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Intersection

## Michigan Mirror

# Can the state kill crime by executing criminals?

By ELMER E. WHITE

Steve Simmons died on the gallows for murder in 1930—the last man executed by the State of Michigan.

From time to time—and now is one of those times—the question of reinstating the death penalty crops up in the state.

A Michigan State Chamber of Commerce publication, *Michigan Challenge*, recently printed a strongly worded editorial which said in part:

"The sooner we start executing cold-blooded criminals, the sooner Michigan citizens can see a significant reduction in crime."

A Chamber spokesman says the editorial does not represent an official position of the group's board of directors.

Calling for a focus of "serious attention on the problem of crime in Michigan," the publication said the legislature should legalize the death penalty for persons convicted of:

• Crimes involving use of handguns.  
• Murder in the first degree, regardless of weapon used.

• Kidnapping not involving family members.

Foes of capital punishment contend studies show there is no correlation between the increase and decrease of violent crime and homicide on one hand and the existence of the death penalty on the other.

A recent national poll, meanwhile, indicates increasing support for the death penalty for those convicted of murder.

IF ALL Michigan folks were smokers, it's figured they would have pulled away nearly 127 packs a year during 1975. That's down two packs a person from the record state high in 1974.

Nationally, the per capita consumption of cigarettes dropped seven packs per person from 1974 to 1975—1117 packs compared to 1974.

That's still a lot of smoke, especially in light of increasing demand for non-smokers' rights.

The Michigan Legislature this session has approved measures to regulate smoking in hospitals, supermarkets, restaurants and public meetings.

THE GREAT WALLET of the State of Michigan—more formally known as the state of the budget—seems to be in pretty bad shape these days.

But do the people who pay the bills, the taxpayers, really realize how bad?

Dr. Jack Stach of Alma says he and a newly formed organization called Michigan Citizens for Fiscal Integrity want to take the tale of the budget crunch to the people.

A second priority for the organization is

convincing the governor and the legislature "of the need and the urgency for an increase in revenues to provide adequate funding for present state services and programs."

Stack, a member of the Michigan State University Board of Trustees, says his group includes representatives from public schools, mental health, higher education, social services and health care providers.

A PERSON having a burial vault from a privately owned cemetery, fully expects that vault will be there when he needs it.

Most times, it is of course, never needed.

And an added assurance that it will be available when the time comes is a 1972 state law requiring cemeteries regulated by the Michigan Cemetery Commission to set up merchandise trust funds.

Other regulations seek to assure that cemeteries will be maintained properly and that planned facilities that are not before they're completed, will indeed be completed.

Problems occur, according to Cemetery Director Richard Heinbrecht, because cemetery laws aren't strong enough to give the Cemetery Commission the ability to enforce the special funds are kept up.

Heinbrecht, whose department includes the Cemetery Commission, called for stronger laws after an audit showed more than \$700,000 deficit in state vaults which are supposed to be maintained by the different cemeteries.

The commission has jurisdiction over 128 privately operated cemeteries in Michigan, but does not regulate church-operated or municipal cemeteries.

MYOMASSOLOGISTS don't need to be licensed by the state. Local ordinances are enough to allow pointing of massage parlors.

And while we're talking about unnecessary state licensing, think about community planners, sanitarians, foresters, landscape architects and waterworks.

That's the word from Dennis Faust, William Faust of Westland, whose introduced legislation to end state licensing of these occupations.

A lot of time and money are spent by unnecessary state licensing and regulation of professions whose activities have little to do with the public's health and safety.

He says also that professions licensed out of genuine concern for the public health and welfare are often not perceived

that most of the youths have been having beer.

Some of those arrested were young adults who were charged with contributing to the delinquency of minors.

COUPLE TO RACE.

Alice and Bob Gustafson of Orchard Lake will be among the approximately 50 couples to compete in the Seventh Annual Illinois-Air Derby in Illinois this week end.

Mrs. Gustafson will pilot their 1971 single-engine Arrow, while her husband, a former flight instructor, will handle navigation and the radio.

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POLICE STAKEOUTS

Bloomfield Township police over the weekend arrested 53 youths on liquor-related charges. The action stemmed from a police crackdown on young adults buying liquor for minor friends.

Police Lt. Curtis Grever said that as many girls as boys are involved. He said

First Presbyterian Church in Troy recently decided to raise funds to aid the retarded by sponsoring a circus. The funds expected to be \$2,000, would be donated to New Horizons, an agency which trains and finds work for the retarded. But the promoter hired by the International All-Star Circus has allegedly abandoned the project, leaving ticket sales far below expectations. While the circus will cover its losses, the church fears it won't make a dime from the June 1 performance in Athens High School gymnasium.

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