left. I think if you ask our editors now, they would not use the term liberal. They would say we're a 'moderate' paper.

"Now, you ask the *Chicago Tribune* editors and they will tell you the *Trib* is not a 'conservative' paper, it's a 'moderate' paper. I think you might have to squeeze our editors a little bit to get it out of them, but they would probably admit *The Journal* is more conservative than we used to be. I think they would admit that and it's true. That's what's happening. Everybody is moving, occupying the center space.

"You take the editorial pages of *The Milwaukee Journal* and the *Chicago Tribune* for the last six months — or the last year — go through them, read them carefully, and you know, there is not a lot of difference in those two papers.

"There was a time when they were as different as night and day. Their editorial pages were iconoclastic, polemical pages that expressed a certain political social philosophy.

"Now, they both occupy the same ground. They read the same. You can go to any place in this country, pick up the local paper and it's the same story. They all look about the same. They all read about the same. They're really very bland and they don't offer the American people an awful lot in terms of stimulating them mentally and educating them about what's going on in the world. I find that really depressing. It's like everywhere you



REDEFINED CASUAL CLASSICS

Totally new for Fall...
Mark Alpert introduces casual
tailoring, featuring a new
definition in footwear fashion.

Upper, all leather comfort,
"Cortina." Featuring tie front
closure, and detailed cross stitching,
positioned on crepe soling.

Tobacco,
Winter White \$49

Lower, all leather comfort, "Trieste."
Featuring kiltie topping buckle
closure, positioned on crepe soling.

Caffe, Navy, \$49

UPPER LEVEL NORTHRIDGE MALL

OTHER LOCATIONS
APPLETON & GREEN BAY

Stewart's Shoes

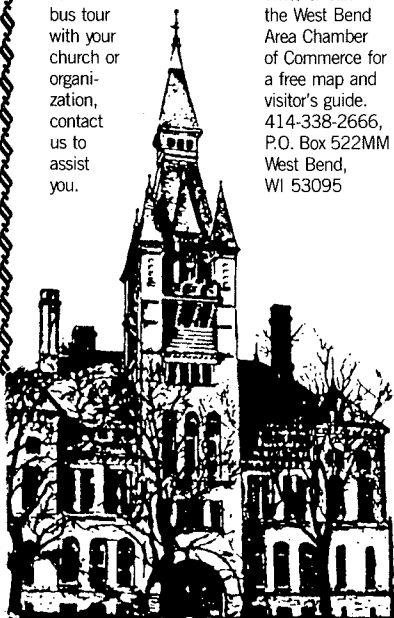
Spend a DAY, a WEEK, a WEEKEND in

WEST BEND, WISCONSIN

- Anytime you're there — you'll enjoy yourself.
- See the "new" Downtown.
- Visit the restored historical buildings.
- Shop the fantastic stores and shops.
- Enjoy the varied restaurants.
- Experience "outletting"

Form a
bus tour
with your
church or
organiza-
tion, con-
tact us to
assist
you.

Write or call
the West Bend
Area Chamber
of Commerce for
a free map and
visitor's guide.
414-338-2666,
P.O. Box 522MM
West Bend,
WI 53095



SUZY'S Cream Cheesecakes

Milwaukee's
Slice of
New York

- The Turtle
- Grand Marnier
with Orange Marmalade
- Chocolate Amaretto
- Raspberry Chambord
- Chocolate Chip and Walnut
- New York Style
- many more

Whole, half, quarter or slice.
5901 W. Vliet St., Milwaukee
Call 453-2255 for
special orders.

Open Tues.-Sat. 9AM-5PM
Also at
Sendik's on Downer,
Grasch Foods, Brookfield,
Spice of Life, Greendale,
V. Richards, Brookfield

turn, there are the McDonald's hamburgers of journalism.

"Since *The Journal* moved towards the center, it's hard for me to be competitive — on national terms — when my competition, other cartoonists, are free of the strictures that I have to work under.

"I could name 15 cartoonists around the country — Paul Conrad, Doug Marlette, Paul Zepp, Mike Peters — a dozen others, who are allowed to function as columnists and who are not tied to the editorial

*"It's hard for me
to compete in the
national arena of
political
cartooning because
I am tied to the
policy of my paper."*

policies of the papers at all.

"It's hard for me to compete with them in the national arena of political cartooning because I am tied to the policy of my paper. I am more restricted than I used to be. I cannot counter the policy of the paper.

"For example, this paper now endorses preventive detention. I don't favor it so I can't draw a cartoon on preventive detention. This paper has changed its position on abortion, and I don't agree with that position on abortion, so that kind of X's me out of that arena, too. There are a number of areas that I just cannot get into or comment on. There are cartoons I simply cannot draw.

"Those cartoons that I can draw now come under closer scrutiny than they used to because the editors are very concerned with the *tone* of a cartoon now. They're much more concerned with tone than they ever used to be.

"Let me try to explain tone in a political cartoon.

"It's one thing to *write* an editorial saying . . . 'Today John Smith bulldozed his own point of view through the appropriations committee, thereby killing the aid-to-education bill, et cetera, et cetera.'

"It's quite another thing to *draw* John Smith in a cartoon wiping off his dagger, having knifed this poor little kid — the aid-to-education bill.

"A political cartoonist chooses the metaphor and sometimes editors tend to cringe at the metaphor you choose and this choice, this presentation, is what gets called tone. The tone thing is one of the big, big problems for me at *The Journal*. Even when the editors and I all agree on a political issue, we often part company on the tone of the cartoon.

"I think this concern with tone has been caused by a trend in political cartooning

toward humor and gags. Jeff McNelly is the one who started it all because he's really a gag cartoonist and he has influenced all the young cartoonists coming along.

"They look at a subject and they are looking for a laugh. Not 'What can I say about this subject?' but 'What can I say funny about this subject?' That's a whole different ball game.

"The gags have not only influenced the

"If I'm a political cartoonist, the worst thing they can say about me is that they don't know where I stand."

cartoonists, they've influenced the editors, too.

"The political gag cartoon appeals to the editors, oh Lord, does it appeal! They love it because they are getting something topical and funny and *something that doesn't offend anybody*. That means they don't have to get nasty letters. They don't have to go down to their silk-stocking clubs to listen to somebody rave and rant about that goddamn cartoon.

"You know, I've spoken at universities about this and I've had people come up to me and say: 'Oh, Jeff McNelly is my favorite cartoonist.' I ask them if they read McNelly a lot and they'll say, 'Yes, yes. I follow him all the time.'

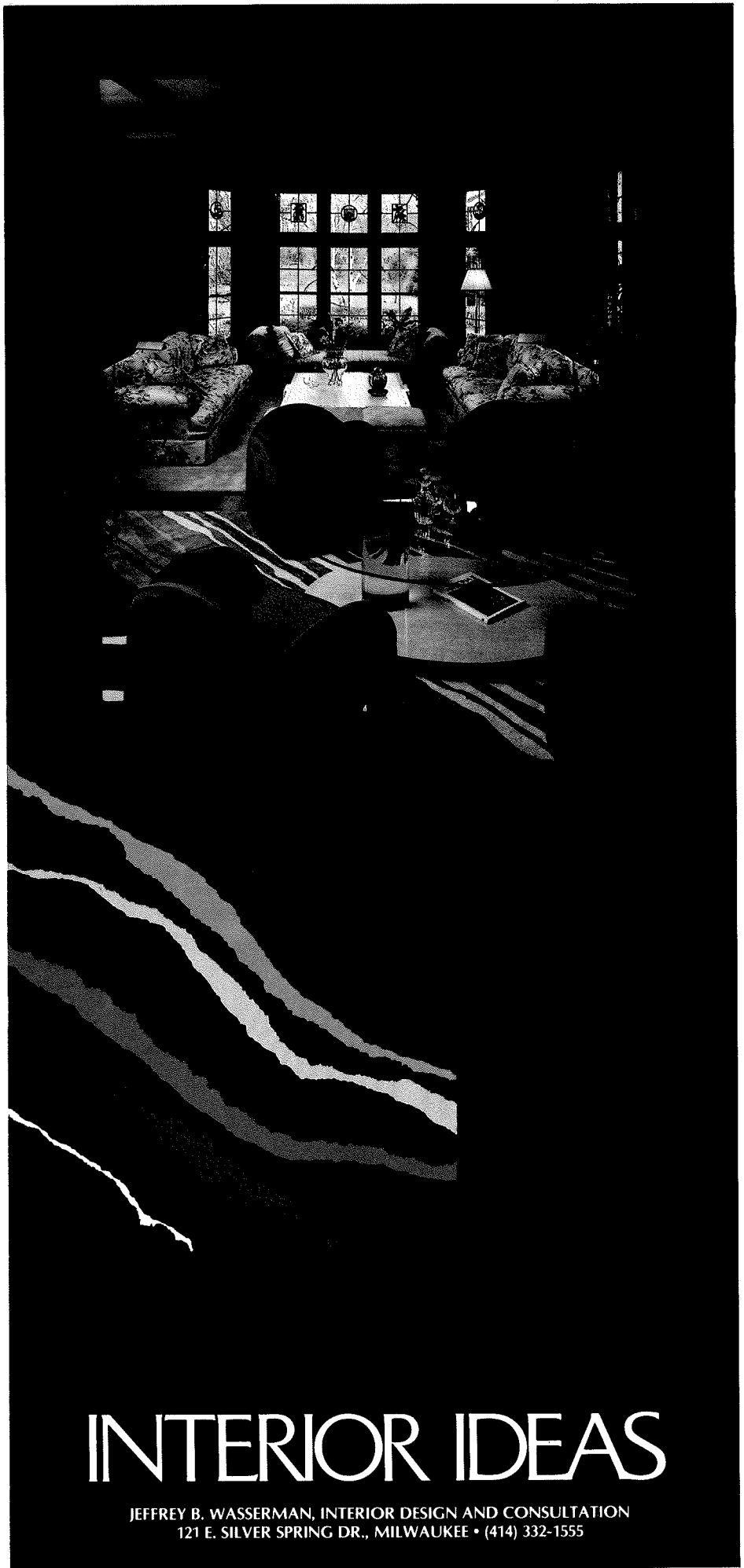
"Then I ask them to tell me where McNelly stands on gun control or where he stands on abortion and they can't tell me *because they don't know*.

"Well, if I'm a political cartoonist, the worst thing they can say about me is that they don't know where I stand. Hell, then I might as well be drawing Dagwood and Blondie.

"One of the things that's happened to our editorial pages as *The Journal* has gone more to the center is that we aren't passionate about our position anymore. My personal opinion is that our editorials spend way too much time constructing the opposition's argument before we make our own case.

"Another thing that's happened is that the paper apologizes more than it used to. I think that's motivated partially by trying to be all things to all people, particularly by business considerations, by advertising, trying to keep our circulation up. It's part of this whole blandness syndrome.

"I don't have any problem with printing a retraction if we made a grievous error, something that would cause damage. I



INTERIOR IDEAS

JEFFREY B. WASSERMAN, INTERIOR DESIGN AND CONSULTATION
121 E. SILVER SPRING DR., MILWAUKEE • (414) 332-1555

think sometimes when *The Journal* does it now, it demeans us. I really think it tends to deepen the problem of journalistic credibility when you do that.

"I'll give you an example. I was on vacation when this happened. Before I left, I had drawn a cartoon with a police figure in it. A suspect had been beaten with a police radio while in police custody and the police said they didn't know how it happened, so I drew the police figure with the headgear on, a blank face, no nose, a mouth with a downward, not a sneer, but a scowl.

"I drew a faceless, mindless police person and someone in our city room at the paper with apparently not enough to do that day studied that cartoon and decided that I had secretly drawn a phallic symbol, that this faceless face indeed looked like a male penis.

"Do you know there were people at this paper who believed that? Who believed that I actually stuck that in like an 8-year-old kid might? Hell, I'm a professional political cartoonist. That's dumb. I've been drawing for 25 years.

"Our editors wrote and printed an editorial *apologizing* for that cartoon. I couldn't believe it. They even, seriously, asked me if I had done that on purpose. I couldn't believe that either.

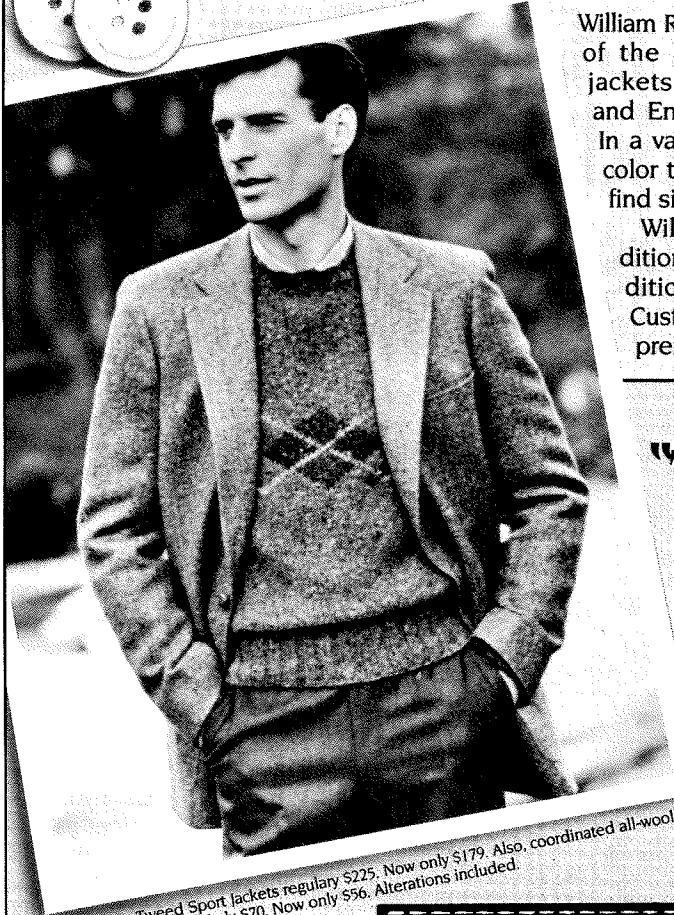
"As a liberal, I'm to the left of everybody here but I don't see anything particularly wrong with the paper printing 'View from the Right' columns. What I find kind of funny is that some of these columns are not too different from our editorial positions in many ways. Some of our readers have written in and asked when we were going to have 'A View from the Left' because we don't occupy that position anymore. I think that's true.

"When people ask me to define myself as a liberal, I tell them that I think the collective body politic has to serve the people least able to help themselves in our society and I think that's one of our number-one obligations. If that means making some of us in the middle and upper class less comfortable, then damn it, that's what has to happen. I don't make any apologies for the New Deal either. I don't make any apologies for Lyndon Johnson's policies. I don't make any apologies for those of John F. Kennedy.

"I abhor the policies of Ronald Reagan. I think he's absolutely the most detrimental president we've ever had in real terms. In terms of what he's done to the people on the lower end of the economic scale in this country, the disenfranchised, the people who don't have lobbies, to basic American civil liberties, to the Constitution. This man, I think, is an absolute detriment to the United States.

"I can only define where I am in those terms. If you want to say that's liberal, then that's what it is. I'm not ashamed to say it. I just don't know how to precisely define it otherwise." ■

Those who lead wear our tweed.



William Rogers offers you some of the finest tweed sport jackets available. Scottish and English Shetland Wool. In a variety of patterns and color tones, and in hard-to-find sizes.

William Rogers... for traditional and updated traditional men's clothing. Custom tailor always on premises.

FALL "TWEED" SALE

Sept. 27 - Oct. 12

Now's the time to add to your Fall wardrobe with quality attire at substantial savings.

The William Rogers label... your assurance of the finest in quality, value and service.

Exclusive Tweed Sport jackets regularly \$225. Now only \$179. Also, coordinated all-wool worsted slacks regularly \$70. Now only \$56. Alterations included.

Open 10AM-9PM Mon-Fri;
Sat: 10AM-5PM
Visa, MasterCard,
American Express and
personal checks welcome

William Rogers

CLOTHIERS TO THE DISCERNING GENTLEMAN

Market Square • 17115 West Bluemound Road
Brookfield, Wisconsin 53005 • (414) 797-7970

SET YOURSELF APART

**suburban
leasing,
inc.**

367-8906

