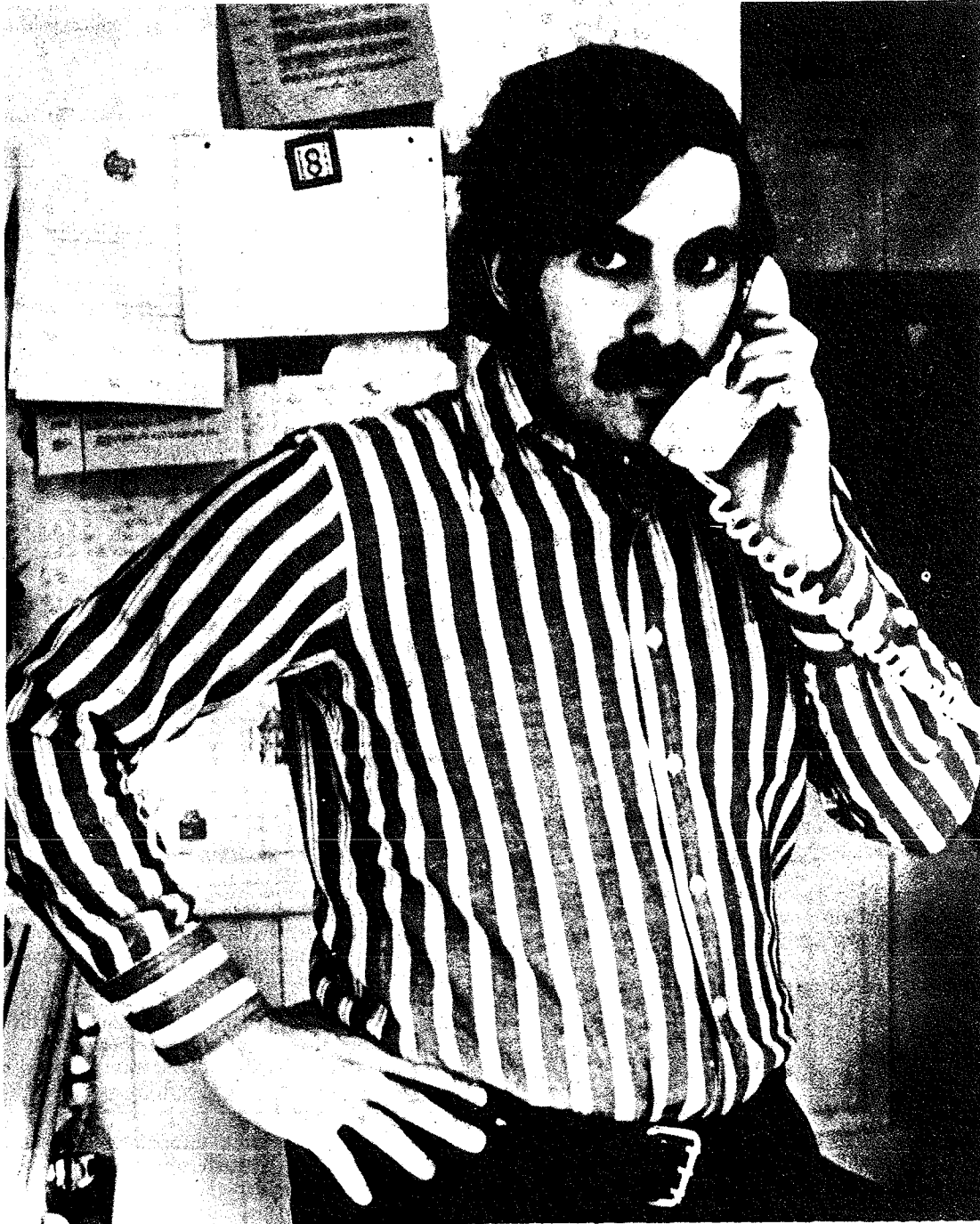


# **MICHAEL SACK**

**for**

## **ALDERPERSON - 13th DISTRICT**



**PROGRAMS FOR MADISON'S 13th DISTRICT**

## THE HOUSING CRISIS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

There are a number of reasons for our current housing shortage and wide spread deterioration in many of our neighborhoods. One factor involves the expansion of the university and state government in the last 10 years. In this expansion period the university and state acquired and transformed much land in the down town area which once served as housing for low and moderate income families. In this transition from residential to non-residential use, the university and state government made no real efforts to replace the housing that they displaced. During this period of building expansion enrollment at the university increased tremendously. The university, under pressure from private real estate interests in Madison, consented to let the private market meet the bulk of the increased demand for student housing.

Landlords began buying up homes which previously housed low and moderate income families and were able to divide these houses into separate units, which netted up to three times the rent they did when a single family lived there. This kind of conversion caused an inflated speculative market for housing in the area surrounding the campus. Because of inflated sale prices for income property homes, all homes in the area that were not income property were assessed as if they were. This meant that families living next to income properties paid the same high taxes as profit inflated properties. With higher assessments, came higher taxes making it difficult for low and moderate income people to remain in the neighborhood. Families moved out, school enrollment dropped, schools closed, and the remaining families left. This process is occurring in the areas of the 13th ward. Longfellow school may soon be closed.

Landlords who converted dwellings found that they could maximize their profits at high rents, letting them deteriorate to the point of utter decay, then tearing them down and building a high density, high rent apartment in its place. The landlords could afford to let buildings run down because building code enforcement was lax and they often intended to tear the buildings down anyway. Often landlords fail to make needed repairs because they fear it will cause a rise in assessments and thus raise taxes. Some landlords don't make repairs because they just don't want to spend the money. Land speculators who merely buy a house for a short period of time to gain profit by resale have relatively little interest in keeping up a property.

These patterns of deterioration are threatening other neighborhoods, including much of the 13th District. Unless decisive steps are taken, much of our neighborhood may go the way of the Mifflin Street area.

## PROPOSALS TO PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY

### Rent Control

Maximization of profits is the motive for land speculation and thus the heart of the problem of neighborhood deterioration. By controlling profits we can decrease speculation; i.e., conversion of single-family dwellings to tenant slums, and stabilize assessments and taxes. This would bring home purchase prices within the reach of families and protect tenants from inflated rents. A strong rent control ordinance must include the following features:



#### Keeping Our Yards and Sidewalks Clean

Walking through our neighborhood I very frequently hear complaints about stray animals messing up yards and gardens, snow not being shoveled, and trash cans being left out on the curb all week. Clearly these things make our neighborhood a less desirable place to live. The city has ordinances concerning these problems but just does not enforce them. As alderman in the district, I would exert strong pressure on the police and health departments to start enforcing these ordinances.

#### Traffic and Transportation

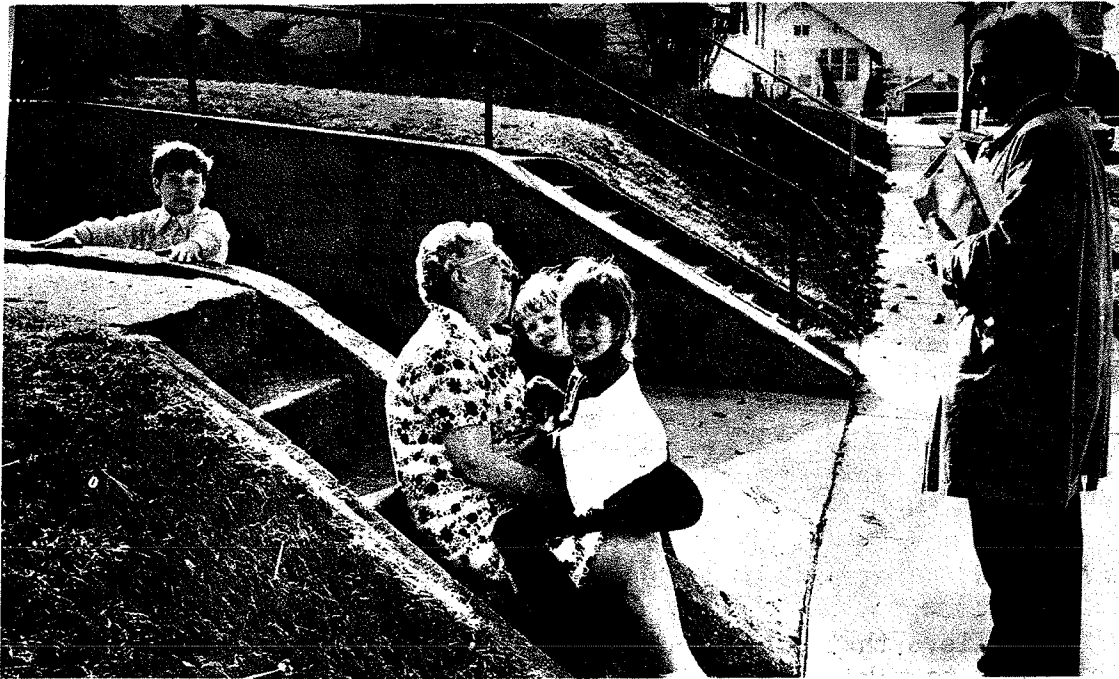
If we are to preserve our neighborhood we must not allow our streets to be used as throughways and parking lots for commuter traffic coming into the central city. I favor the development of satellite parking areas for commuters with shuttle buses transporting the people into the downtown area. Buses should be made less noisy and cleaner. We should experiment with the idea of lowering the fares to get more people to use the buses.

Traffic on many of our streets should be slowed down by use of more stop signs at certain locations. Certain streets should be closed off to through traffic by means of cul-de-sac's similar to those found on the west side. Our neighborhood must exist primarily for people not automobiles.

#### Rape and Violence

The women of Madison must be protected against the growing rape crisis in our community. The time to stop violence and rape is before it is an everyday occurrence. Women of Madison have come up with excellent proposals that I would endorse. We should have better lighted streets, violence-free paths through the city, and counseling for rape victims.

- RENT ROLLBACK: rents should be rolled back to the level that they were one year prior to the date of enactment of rent control
- A RENT CONTROL BOARD: composed of 3 tenants, 1 homeowner with no income property and 1 landlord, each elected every two years
- LANDLORD REGISTRATION: all landlords should be required by law to register and file yearly statements of operating costs, rent and net profits
- NO RENT HIKES WITHOUT A HEARING AND APPROVAL - from the Rent Control Board
- TENANTS' RIGHT TO PETITION FOR RENT CUTS - before the Rent Control Board
- RENTS BASED ON BUILDING UPKEEP: the Rent Control Board should consider a building's physical upkeep when judging a proposed rent change
- EXEMPTIONS: rent control should not affect owner-occupied dwellings, non-profit housing co-operatives, hotels, motels, or government-run housing. Fair rents for new income property should be negotiated with the builders, taking into account development costs, type of unit and cost of comparable units.



### Property Tax Reform

- 1.) Property tax reductions for elderly people living on fixed incomes.
- 2.) Property tax reductions for non-profit housing, health, and day care cooperatives.
- 3.) Special tax deductions for home improvements.

### Building Code Enforcement

Stringent building code enforcement must accompany rent control. I recommend doubling the current staff of 8 inspectors and creating a "housing court" similar to traffic court to deal with code violations.

There are several major differences between municipally-owned and privately-owned utilities which make municipal ownership more economical for the user. These are the three basic advantages of municipally-owned utilities:

- 1.) Lower bond costs
- 2.) Federal tax exemption
- 3.) Special state property tax reduction

These advantages would translate into comparatively lower rates as well as a probable reduction in the property taxes of Madison. PSC studies show that user rates of municipally-owned utilities run from 10 to 15% less than rates paid to privately-owned and operated utilities.



#### LABOR IN MADISON

I believe that city government has a basic responsibility to its wage earning citizens to make sure that working conditions and wages in our businesses and industries are decent and fair. I support the right of city employees to strike and participate in collective bargaining. I also feel that the city should not take sides in labor-management disputes by purchasing products and services from businesses whose employees are on strike.

#### PROJECTS TO MAKE THE CENTRAL CITY A DECENT PLACE TO LIVE

- 1.) Keep Longfellow School open
- 2.) Support efforts to develop a decent playground for Longfellow School
- 3.) Develop a State Street mall
- 4.) Develop the Monona Basin area as a park with a community facility
- 5.) Close the Arboretum to automobile traffic

## CITY RELIEF IN MADISON: A COMMUNITY DISGRACE

There is a large group of poor people in Madison who, because of inequities and gaps in the county welfare programs, must depend upon Madison City Relief for help. These people generally fall into one of several categories. They are 1.) single people and married couples with no dependents who cannot find work. 2.) disabled people enduring the three month waiting period to receive disability benefits from the state. 3.) transients and 4.) individuals with drug or alcoholic problems. A typical example of a city relief recipient would be a widowed or divorced woman between the ages of 42 and 62, whose children have grown up. This woman has no "marketable skills" because she has spent most of her adult life raising children. The Madison unemployment rate is significantly higher than the national average.

When these poor people come to the city welfare department for help, more often than not they get humiliation and abuse from the department officials rather than any real help. In the 3 years I worked with city welfare recipients and applicants in Madison, I have seen many people storming out of the department office in tears after being humiliated by the social workers or director. In fact, it is fair to say that the city welfare department uses humiliation of applicants as a means of keeping the welfare rolls down!

If city relief is granted it is of a pitifully small amount. The department grants only \$1/day in food and it provides very little in the way of help for clothing and furniture. Virtually all assistance is granted in the form of vouchers so that the recipient is stigmatized when they are used.

Basically, there is no way to eliminate these injustices without a complete change of personnel and policy in the department. This cannot be accomplished easily because the director and employees are in civil service posts. Therefore I propose that the county take over the operation of Madison General relief as well as the operations of all municipal general relief departments in the county. In this way the administration of the relief program would be taken out of the hands of the current director and staff.

## MADISON GAS & ELECTRIC

Why have their rates gone up and what can we do about it?

In February, the MG & E got a rate increase from the Public Service Commission. One important reason for the increase, according to a PSC spokesman, was that the Company needs to provide higher rates of return on its stocks and bonds in order to attract new investors.

This means that our rates go up so that investors in MG & E can make more money on their investments. I personally do not believe that we should have to guarantee wealthy investors more profits in order to get adequate utility service. Thus, I propose the following solution.

Under state law any city can acquire the private utilities operating principally within its boundaries without the utilities' consent.





## THE JOB OF ALDERMAN

An alderman represents his ward in three main ways:

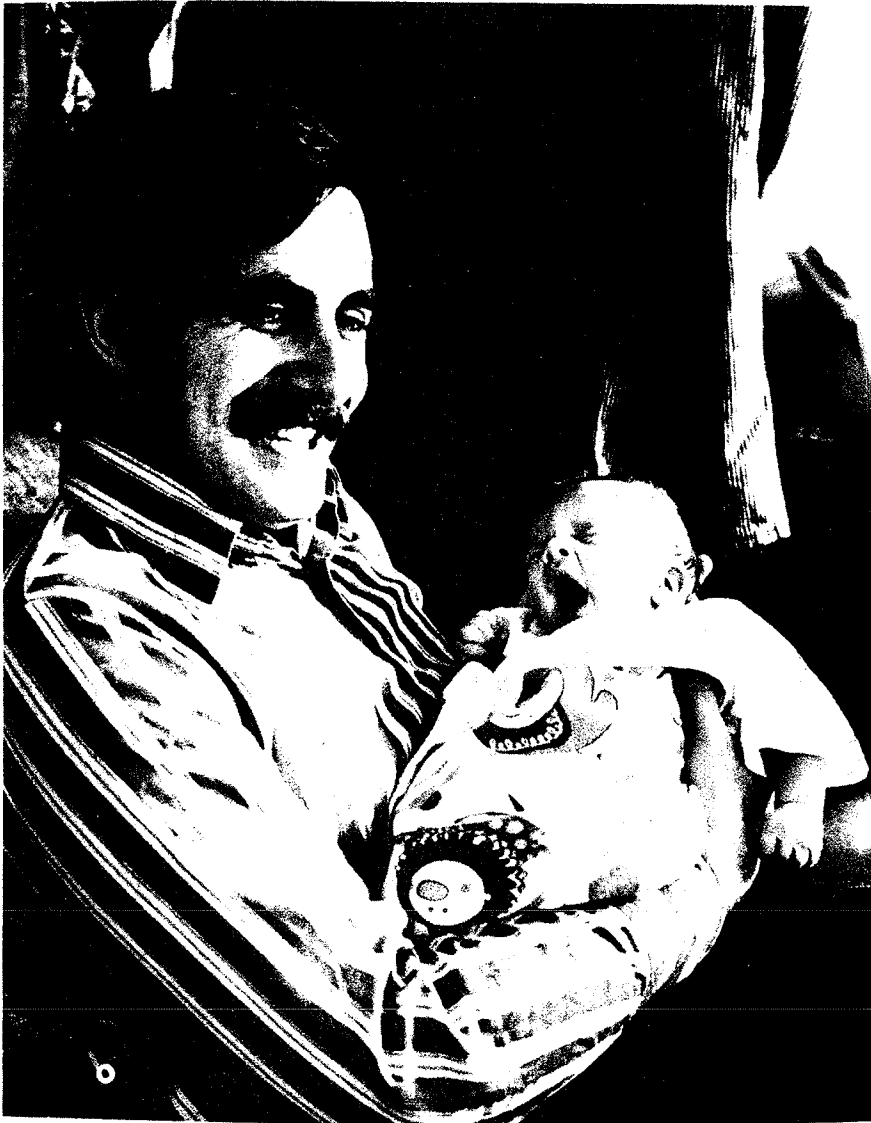
- 1.) he must be present at common council and special committee meetings.
- 2.) he must keep himself informed about the business in front of the council.
- 3.) he must maintain close contacts with ward residents.

Unfortunately it is difficult for one person to do all these jobs alone. When elected, I will share my aldermanic salary with two other people. One person will help me do research on council business, while the other will help me maintain contact with ward residents. I will also set aside specific hours at home when I will be available to talk to ward residents.

## GETTING THINGS DONE

I believe that we need a new form of politics in Madison. A form of politics that depends not merely on elected officials, but a politics based on using the influence of coalitions of community and civic organizations. When I am elected I will work with all and any group of citizens to help implement the programs that I believe are in the best interests of our district. I will not isolate myself by associating with merely one or two organizations, but will strive to work with as many diverse groups as possible. In this way I believe that I will be a very effective alderman.

Michael Sack is a former welfare rights organizer who has worked extensively with low income families and elderly people in Madison's central city area for three years. He also has a B.A. degree in psychology from the University of Wisconsin. Michael and Nancy Sack live with their three children in their own home at 526 S. Orchard St. Michael currently is a life insurance salesman for Northwestern National Life Insurance Company.



The candidate tries to convince the 13th District's youngest future voter - Joseph Sack - who was born March 10, 1973



**WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!**

If you believe in the fundamental changes and reforms proposed by Michael Sack and are willing to donate time and/or money to his election campaign please call 255-7313.

Authorized and paid for by the Michael Sack for Alderman Committee, Pat Friedkin, 516 S. Orchard St., treasurer. Photographs by Dan Brody.



From the Reader of the Conference on Alternative State & Local Public Policies held June 10-13, 1976 in Austin, Texas. The reader was edited and compiled by Derek Shearer, California Public Policy Center Los Angeles, California and Lee Webb, Professor of Public Policy, Goddard College Plainfield, Vermont.

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