

editorial opinion CELEBRATE

Hold your head up for Michigan

A lot of folks would like to come back to Michigan. That's one thing I've noticed throughout the years after having traveled around the United States.

You know the tune of the chronic migrating Michigander.

"I can't wait to get out of this rotten place. Any place is better than Michigan," he warbles.

So one fine day he packs his bags and flies to a warmer climate. This almost always is done in a fit of irrationality, just as winter is about to raise its ugly head.

I used to complain like that—until I lived in a few other spots around the country. Fortunately, my roots weren't so deep as to force me to work in one of these summer "paradises."

I can't count how many times I've heard uprooted Michiganders reminisce about the good old water-winter wonderland as they fruitlessly flap their clipped wings.

That's why all of us should take a deep breath and sigh in relief that we made it back, or never left.

This upcoming week—Michigan Week—is a good time to do just that.

Michigan Week is a time for every community to beat its chest to show that the nonmigrating Michiganders made—and make—this state work.

The idea came about back in 1953 when a bunch



of civic and business leaders got together to figure out how to raise the state residents' morale. Times were bad and the job market looked even worse.

Since 1954, when the first Michigan Week was celebrated, we've had a lot of which to be proud. That's not to say that everything is perfect but those who haven't deserted for the sunnier climes can hold their heads high.

So this coming week take some time out to enjoy some of the activities your community is offering. By the way, don't let it stop you even if it does rain, or snow, or flood.

You know the old saying, "If you don't like the Michigan weather, wait a few minutes. It will change."

You can defeat the Litter Lobby

There's one issue that's more popular than apple pie, baseball and all the presidential candidates put together.

That issue is litter and the desire of the public to ban throwaway bottles and cans from the marketplace, from their lawns, from the roadsides, from farm pastures and parks and beaches.

The so-called Jondahl bill—House Bill 4296—has been introduced in the Michigan House of Representatives with 23 co-sponsors. Nevertheless, it will face tough opposition from the Litter Lobby.

The Litter Lobby has attorneys, lobbyists, charts, graphs and other propaganda to make it look like the American economy will come to an end if the bottle bill becomes law.

People of sense know better. We got along quite nicely, thank you, when we didn't have the kinds of throwaway containers we have today.

Nevertheless, the legislature needs prodding. If you are asked to sign a "bottle bill" petition, sign it. Circulate petitions yourself. Write to your state lawmakers in Lansing and ask them to pass the bill.

If the legislature fails to act, the petitions will help put the issue on the ballot. If that step becomes necessary, be sure to vote for it.

June 1 is the deadline for getting those petitions returned to Michigan United Conservation Clubs, PO Box 2235, Lansing, Mich. 48911.

Ford's in trouble, but he deserves fair chance

The senior movers and shakers of the Michigan Republican Party held a quiet meeting last Saturday.

The subject: Next Tuesday's primary election, where President Ford and Ronald Reagan will go at it head-to-head. The message: Watch out, guys, because if the president loses this one in his own home state, it could very well cost him the nomination. The worry: If Reagan gets the GOP nomination, it could be the disaster of 1964 all over again.

The movers and shakers are right on all counts. The president is in trouble in his own state.

For much of his political career, he cultivated his congressional district around Grand Rapids and his career on Capitol Hill to the exclusion of all else. As a consequence, he never became a full statewide figure in the way Gov. Milliken has. Therefore, next Tuesday President Ford will benefit less than one might expect from feelings of home state chauvinism by the voters.

Further, Michigan voters have a long history of political unpredictability, marked in recent years by a resounding willingness to cross over to vote in the opposite party's primary. If you add to that historical pattern the notion that all those thousands of voters who were for George Wallace four years ago have no real place to go today now that Jimmy Carter has wiped out the media field, you have an opening a mile wide for a Reagan blitz for a massive Wallace crossover vote.

THE PRESIDENT HAS NOT helped his own cause in recent weeks by his choice of campaign tactics. Instead of staying in Washington running the country and campaigning in his record, he has been dishing hitler and thither, responding to every criticism Reagan makes, in a frantic courtship of the small but very powerful and vocal Republican right wing.

There is every indication that Ford has changed these tactics since they failed so spectacularly in Texas and Indiana. The senior party people have advised him to campaign in Michigan, but as the incumbent president with a good record, not as a suitor of the right wing.

In the event that the president does lose Michigan to Ronald Reagan, the damage could be



by PHILIP H. POWER

serious. The national media will fail to understand Michigan's political volatility, and the Reagan campaign will argue that if an incumbent president can't carry his own home state, he cannot hope to win in November.

Reagan's chances of winning the Republican nomination would be enormously increased.

THAT WOULD BE a shame, both for the Republican Party and for the country.

Although a few transcendental political theorists have been able to construct an argument that Reagan would do better against Carter than would Ford, most of the polls and virtually all of the practical politicians disagree. Reagan might not do as badly as Barry Goldwater did against Lyndon Johnson in 1964, but he certainly would not be a strong candidate against Carter's broad appeal.

And Ford has a useful, valid and powerful set of arguments going for him. As the man succeeding Richard Nixon, he has convinced the country of his decency, honesty and integrity. As the manager of the economy, he has resisted the blandishments of vastly expanded government spending and appears to have the economy growing with little inflationary pressure. As the national spokesman, he has the nation at peace for the first time in many years.

The test in the coming November election ought to be between the best possible representatives of our two political parties. I cannot accept the idea that Ronald Reagan—by training limited and by instinct simplistic—is the best possible representative of the Republican Party. President Ford has done a good job, and he deserves to run on his record this fall.

WE'RE NOT TALKING IN CIRCLES...



The parks millage A good program should be continued

There have been criticisms—some of them perhaps valid—of the Oakland County parks and recreation program.

But so far as we have heard, no one has come up with a single good reason for not renewing the quarter-mill property tax which supports the program for another five years.

Indeed, a defeat would cripple not only the parks system but the entire county governmental operation. Such a defeat would be short-sighted. The parks millage proposal on the May 18 ballot instead deserves warm support.

THE OAKLAND COUNTY parks system got its start 10 years ago when voters approved a quarter-mill tax for five years. It was renewed in 1971. While the finances of a park system are complex because of state and federal aid, what it boils down to is this: The tax has been used 80 per cent to pay for land acquisition and development; operations have largely been covered by user fees.

If your house has a market value of \$40,000, the tax has been costing you about \$3 a year. The ballot proposal, if passed, won't cost you any more dollars per year; it will extend the program another five years.

It's a pretty reasonable deal for the seven parks with their 2,400 acres and the seven mobile units people are using.

THE PARKS and Recreation Commission has tried to be responsive to a wide variety of needs, although obviously it can't please everyone.

There has been criticism that the parks were developed too far into the hinterlands of the county. The answers are that the land had to be acquired before it could be developed, and the commission

has begun to pay attention to the south end, making the swim-mobile, puppet-mobile and other units available and developing a new park in the south end.

There has been criticism that the facilities are too citified—that a county with so many lakes hardly needs a wave-making machine; that facilities for animal shows aren't all that necessary. The answer is yes, but you'd be astounded at how many people like that sort of thing.

There has been criticism of the fee system. The alternative is to have a much higher property tax. The commission's philosophy of using tax funds primarily for development and user fees to cover operations makes good sense.

THE PATTERN of park development in Oakland County has been much like other systems.

In the early years, the first priority is to get land and get things going.

As the system matures, one expects it to be fleshed out and strengthened.

This year the wave-action pool is scheduled to open at Waterford Oaks. The new Independence Oaks park is scheduled to open. Ground will be broken in Madison Heights for the Red Run golf facility. The mobile units will get more circulation. Many small improvements, too detailed even to be listed here, will make other parks more pleasant.

As Oakland County residents go to the polls Tuesday to indicate their preferences for the Big Job, they shouldn't overlook the kinds of programs that make living more pleasant right close to home. The Oakland County parks millage proposal deserves continued support.

Observer & Eccentric Newspapers

Registration by party can end mischief of crossovers

Next Tuesday is Michigan's presidential primary.

The fact that Michigan is having a primary election is a positive step toward the people's electing their own president.

We have not reached true democracy yet because the primary only determines delegates to national political conventions, which in turn still nominate presidential candidates; and the electoral college still elects presidents, regardless of how the people in America vote.

THERE IS ONE quirk in the Michigan law creating the primary election that should be rectified.

In this state, you do not have to register with a political preference. No one need know whether you are a Republican, Democrat or Independent.

When you go into the voting booth, you make the selection of your party and pick the candidate you like.

Proponents of this system say that registration by party excludes independents from voting in a primary and discourages some people from voting in a primary because they may have to identify themselves with a party unpopular in a given location.

The problem, though, is that the purpose of the primary is to let the Republicans pick their candidate and the Democrats pick their candidate. People who are not going to vote for that candidate in the November election should not participate in selection of the party's nominee.

THE PENDULUM HAS swung both ways now, proving that the system needs to be corrected.

Four years ago, the first year of Michigan's presidential primary, Republicans crossed over and voted for George Wallace in the Democratic primary. Many did this not because they wanted Wallace but because they wanted to disrupt the Democratic Party's delegate-selection process.

This year the Ronald Reagan forces are encouraging Democrats to cross over and vote for Reagan in the Republican primary. Their argument is



by HENRY M. HOGAN, JR.

that Jimmy Carter is already the Democratic nominee and doesn't need help at this point.

But they are really advocating that people involve themselves in the selection of a nominee they have no intention of supporting in November.

The election process should not be designed to allow people to play tricks with the wishes of the electorate. No one knows what the outcome will be next Tuesday, but there is certainly a disruptive element in our state.

The state law should be changed so that people must register by party in order to vote in the primary. This is true in all but seven states.

OF COURSE, IF we are going to change the law, there are a couple of other things we ought to do, too.

The first is that we should have a national primary held on one day across the nation so that we can avoid all the time and resources being spent on a state-by-state primary circus.

Secondly, we must amend the U.S. Constitution to allow the direct election of the president by the electorate, eliminating the archaic electoral college and the smoke-filled rooms at national political conventions.

Thirdly, the time lapse between the presidential primary and the national election should be shortened so that the country is not racked over an extended period by campaign oratory that has a tendency to confuse rather than enliven the electorate.

Hartington
Observer & Eccentric

DIVISION OF SUBURBAN COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION

STEVE BARNABY, Editor
352 2400

HENRY M. HOGAN, JR., Co-Publisher
PHILIP H. POWER, Co-Publisher

JOHN REDDY, Executive Editor
THOMAS REYNOLDS, Retail Advertising Manager
ARTHUR LANGER, Classified Advertising Manager

Member of
MICHIGAN PRESS ASSOCIATION
SUBURBAN NEWSPAPERS OF AMERICA
NATIONAL NEWS PAPER ASSOCIATION