

Obey has plan to run in dist but  
but not army has supporters  
much.  
Republican as red headed  
but old of Reps who for  
him.

Compare policies of Mondt, Waisa, W. W. R. G.,  
Stevens it.

- Are township counties still from the earlier  
which make Taylor Avenue

David Obey

October 6-9, 1972

Friday - October 6

- 10:00pm Rally at tavern in Blenker for Assemblyman  
John Oestereich
- 11:30pm Talk with man in nearby tavern to whom Dave  
gave flag
- 12:30 Pizza Parlor in Wausau

Saturday - October 7

- 9:30am TV Interview at WSAU-TV
- 11:00am Presentation of Awards to 7th District Poster  
Winners in Hire a Veteran Contest, American  
Legion Hall, Stevens Point
- 12:00-2:00pm Dinner and Speech to Wisconsin Environmental Resources  
Council, Whiting Hotel and Sentry Insurance Auditorium
- 2:00-3:30pm Jerry's House - listened to radio tapes
- 4:00pm TV Interview WAOA-TV Wausau, Channel 9
- 7:00pm Dinner and Speech  
State NFO Convention, St. Mary's School  
Marathon City
- 10:30pm Drinks at Holiday Inn (Dave, Jerry, Larry and Opal Dahl,  
Al Zins, Bill Boblitch, Paul Slattery)

Sunday - October 8

- 10:00am Breakfast at Holiday Inn with Jerry and Nelda Madison
- 12:30-4:30pm Jerry's House watching Packers-Bears Game (Dave,  
Jerry, Tony Earl, Dan LaRoche)
- 7:00pm Wisconsin Association of School Administrators,  
Northaire Hotel, Three Lakes
- 12:00 Jerry's house

[Kathy O'Hara, Lyle Stitt, Lynda Reivitz, Jerry Sturgiss, Don Hagengruber, Jerry Madison and Nelda]

Jerry - Home: 842-7778; Office: 842-5605

We went straight from airport to town of Blenker for a fund raiser "rally" for 1st term Assemblyman John Oestreicher [Aystriker], whom Dave calls "the finest man in the Legislature." We drove for 3/4 of an hour through farmland that was very sparsely populated when I commented on that, Jerry said, "This is a population center. You should see our northern counties."

Dave recalled "I remember in 1970 at recess, Al Lowenstein and a couple of other guys asked me what I was going to do. I said I was going home to campaign like hell for two weeks and end with a rousing rally at Jerkwater. They didn't believe me! But there really is a town called Jerkwater. Well, Blenker is as close as you'll get to it."

I asked what he accomplished. "Right now, what I'm trying to accomplish in this part of the district is to get out the vote. So I came here to shake hands and rev up the troops to work hard. These are all Democrats and they are the people who will bear the burden of the political work--union men, shop stewards, farm organizers. They've come to have fun. They don't want to hear a speech. I just came to remind them to work and get out the vote. If we get out the vote in this part of the district we will win. If we don't, we won't. I met a lot of people tonight. I'll bet 50% of the people there I hadn't

met before." About 400 people--200 of them union men from Marshfield; Dave very pleased at the turnout.

Earlier when I asked him what the core of his strength was, he pointed to what he calls his <sup>four</sup> southern counties--Marathon (Wausau), Portage (Stevens Point), Wood (Marshfield) and Clark. All weekend it became clear these were his core in every calculation. "They are my tough nut--my greatest strength and they cast 43% of the vote. If I carry them the way I should, I carry the district."

On the plane when I asked him how he saw district; he talked in terms of Democrat and Republican nature of counties. And I asked him, again, whether he saw it in terms of counties and he said yes. Later, when were eating pizza, he came back to it spontaneously. "You asked if I saw the district in terms of counties. As far as our campaign is concerned, where we put our effort, where we get TV coverage, where we put our money, we do. But then, there are the interest groups--labor, the farmers, the teachers and the good government groups--the League and the AAUW. Those four are important. The farmers are very important--Mel Laird used to campaign very hard among the farmers--more than I do. He needed them more because they were perpetually mad at the Eisenhower administration farm policy."

He said he never campaigned farm to farm. Jerry said it's best way, but you can only cover 100 farms in a 9 hour day. Dave says "The best way to cover the farms is to go with a local guy. He'll stop and

say 'There's a farmer here I want you to meet.' If you do that 20 times, you've gotten some help. The important thing is to let the local people have their head in deciding who you ought to meet. Leonard Gross~~beck~~ is Assemblyman from Portage; he's one of the best. He's related to one out of every three people in the county, so he's a great help."

Are you more liberal than your district? "Hell, yes. But don't quote me on that. That's the biggest part of my problem--to keep people from thinking I'm a radical liberal. How do you explain to a group of Polish Catholics why you voted to abolish the House Internal Security Committee or why you voted against a bill to keep Jane Fonda from going to North Vietnam. How do you explain that? You can't. I don't mind answering a letter on these questions; but I hate it when they use it against me on TV. You just can't explain." This was interesting, yet somehow unsatisfactory. He must have to explain OR do something else so they don't care about these issues. He later said "This is the junk I expect Alvin to start throwing at me later in the campaign."

Portage is Catholic and Polish and they are Democrats. More Scandanavians are up north and west and they are hard core Republican. He said later that Almanac and Nader had this absolutely reversed.



When I asked about difference between old and new district, he said "The farmers in the Southern part sell their milk on the Chicago Market; the ones in the new part of the district sell on the Minneaplis market. So they are interested in different things. The Southern farmers produce Class A milk and get a good price for it. The Northern farmers produce Class B milk, so it goes for bulk use, in dairy products other than milk--mostly cheese. They get a shorter price. They are poorer. And the NFU is stronger in the new area."

He spoke often of NFU, NFO, AMPI--the latter is group that raised so much money for Nixon.

After stories re farmer in Wisconsin Senate: Jerry: "Dave's trying to tell you a silk stocking district this is not." Dave: "John Lindsay wouldn't be at home here." During ball game Tony Earle said something re Lindsay. Dave said, "I like him, but I don't like his arrogance." Tony replied "I'm glad he's on our side."

Redistricting. "Jerry drew the redistricting plan. Bill Steiger and I were designated by the delegation to draw up the plan, because we had the best contacts in the legislature. His man and Jerry each drew up a plan independently. We liked Steiger's better, so we took it. We literally had plans from A to Z--26 of them. When we started, we didn't think O'Kanski would run; but he had said

he wasn't going to run twice before and did. So we figured out how we could win even if the bastard did run. That's why we fought so hard for Chippewa. Alvin lost it by 3,000 votes last time. If I can do at least that well it could even offset his margin in Superior, where we are aiming for a 45-55 split. I haven't campaigned too much in Chippewa, but we have fine local people, good TV coverage and a very favorable newspaper. "We should do better there than 1970." )

"We campaigned early in the new part of the district. I figured if we couldn't make an impression early in Superior we wouldn't make one at all. And we've made some. It's Alvin's base. He should campaign there. If he came out of Superior with a 6-7,000 vote margin, it could give me trouble. But if he's there, he can't be down here in my base. And if we can keep him out of here, I'm happy." His plan is to come out of Marathon with 12,000 - 15,000 vote majority, carry other three of "my original counties" plus Chippewa. There will be about 75,000 votes left in the other part of the district. If I carry Ashland, then even if Alvin wins 2-1 in the rest, he can't defeat me."

Lots of talk re labor--its presence is felt keenly. "Labor can't elect you; but they can defeat you--by not voting." I met several labor leaders at Blenker. Val Scheuller, COPE man and Central Labor Council Representative--from Weyerhaeuser, also President of the Weyerhaeuser union. Also talk of Andy Biemiller giving

a speech favoring Obey and nothing that Alvin keeps saying he'll quit and doesn't. Also Machinists Union gave Dave \$1000 check at Blenker rally. Also some talk when we discussed debates between DO and AO. Two scheduled one in each part. Dave was irate when he heard that Chamber of Commerce was trying to co-sponsor the debates--or one at Stevens Point College (8-9,000 students).

"I want the moderator to be someone from the college who will ring the cow bell when we've said enough and who won't be afraid to shut us off--not a League of Women Voters type who will wilt. (They are the most well intentioned and most troublesome group around. When you get a group of those Polly Pure Hearts in the room; it's terrible.) I want it held at the College, at noontime not in the evening. So there will be students there. And I don't want the Chamber of muscling in on the sponsorship of it. If they are going to co-sponsor, labor should too. Otherwise labor will be mad as hell. So you tell labor that I want them to co-sponsor if the Chamber of Commerce does." Quite emotional about treating labor on par with Chamber and showed his relationship.

When <sup>the plane</sup> we sat down, "we call this Crownwetter International Airport, a good Democratic town--2-1." The Dem-Rep, labor-business split was sharp, I thought. (Like Kingdon says.) Later when Jerry talked of Dave's seminar with Wilbur Mills in May, "Everybody came--doctors, bankers, businessmen, for \$25 a head. The businessmen didn't want to contribute \$25 to Dave's campaign but they wanted to listen to and

question Wilbur Mills, so they were trapped."

His receptions. "They are the most effective campaign technique we've found. We're having two with Carl Albert next week. We have 50 volunteers send out about 2-3,000 invitations-- 'You are invited to a reception for Speaker Carl Albert and David Obey at such and such a time.' And people really turn out." He's done it with Gaylon Nelson too, who is Wisconsin politician with whom he identifies most closely.

"It's a weird thing how you get a district to the point where you can vote the way you want to without getting scalped for doing it. I guess you do it in two ways. You come back here a lot and let people see you so they get a feel for you. And secondly, I go out of my way to disagree with people on specific issues. That way they know you aren't trying to snow them. And when you vote against their views, they'll say, 'well, he's got his reasons.' They'll trust you. I think that's it; if they trust you, you can vote the way you want to and it won't hurt."

Biggest issue so far as I can tell is that Dave is in Washington and AO is campaigning and Dave's got better committee. "He's on the wrong committees for that district--Veteran's Affairs and Armed Services." And Dave hit Alvin on both TV interviews--subtly-- for being back home while he was on the job. When they asked him about debates, Dave said he couldn't make a date till Congress

*Equiv. of  
turning meeting  
for a press -  
press campaign.  
Each candidate  
has an "every body  
come" kind  
of event  
Office hours  
disinhibits  
turning meeting  
negotiations*

*Independence  
as a  
basis for  
trust.*

adjourned, that he was on the job. "I understand Alvin is back here campaigning, but there are important programs to be voted on in Washington and I've got to stay there and vote on them." Something like that. The basic thing I think Dave wants to get across-- subtly--is that he is on the job and that this reflects not just his sense of duty but his vigor and youthfulness against Alvin's age and health and vigor. His 'standard brochure' says "Build for the future with Obey" on cover page and "Northern Wisconsin's strongest voice for the 70's" on inside page.

He came home his first term three out of every four weeks. His third year once a month, his fourth year every other weekend till May and since May it's been every weekend. He talked about "mainstreeting" as a favorite technique in off years when it doesn't seem to political. He goes into a town and walks up Main Street, in and out of stores--often with the local assemblyman or Senator (if Democratic), an informal luncheon and a dinner speaking engagement--all in one town--"mainstreeting".

On the airplane, he had said Alvin was back campaigning and I asked whether he had considered it. He snapped back, "It isn't smart. Besides, I just wouldn't feel right about it. I couldn't do that." After the first TV interview he said he wished he'd been less subtle about hitting Alvin on this issue. That a lot was at stake in Congress next week and Alvin was neglecting it. "I blew that question. I

should have mentioned the Railroad Retirement Bill, the Highway Bill...." He also said in plane that Alvin's attendance record had not been good lately in general.

Wisconsin Resource Conservation Council--a holding company type of organization for 47 state and local conservation groups. Organized by Martin Hansen (whom I sat with at lunch). Martin's brother Louis is one of Dave's close confidants. He (Louis) was State Democratic Chairman, is now the 7th District Chairman and is Gaylord Nelson's "Home Secretary" (only place I've seen this term used). Jerry said of Louis, "He got Dave elected to Congress. He came to Wausau and ran the campaign." It was Louis who, in Dave's long account, got himself and Grover together in Key meeting that avoided primary in 1st election.

At luncheon at Whiting Hotel there were about 70 people and he spoke to them in Sentry Insurance Company Auditorium. Walter Kraus of NFU introduced Dave as a man "who not only votes, but he votes right." He has a 91% score on their ratings; Alvin has 45%. They didn't invite Alvin because he was so low.

"That group has an influence way beyond their numbers. And I don't know why." (laughter)

He showed me his "vote projection" calculations in which he made most conservative estimates, county by county, to see how he stacks up with Alvin. He concluded that he'd win by at least 6,000 votes. His

12,000 margin in Marathon will offset the tier of Republican counties in middle of district including Oneida--Alvin's home county. He figures to lose Superior by from 2,000 to 5,000 votes, but expects to offset that in Portage. He expects to hold even in Ashland. And he expects whatever he gets in Chippewa and Wood to be his margin. His big margin is in Marathon. "Everything would have to fall apart completely for me to win Marathon (Marathon) by less than 12,000 votes."

WSAU-TV, Channel 7, is key to media exposure in Southern district. Dave's 1969 opponent, Senator Walter, John Chilsen is a farmer, news director of the Station. Chilsen's father was part owner of station and Senator is still a director of it (I think). Anyway, Dave's relations with management are not good.

On interview he hit expenditure ceiling hard as he did all weekend as "blank check," "carte blanche" to President and as "domestic Gulf of Tonkin resolution." Said President should make his 6 billion recommendation to Congress--that Congress cut 14.5 billion from Nixon budget.

Re Jerry Madison. "He went to High School in Marshfield, to college in Stevens Point, taught in New London and then taught in Wausau. That covers four centers of the district--Wood, Portage, Waupaca and Marathon counties. Jerry is the guts of my organization back home. He knows 100 times more about the district than I do. I trust Jerry's judgment more than I trust anyone's in the world.

In talk to conservation group, he said he had 54 communities who need and who have asked for sewage treatment help. He talked about the water bill passed and says Nixon will veto it on pretext of inflation, but that what he's really worried about is tighter standards for industry that are in the bill. "The veto of the water bill will be a disaster for my district."

Re farmers. Jerry said "They only listen when you talk prices to them. That's all they want to hear." Dave said, "I disagree. Once the farm issue is aside, I talk to them about other things. I talk budget to them, defense, our priorities. I tell them they are citizens as well as farmers. They don't know how I vote. All that they ask of me is that I take care of farm problems. Otherwise, they trust me to look out for the poor little bastard. That's why they don't trust Nixon. They think he's competent, but they think he's competent on behalf of big business and not the little guy." Dave's image of himself in issue terms is that he looks after the "poor little bastard" and that's what he conveys generally to his coalition--at least to labor--farmer part of it. Style issues--on the job, youth, committees, hard campaigner--those bring in others, and cement the core coalition. They are icing on the issue cake--not the cake. Cake is the "little guy" advocate. That, he probably proved early in career.

*He is totally secure (psychologically) in his identification with "the little guy." + it is totally inconceivable that anyone could paint him otherwise -- he thinks. That's very clear in 2 interviews. But it's based on trust.*



Re questions after Environment speech. He said an amendment on 3 sisters bridge (in Washington I think) was lost "because Bella Abzug offered it. A lot of the guys will vote against anything she proposes." The mass transit amendment (get money from highway fund) failed because it came up in terms of a vote vs. the rule and some people reluctant to vote vs. a committee on a rule. Also 100 members were absent. Rural people thought it was pro-city, too. This was a nice "Q & A session" quiet, informal. Dave's forte, I think--because he's so frank.

*A lot like  
Buckley -  
not vote, argument*

Jerry's estimate is that 30% of the district is labor, 30% farmers. He also spoke of 10,000 teachers in district and elderly. There are 4 groups; they target in their literature.

The key unions are the Pulp Sulfide and Paperworkers Union, the Woodworkers Union, and Machinists. "We don't have any UAW in the district. I wish we did. They are great guys." Re his campaigns, whose success he attributes to "a few people working hard as hell," he said "you need a few labor people you can work with." And he spoke of having them in Marathon, Portage, Marshfield and Wisconsin Rapids.

Much of conversation on way to Blenker concerned street corner surveys they had done--one in Stevens Point and one in Superior and maybe a couple of others. Dave running well in Stevens Point, McGovern running ahead of Dave in Superior. "I'm glad he's running

ahead of me in the northern counties. That means it's Democratic territory." He fed these poll results--showing that McGovern has "a good chance to carry the 7th district" in the TV interviews. "I wish they'd run my comments on McGovern. But I know they won't. That's a management decision."

We listened to tapes of his 1 minute and 30 second radio spots. At end he said other guys had better voices than he and laughed "who's that guy all the others are holding up?"

He was born in Oklahoma during a brief stint there by his family (reason unknown to me). But family came from the area originally. Moved to Marshfield when 2 years, then to Wausau. Between 8th and 12th grade, he said he lived in 6 different houses in Wausau and that he had moved 21 times in his life. He did not say it, but I asked if he was thought of as "the local boy" and he said yes.

Dave on O'Konski. "He's a delightful old rascal, a man who is always there when people need to be helped with their problems.... I don't think he has a legislative assistant. But he has three case workers. And that's what makes him so formidable." He's said to be in poor health, had hepatitis a couple of years ago. Wife "Vonnice" works in his office. "I don't begrudge Vonnice any of the money she's made in his office. She's earned it."

I asked him if there wasn't a problem coming in the district over conflict between environmentalists and jobs, especially with

4, 38  
✓

regard to EPA standars for papermills. What does he say to labor?

"I tell them the crunch is coming and they had better get ready for it. I tell them some of it is scare tactics; I tell them some people will have their jobs with other plants; I tell them to work on early retirement and reform of their pension plans; I hope attrition will take care of some of the problem. But we'll probably lose some pulp plants. Some would have closed anyway; others will be shut down because they can't meet the standards and survive." Jerry calls it "the worst problem in the district." But Dave is facing it <sup>on</sup> ~~hard~~ on.

O'Konski has called Obey "ten times more radical than George McGovern" and TV interviewer asked him about it. He answered it in terms of trust. "If he means by that that I'm some kind of wild-eyed radical, people around here know me better than that." He went on to say he wasn't going to name call or let campaign "degenerate" into personalities, that he hoped they would discuss the issues. Dave's demeanor is so understated, sober, serious and unpretentious, that he is anything but wild-eyed.

Saturday was an absolutely gorgeous fall day. When we went by Rib Mountain, he commented, "The hill is really beautiful today." It was about the only hill I saw. At another point, he noted "It's a beautiful Wisconsin fall day. If you could walk through the leaves and go to a football game, who could ask for anything more." Asked Jerry if he had his football, and at one point watched a touch

*He's happy  
who he's  
quiet  
w. paper*

football game longingly as we drove by. Sunday he asked, "Who wants to go out and throw the football?" But there was no football. He played the harmonica on way back from Blenker. Played a quiet, soulful tune. Afterward he said, "This is the nicest time of day." It was quiet and I think he likes a certain amount of solitude. He's basically a quiet person. Don Hagenruber told me that sometimes when he's driving, they will ride for hours without saying anything. Sunday as we left, Jerry's, he said, "Where's my harmonica. I'll never make Eagle River without my harmonica."

Dave estimated 40% of district was catholic. Tony Earl said at one point, "I hope the Congress will take up parochaid. Then people will write their Congressman instead of beating up on their Assemblyman all the time." (laughter)

In plane after we had met man while waiting to reboard in Green Bay, he said, "I hope you'll forgive me for not introducing you to a lot of people. I'm terrible at remembering people's names." A lot of <sup>the</sup> guys I've travelled with are not really "naturals" at politics at all--not to degree you would expect. They are relatively shy people who overcome their introspectiveness by working hard at the joys of meeting people. On plane Dave said, "Gaylord Nelson says he can't wait to retire, so that when someone comes up and says, 'I'll bet you don't remember my name' he can say, 'No, I don't and I don't care.'" He laughed.

He talked about his coalition in Stevens Point as farmers, labor, academics, and I asked him how he held them together. "They fly apart every four weeks." He said and laughed. Jerry said "ideology" held them together.

On one of his radio tapes, a person says "we need 50 more men like Obey in Congress." Dave commented "People don't like Congress, but they do like their own man." "We need 50 more like Obey" plays on that. It's a way of sliding out from under the charges against Congress.

On way in to NFO meeting. "They're a funny group. They're insulted if you don't speak for 45 minutes. They are the people who would have been for the NFU twenty years ago. They are small farmers--almost all dairy. They are strongly populist. They could go toward McGovern or toward Wallace. It all depends on their leadership. And it's very thin."

"If all the agriculture economists were laid end to end--it would be a good thing."

Will Rogers said "Only way to keep Republican party respectable is to keep it out of office."

HST. "I didn't give 'em hell. I told the truth and they thought it was hell."

"Man, 38, wants to meet woman, thirty--who owns tractor. Please send picture of tractor."

Oren Lee Staley was featured speaker. National President (only one ever) of NFO--he wants contract prices that cover cost of production plus a reasonable profit." An old time <sup>Bryan-esque</sup> tub "thumper," repetitive, rotund oratory. Also Pat Lucey and Minnie. Agriculture Commissioner.

At Holiday Inn after NFO speech, I asked Dave re corruption on Capitol Hill and he said he didn't really know one way or other--but seriously doubted there was much. "The trouble is I'm not a Congressman yet. The first two years I spent all of my time getting reelected. The last two years, I spent getting myself a district so that I could be reelected. So I won't be a congressman until next year. You can get to know a lot about a person's private life if you see him in the gym, in bars, and at dinners. When I was in the legislature I used to transact 75% of my business in bars. I'm sure I shocked one political science class when I told them the state budget was drawn up in Burkes Restaurant. They were probably disallusioned."

"I have a very funny feeling about this town now, I feel rootless. I don't feel comfortable anyplace anymore. There's been no place I can go and feel at home ever since my Dad sold his supper club--the Gaslight. I used to sit in there by the hour. I liked the people who came in, I liked the food, I liked the atmosphere, I liked the drink. You could sit there and find out everything that

Obey's  
equivalent  
of Burkes  
Couples  
Chorus at  
Young's Restaurant

was going on in town, who was speaking to whom. All the government officials came in there and talked about the affairs of the day. Mel Laird even used to come in and talk. I'd be behind the bar and hed' come in and throw his arm around me and talk. Whenever he came through town, he would stop in. It was his weakest county. He ~~carried~~ it, but he worried about it. It was a potential source of trouble and it was going democratic. It was a source of information for him too. He was a great politician--better than I will ever be. He would come in and throw his arm around you. He was at home with anyone."

Who are you most at home with, I followed up. "With five or six friends. I'm really very reserved and I don't feel at home with most groups. I love to campaign at coffee hours with 10 or twelve people. I hate standup cocktail parties and the Washington scene. Or if the audience is very large I don't mind it--it's impersonal. I'm very bad at making small talk with people I don't know. I can't do it. They say Bobby Kennedy used to insult people by just standing there and staring at them while they expected him to talk. I feel that way."

Staff in District. Jerry (Home Secretary), two full-time girls, Larry his Agriculture Representative is part-time (and maybe one other). Dave said that size of office in district and

size in Washington (he has 7 there) "depends on where you are going to have all your press releases sent from. We send all ours from Wausau so we need more people here.

At breakfast, Jerry discussed the redistricting problem on which he worked for a year. The worst possibility was a district including Eau Claire, because a primary opponent might come out of there. Now, only Superior exists as a possible base for a primary opponent. Jerry considers O'Konski the worst possible opponent since he pulls well in normally Democratic areas. The district as they drew it is one of 3 most Democratic districts in Wisconsin. Jerry figures it to be at least 65% Democratic. He thinks if Dave wins it he'll have it sewed up for next 10 years. (Dave's own optimism was apparent on the plane when he started pointing out what areas he thought would come back into his district after 1980.) None of the plans they considered was without the Marathon-Portage-Wood base--the best indicator I think of the importance of the "tough nut" in Obey's calculations.

On Sunday, there was sporadic talk about the article on Dave and OK which appeared in Green Bay paper--portraying Alvin as just folks and Dave as a machine and containing a quote about Linda that Dave never made to effect that she takes care of women's lib for him. Also, a section treating the Medford festival as a triumph for Alvin. Dave was upset over it even though "very few people in the district will see it." He kept saying



what a bad reporter Bonnie \_\_\_\_\_ was." "It's like a cub scout reporting World War Two." Article says Alvin does well with Poles. Dave says the opposite is true--that OK does best with German Lutherans, Scandanavians and German Catholics and worst with Poles. Re machinelike quality, i.e., his staff would do serious research on question, "How many angels could dance on the head of a pin." "It makes us sound like we don't have any fun." "I'm not efficient." "It sounds like Linda is my travelling companion instead of my legislative assistant. The quotation about her is completely made up. The only time I've been with Linda was one TV interview. And where did she get the idea I throw gum in the basket? She's a terrible reporter." The segment about Linda troubled him and he came back to it again back at Jerry's house at midnight after we returned from the Educator's talk. He said Bill Steiger had a woman assistant who had been with him since beginning and who was heart of his office. "Like a sister to him." And that press had played it up as if there was something else between them or in such a way that a naive reader might think so. Said ~~that~~ the quote re women's lib came from Linda, not himself. Very gun shy about being publicly associated with another/<sup>woman</sup> in any way.

Tony Earle, Dan LaRoc are brothers-in-law. Dan and Dan Crooks are brothers-in-law. They are Dave's core (+Jerry +labor). He says they kid about "the two dynasties." Tony and Dan came to watch first half of Packers game--before speeding off to Merrill to watch the 2nd half on a better set. Jerry's was awful and gave

*1/16 Dwyer's diary  
11/14/54*

everyone a headache. We sat drinking beer, eating cheese and dip and the conversation was interspersed with football game and politics. But politics was the main theme and, after each comment about the game, talk returned to just where it had left off on politics. Tony is the floorleader of the Assembly just as Dave was. Tony wants to run for Attorney General. They talked about the legislature, strategy in running for Attorney General, local people and their political leanings, ambitions, problems, etc., "plant-gateing" by the two of them in tandem, national politics (very little), etc. Here is the equivalent of Barber Conable's cronies. This is how Dave finds out what is going on at home. Tony, Dave, Dan and Jerry covered a lot of territory during the first half. Dave had already covered district back and forth with Jerry who is the key informant. Close friends play an important part for some congressmen. It was a very warm circle of friends, too. A thoroughly comfortable meeting of equals. He wanted Tony to go to Three Lakes with us; but Tony said his wife would not appreciate it. Jack Flynt, by contrast, keeps it all to himself so far as I can tell. I never heard him talk strategy on politics.

One of the themes I noted in the various conversations among friends that I witnessed was the recitation of "how we did it" in the past. A kind of unconscious rehearsing of "past glories" (as Dave put it after our Three Lakes trip). At cocktails in Holiday Inn

Dave told story of how he psyched out a leading Republican Judge in Marshfield by making<sup>it</sup> his business to drop in on him 4 or five weeks in a row, to give the Judge the idea that he was always campaigning and would, therefore, be hard to beat. He said (amid much laughter) when he'd be going through or near Marshfield, he'd stop and look up the Judge just to create impression he was always around. Said he'd go find that Judge wherever he was just to say hello. Idea was that Marshfield Republicans would think he was unbeatable.

He will spend 45,000-50,000 on the campaign. One half of the budget will go to TV--out of Superior, Eau Claire and Wausau, 1 minute, 5 minutes, 30 seconds and three 1/2 hour programs. These three will have Tony Kubeck relaying questions to Dave.

Sunday, there was lots of hilarity as Dan told story of how he and some friends after drinking one evening decided to run Irish flag up on Wausau City Hall. Tony Kubek was with them, had not been drinking, was persuaded to come along and, when they got caught by police, Tony was only one they recognized! Then the flag got stuck on the flagpole. Good story. Dan is now the District Attorney of Marathon County.

On way to Three Lakes, Dave summed up the weekend. "It's been an unusually loosely scheduled weekend. It isn't often that I get the luxury of watching a Packer's game. But it's been the best weekend of the campaign for media coverage. I got media exposure in every major market in the Southern part of the district except Taylor

and Clark counties." He named the two TV interviews, the NFO speech, the poster ceremony in Stevens Point, the speech to superintendents, the Blenker rally, the environmental group. They were few but important. Jerry concurred that it was slow but important. I, of course, never got to ask him the question about the most important thing he did.

Before Dave spoke at School Administrator's meeting (they were there for what they call a "political seminar" to educate selves in political action) during the introduction of dignitaries, a man from national office of Association of School Administrators in Washington got up when he was introduced, praised Obey lavishly and said "We need him back."

On way home, Dave talked about his first campaign, how it came about, blow by blow--for about one hour. I could not remember it all but will try to indicate some of the highlights.

He was in Hawaii with Manny Brown and wives when a staff man from Wisconsin legislature, who was with them, came into hotel waving a paper and saying "Obey, you're going to Congress." The story was that Mel Laird had accepted Nixon's offer as Secretary of Defense and would be resigning from Congress. Had to decide whether to go home immediately or not--had been sick and decided not to.

I asked: Had you been thinking, before that, of running for Congress." That's all I had thought about since I had been in the 8th grade."

He came back and started touching base. First to Speaker of Wisconsin Assembly to ask if he should give up his whip's job-- Speaker (Huber, I think) said no.

Then he called a meeting at Jerry Madison's house. People at the key meeting were Dave, Jerry, Tony Earl, Dan LaRoc, Dan Crooks and Rasmussen of AFL-CIO. Same core group that now makes up his network-- with a couple of additions. (Larry Dahl and Louis Hansen anyway). They decide strategy.

First step is to go see Frank Nikolay, a State Senator, once the leader of the Senate, had been defeated in 1966, but came back in 1968. From outside Marathon County, Dave admired him greatly, said he would not have opposed him and felt Nikolay should have first crack at chance." Nikolay made a hard political calculation--that he had been defeated once, that I had been getting better TV exposure as a result of my position in the Assembly, that I came from the population center of the district and that I would have a better chance than he. He didn't think a Democrat could win, but thought I had the best chance. He agreed to support me." Strategists decided to have Nikolay put out statement urging Dave to run and he did.

Then Dave called Larry Dahl who had run vs. Mel Laird in 1968 (got 35% of the vote) to see what his intentions were. Larry was vice president of NFO. He was non-committal and said he was keeping options open. But apparently soon after he decided not to run. Not clear on that.

*In later interview, Dave said he could only see trouble coming from right in a primary.*

That left one serious other candidate, Herbert Grover, an Assemblyman from Shawano County--"a conservative--very conservative." Grover was making noises and being quite assertive about running. He and Dave had some personal feelings growing out of contretemps over who should run for State Senate vs. Chilsen in 1966 or 1968. Anyway, strategists decide that Louis Hansen, 7th District Chairman, should get the two together in a room to see if they could work it out. Louis gets them together. Grover comes on strong that he's going to run. Dave keeps quiet, except to say he's running no matter what. Gradually Grover gets it off his chest and begins to see the light. What happens is that Louis and whoever else is at the meeting (not sure who was) tells Grover that AFL-CIO, NFU and NFO will support Dave in the primary. Here is his primary constituency. He decides not to run and subsequently backs Dave in election and helps him.

Dave sees this as a key decision. "We could not have won the general election if I had been forced into a primary. The primary was scheduled for March and the election in April. We couldn't have recovered from a primary fight in time to win."

He did have a primary opponent who got 5%--William Sandstrom. "His motto was Scientists in Congress and his issue was the preservation of the Great Blue Whale. That was certainly praiseworthy, but not immediately relevant to the citizens of the landlocked Wisconsin Seventh." Guy later called Wilbur Mills and threatened to run vs. him in Arkansas if he didn't do something or other. A longstanding joke between Obey and Mills.

His election opponent was State Senator Walter J. Chilsen. Obey's main issue is the State income tax passed by Republicans. Obey had said before 1968 election that tax was coming; Republicans (Knowles was Governor) said no. Then, after election, they put one in. It stopped taxes at \$14,000 level. Obey called it "a rich man's tax bill." Chilsen called it "a reasonable tax bill." Obey blasted the "secrecy" with which it had been put over on voters. "If he votes that kind of rich man's tax bill in Madison, he'll vote the same kind in Washington." "If he operates in secrecy in Madison, he'll operate in secrecy in Washington."

*Same kind of  
mess ever  
since - class is  
sordid*

Chilsen's main issue is that Dave is soft on radicalism. Some black students invaded offices at Oshkosh State University and everyone upset about it. They are kicked out. Obey says they should have a hearing first. Chilsen wants tough laws against students. Nine came up in legislature. Dave supports 3, opposes 6 and then went on TV, took radio ads defending his position.

He says that when the Osh Kosh thing hit and Chilsen started after him: "I was ahead, but I could feel the whole bottom start to fall out." Said he decided to face issue head on and fight back. "To this day I don't know whether we did the right thing or not. I think we did."

The turning point came, he thought, when he and Chilsen debated before students at Stevens Point. "I clobbered him before th students at Stevens Point." Probably a morale booster more than anything

since it was a friendly audience. "I told them, if you were arrested for speeding, would you want your license taken away without a hearing. If you were arrested for anything, would you want to be thrown in jail without a hearing." Anyway, after that, he goes back on offensive on taxes.

*representational style  
is an important  
kind of issue  
not just used  
often.*

"In Shawano County he only won by about 200 votes. He should have done much better. We hit him there for being lazy. "Since when have you seen your State Senator? If you don't see him when he's in Madison, you won't see him when he's in Washington.'" This was a style issue that was used against OK--that he's on the job and his opponent isn't. All during the campaign, he drove to Madison for morning session, came back and campaigned in late afternoon and evening, "plant-gated" in the morning and drove to Madison again. Speaker told him to skip votes on the 9 issues and Dave said no. He wants image of being on the job.

*representational  
↑  
same as  
now*

I asked who gave him his strongest support in that first campaign? "Labor--and the farmers. We had a coalition of labor, farmers and Democrats. It was a DFL operation--plus a lot of luck. We had enough people who were hungry for a victory--especially after Hubert Humphrey had just lost--that they just worked their asses off. I remember once we had to get out a mailing of 12,000 letters. The guys from the Brokaw Plant--where I had worked summers while I was in college--came down to headquarters at 3:30 and worked till 10:00 at night, for one whole week, addressing envelopes. It was the first time I had ever



seen labor operate that way in a campaign.... At 6 a.m. the morning after the election Joan and I were down at the Brokaw Plant gate saying thank you when they came in to work."

His money was mostly labor--a little from farmers. He had a local fundraise when Humphrey came and people paid \$10 apiece. Democratic National Committee gave 5,000 and he spent 50,000 in all. That was the most spent by any Democratic Candidate in Wisconsin.

"If it hadn't been a special election, I would not have won. There was a concentration of resources that would not have been possible in a regular election. It was just after Humphrey had lost and everyone was hungry for a Democratic victory." Nelson came in 8 times, "Prox" once, too.

"(Democratic National Chairman) Fred Harris was with us on election night, waiting to see whether he was going to proclaim the resurgence of the Democratic party or slink out of town on the early morning plane."

After winning and making TV statement and going to Headquarters celebration, he went to bed. Couldn't sleep. "I couldn't sleep so I decided I had better get up and enjoy it. I wanted most of all to go walk down the main street of Wausau. I wanted to walk down Third Street and look at all those Republicans who had run that town for so long--look at them and enjoy my victory (I wanted to walk into the Dairy Bar.) I knew I'd enjoy that walk. And I did."

I asked him about business being on the other side and he said yes they were. He spoke of Marathon Electric, Sentry Insurance Employers Insurance of Wausau, the Farm Bureau (agro-business), a Dairy Cooperative, and Forward Communications, network of newspapers and TV--including Channel 7, WSAU-TV. "Sentry Insurance in Stevens Point is the heart of the Republican operation in this state." President of Employers Insurance (the one with the train station on TV!) had brother or relative who was Republican County Chairman.

"It's the small town main street capitalist syndrome."

"I'm getting some support from business this time, not because they like me but because they think Alvin is such a clown."

Talked re Bill Ford as a fine congressman, because he's willing to be No. 2 behind Jim O'Hara on E & L. Has built good reputation as No.2 man. "The trouble with the House is that there are too few people who are content to be Number Two. They all want to be number one. I've always been Number Two." I said, "You're Number one now in the district." He replied, "No, most people still think I'm number two. Mel Laird is Number One." (Ask him for difference between his coalition and Laird's). That comment portrayed his essential modesty--as when he said Tony Earl would make a better Congressman than he, also said that about Frank Nikolay and also said Mel Laird was better politician than he.

Re that first contest, he mused, somewhat wistfully, "That was really fun. I enjoyed it." At another point he called it a "clean, hard campaign," and satisfying for that reason.

Re appropriations seat. "I was so happy I could have burst. I just sat there in the office quietly and smiled. The staff went out and bought some champagne; and some of them thought I wasn't happy enough. Kathy O'Hara said she had never seen me so happy in her life. She was the only one who understood what my mood was. When I'm really happy, I just sit still and keep quiet and enjoy it."

*class thing again*  
Re school superintendents: "Half the men in that room would never stick their necks out for a Democrat. It's just not socially acceptable in the kind of towns they come from. They know their school boards are Republican; they know their friends at the country club wouldn't like it if they supported anyone but a Republican. I've seen some of their names on petitions backing conservative Republicans against Democrats who have busted their asses for education. I love to needle them. They're a one-way street crowd. They want what they want from you, but they'll never help you back home when you need it." There's a class thing here. And you can begin to see what midwestern Republicanism is--it's a small town, main street, respectability kind of thing. It's also a class thing, but the sense of class may be strongest in the small town. Dave feels it--his desire to walk down main street and look at the Republicans and savor his victory there, plus his comments re educators.

He sees issue in this campaign as O'Konski's credibility. When I asked him about Project Sanguine. "It's all part of a larger issue--his credibility. First he's for the war, then he's against it, first

he isn't going to run, then he is, first he's for Sanguine, then he doesn't know. He can't make up his mind and he loses credibility. That's the issue. And, indirectly, it calls attention to the fact that he's old." No question but what Obey is pushing the age issue subtly.

He thinks Alvin will start throwing social issue stuff at him near end of campaign, trying to make him out to be radical.

He told his Appropriations seat story--asked for it early--got Public Works. "Going crazy on PWk's"--"I would have loved E & L." But said only committee he really wanted was Appropriations. Someone died on Appropriations and I&FC, he went to see Martha Griffiths about I&FC vacancy who said she wanted Appropriations for her zone. Bill Ford had crack and didn't want it--she asked Dave if he wanted it--yes--he went to Mills; Landrum, Ullman and I've forgotten who else. She calls up and tells him he got it. It was a Griffiths-Rostenkowski deal. He wanted I&FC vacancy kept open till they had Illinois man to go on. She wanted Appropriations spot. They traded. Danny says to DO "You can't be too liberal if you're going on that Committee."

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"I trust Jerry more than anyone else in the world. He's the guts of my operation. He knows how I want to say things as well as I know myself. And he has insights into the political situations that I wouldn't have." Jerry is "Home Secretary".

In first race, Chilsen's strength was described in counties.

"I got clobbered in Waupaca, Waukesha and Marquette." He lost Shawano

but not by much. Carried Lincoln unexpectedly because Chilsen family sold paper there and people were upset.

He has trouble getting media coverage, and he fretted about that all day Saturday. "There are several local reporters--one in Wausau and one in Merrill--who could write a good story on this campaign. But they wouldn't be given a free hand to do it." Local papers will use handouts and releases, but no interest in writing own stories.

In 1st campaign, "I had the support of one newspaper, with a circulation of 400. All the rest were against me except two that were neutral. It's a close arrangement between the newspapers and the TV in most of the district." He was apprehensive that though TV reporters were OK, and would ask him good questions, the management wouldn't use the best ones. He and Jerry were upset Sunday night about their inability to buy some time when they wanted it and were planning to put pressure on TV station by threatening action vs it when license renewal came up. A constant battle with media.

Mrs. Chilsen had bought a new dress for a planned celebration banquet in Washington. "Every time I saw her afterwards, she looked like she was going to cry. It was a physical thing with her. She's a nice person and she didn't know anything about politics. They were so sure they were going to win."

Jerry. "Dave's a loner. I worry about Dave sometimes." This was appropos of Dave's great dependence on Jerry. Jerry wants to go back to teaching. He and Dave have agreed not to talk about it till after campaign. He says if it hadn't been for redistricting, he'd have left after 1970 since he believed Dave had it sewed up. Then redistricting made it "a whole new ball game." If he wins this time, he'll sew it up tight. Dave himself on the plane was talking about which counties he expected to get back after the 1980 census.

Dave wants 5 LA's! He says that's because he wants to work on issues. Jerry Sturgis knows freedom of info--worked with — "I could make a national impact in that area. But I can't let him work full time on it." Wants Linda to work full time on Environmental staff. Wants a budget man to do Appropriations. "I'm awfully understaffed." "My real interest is Foreign Affairs. That's where my education and training are. I'd love to get on Otto Passman's subcommittee or John Rooney's subcommittees or, of course, defense. I'd like to have Jerry Madison come to Washington and do Foreign Affairs for me. He has a good historical perspective. "The district doesn't demand this. It's just the way I'd like to do it." He's issue-oriented. When first went to Congress "I wanted to get on E & L. I'd have loved that committee...." At meeting "It's the wildest committee in Congress."

Don told me that Sheila Earl said Republican image of Dave is "ambitious young man willing to do anything to get ahead--in a word, vicious." He's ambitious, but anything but vicious. Republicans apparently don't know how to respond to successful young man. *who sent in Jay Lee image.*

He was probably most introspective at Holiday Inn where he talked of being most at home with a few friends. His circle in Wausau and other friends, Louis and Larry.

Larry Dahl told story which everyone enjoyed immensely and which tells something about the ideological stance of the close friends. He's on Wisconsin Natural Resources Board, and he's the only honest to God farmer on it. The rest are rich businessmen--he spoke of meeting with them, how "I crooked my little finger with the best of them," how "they all came in private planes." "One of them said to me that he had flown to Mexico in his private plane to get his wine. I told him that I drove to Big Falls to get my beer." Great hilarity--class joke.

He does no polling, only the street corner surveys, catching people as they go down main street. "People laugh at our street corner surveys. But they've always been an accurate indicator in the past." They treat them as gospel.

Problem with labor in this election is to get them to work and vote. Jerry left me at airport and event to talk with a national

COPE man--they want him "to go to Superior and jack up labor," to tell rank and file that COPE has endorsed Obey. They always endorsed Alvin before and guys are in habit of voting for him. They still will--but Jerry wants leadership to try to get the message through--so they'll work and vote.

The first thing I smelled and the last thing I smelled on entering and leaving Wausau was the Mosinee Paper plant--oldest craft (a technique) process paper mill in USA. Dave says it smells like cauliflower downwind. But that's charitable. It is an awful stench. It filtered into the airport the day I left and left a big dark brown streak across half the cloudless sky.

The ride to Three Lakes was lovely. The lake area of Northern Wisconsin is like New Hampshire flattened out. It's a glaciated area, with thousands of little lakes, colorful birches and evergreens. We did it in late afternoon with sun slanting in through the bright fall colored trees. "Look at that beautiful light with the barn silhouetted against the sky." What do you think of that sight--the canoe on the lake." "Aren't those trees something? All we need now is a strip mine." It was as the big banner in Three Lakes proclaimed "Fall Colorama."

Dave's speeches were the same, with variations, for each group. Expenditure limit is a blank check; defense budget is full of waste (B-1, trident and "grade creep"); no money for other programs till we go after defense. Told educators they weren't going to get help.

Farm audience sat still for 3 hours of speech making. Jerry said: "Did you ever see an audience sit so still for so long? To



them it was a great evening. Larry says that no group has tougher asses than farmers--grinding around on the tractor all day." And they all drove home to far reaches of state so to milk cows in the morning.

He speaks of his area as Northern Wisconsin, i.e., Milwaukee newspapers don't give us much coverage "up here in Northern Wisconsin." But he divides his district into "Southern part of the district" and "Northern part of the district."

Andy Biemiller's name comes up a lot. Kathy O'Hara was recommended by him. His criticism of Alvin is taken as gospel. They want him to come into district and help Dave. He's a special hero in Wisconsin, since he was a Wisconsin Congressman and is now Legislative Director of AFL-CIO.

Everyone I talked to sees Dave as great campaigner. But he doesn't make a big thing out of his personal image and personal style.

In resort area near Rhinelander "Did you see those homes? We aren't in a Democratic precinct." Big homes on a lake.

He called Oneida "my worst county." "The paper with the largest circulation in that county is the Chicago Tribune. There are so many retirees from Illinois living there." It's a tourist area, Alvin O'Konski owns TV station in Rhinelander and it's his home town.

"When I went down to Madison to clean out my desk and say goodbye, that was the warmest and the worst I had ever felt all at once. I

In second interview he told  
how he played harmonica  
in Illinois & that he  
made money 100/turn  
for 3 tunes.  
Thought that  
was great  
turnabout for  
politician who  
was expected to  
make a speech.

1/16 Barber  
pretty!

hated to leave those guys. I had never sat in the Speaker's chair before, but Walt Froelich (the Republican Speaker) said 'you belong up there now.' So I said goodbye from there."

Had a gorgeous flight from Wausau to Appleton to Chicago--farms, and woodlots, with about 1/2-2/3 woods around Wausau and about 1/8-1/4 woods near Appleton. The sheer number of farms is striking compared to Nebraska, which has more land under cultivation but fewer farms. No wonder NFO and family farm theme was so strong. By the time you get to Fond du Lac at end of Lake Winnebago, it's almost all cultivated. Soil gets worse as you get north. In northern part, soil is very poor and lots of poverty there. High unemployment--"our chief export in Northern Wisconsin is our youth." High unemployment 17% in Ashland and Bayfield and Iran. But the country from Wausau south is gorgeous, healthy and peaceful. It looked like God's country to me--more than anything I have seen. I watched the seasons turn--yellow and orange around Wausau and all green by the time we got south of Milwaukee.

He said twice re Nader. "He's trying to take the politics out of politics. I don't see how you can do that."