

Consumer mailbag

Why write your legislator? Here are a few reasons

In the past few months, our office has received many questions on the impact of the individual on our legislative process. The following column will reflect a compilation of these questions most often asked. John Sobelizer, an attorney and executive director of East Michigan Environmental Action Council is our guest writer.

Why should I contact my legislator?

The standard replies to this question include stating one should do so to be a good citizen and so that the legislator knows which way to represent you.

The fact is that your legislator will be contacted by lobbyists, powerful self-interest groups, and a few citizens. If you do not indicate to your legislator what you feel on an issue, you cannot expect him or her to vote the way you feel. You can expect the positions of the lobbyists to be an important factor in the legislator's vote.

That is true in theory, but my letter or call won't mean very much. With all the mail they get and the direct contacts of lobbyists, how much impact can I have?

Plenty. On most issues, legislators receive very little mail. Even on the most controversial issues an average representative may only receive 15 letters. One letter means much more, therefore, than one vote.

As for the lobbyists, they certainly do have influence. A few letters may not be able to counter it, but 50 letters, on the other side, probably will. Remember, the letters they receive are their one measure of their districts' position on an issue. It is the only way to counter lobbying.

As for public interest groups, their only power comes from citizen support. Letters and logic are their only strength.

But, what if I'm not an expert on the legislation, can I take a position? What do I say?

You may already have a general opinion on an issue. For example, you may be concerned with the quality of water in the Great Lakes and the increased rate of eutrophication they are experiencing. Convey that concern to your legislator. It may spark his or her interest in legislation which would protect the Great Lakes.

If a specific bill such as HB 4023, which would ban the use of phosphates in laundry detergents comes up then you can take a position and convey it to your legislator.

Of course sometimes you don't know if the specific bill is good or

DNR ok's Holly camps

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has awarded the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission a grant for \$139,500 for the construction of 55 new campsites and improvement of existing sites at Groveland Oaks County Park near Holly. Initial approval of the grant was announced at a commission meeting in July. The commission also announced the DNR had rejected bids for funds to develop a softball complex at Waterford Oaks County Park in Pontiac, and for a grant to develop an environmental center at Independence Oaks County Park near Clarkston. The grant was referred to the County Board of Commissioners for final approval.

bad in all its ramifications. You may not place much credibility in either of the opposing sides arguments. Or you may simply feel there are so many bills I am asked to write on, why write on this one?

Again, you can express your general concern to the legislator. You can do a little reading on the issue yourself. In the end you must make a choice just as you did on the bottle-bill when it was a referendum issue. You don't need to be a scientist to express your opinion. Your legislator isn't. When writing, the letter need only be a brief one, explaining your position. You may add a couple of reasons as

well. Nothing fancy is needed. Where and how do I send it? Representatives or senators: Capitol Building, Lansing, Mich. 48901. For more detailed information on how the

legislative process works, how to contact your legislator, and addresses, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to EMBAC, 1 Northfield Plaza, Troy, 48068, and request our Legislative Handbook.

Where else can I write now that I'm writing my letter?

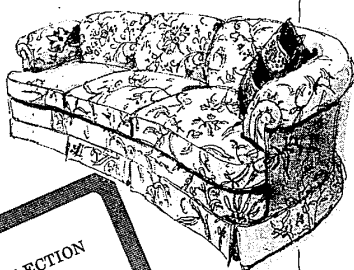
Of course, the governor should be contacted since he represents everyone in the state. In a way, so do the Democratic and Republican leaders in each house. Sometimes the issue will involve a government agency such as the Department of Natural Resources and it should be contacted directly. Remember that a letter to the editor in the newspaper helps too.

Please address questions to Consumer Mailbag, Concern Inc., Detroit, 1 Northfield Plaza, Troy, Mich. 48068.



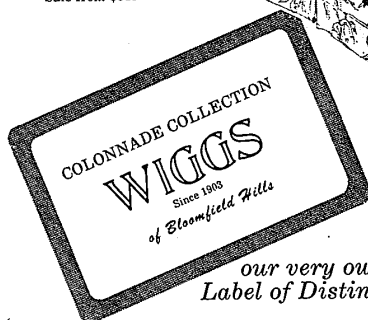
Crescent-shaped Sofa with luxuriously padded and rolled arms and back. Stunning... in your choice of fabrics... to suit your decor.

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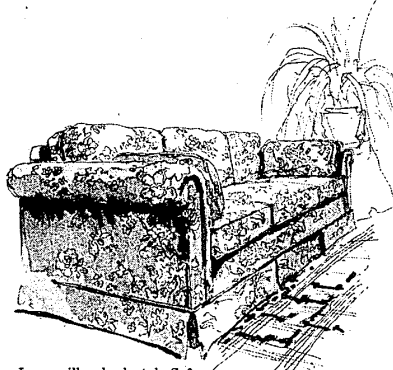
Beautiful crescent-shaped Sofa in loose pillow-back style with matching bolsters. Choose your fabric from over 600 delightful patterns, solids, tweeds or florals.

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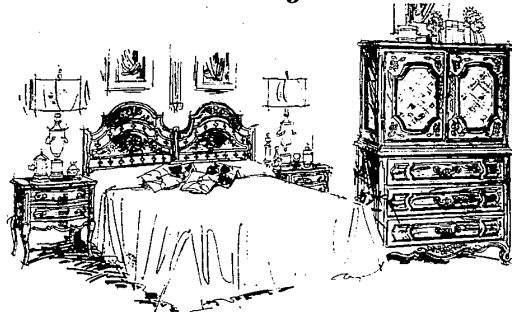
Here's the collection you've been waiting for... now at Summer Sale Prices! Our very own fine, elegant Sofa creations, so skillfully crafted to our specifications, carries our own Colonnade Collection Label. These three distinctive styles are from our large collection of Colonnade Sofas... in an excellent fabric selection! You may choose your own style... choose your own fabric... choose your shape and cushion comfort... at Savings of 20% OFF! See them on the Main Floor, The Colonnade.



Loose pillow-back style Sofa with matching bolsters... deeply padded, rolled tuxedo arms. You will enjoy choosing your fabric from our exquisite selection.

Sale from \$670

Special 20% Savings on Colonnade Sofas, and Thomasville Bedrooms & Dining Rooms...



La Galerie Provençale

by

Thomasville for bedroom and dining room

Thomasville recreates treasures from the 17th and 18th Century in an exciting, new La Galerie Provençale collection for bedroom and dining room. (Our series includes many more pieces than shown plus an assortment of occasional living room items... ALL SUMMER SALE PRICED!) Authentic French design detail is seen in the deep relief carvings and beautifully shaped panels. Wormy oak veneers and oak solids are carefully blended to create a naturally distressed finish.

- Night Stand... Sale \$184
- Full or Queen-size Headboard and Frame... Sale \$288
- 42" Door Chest... Sale \$625
- 66" Dresser... Sale \$565
- Matching Mirror... Sale \$112



Meticulous craftsmanship can be seen throughout this collection. Note the interesting parquet door panels and quality hardware... special features from the original French Provincial pieces. Edges are worn, then highlighted as through years of use. The finishes are a treasure of delight for decorating in the Country French style. Of course, we have many more pieces, not shown, available at our exciting Summer Sale Prices

- 44" x 68" Trestle Table (opens to 108")...Sale \$515
- Ladder-back Side Chair...Sale \$136
- 66" Arm Chair...Sale \$149
- 66" Deck and Huntboard...Sale \$700
- 70" Closed Deck... Buffet (not shown)...Sale \$1250
- 49" China (not shown)...Sale \$1050

open Monday, Thursday & Friday until 9:00 P.M.



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TERMS, of course!