

## OBSERVATION POINT



## Where, Oh Where Did Our Government Go?

By Philip H. Power

There is a widening Relevance Gap between people and their governments that now borders on political anarchy. A man and his representative are soon parted and they march off in oblique directions, each seeking his own salvation apart from the other.

Certainly, there are effective lobbies everywhere—from township hall to Washington—and perhaps, beyond—but the superficiality of day-to-day relationships is deadening.

A political creature has a world of his own in which he succeeds or fails among his fellows. The organization of politics is geared to operate within itself, not at the behest of the electorate.

Examples abound. The controversial design of the new state capitol was determined and its financing arranged in private, between two people in Lansing. Certainly not more than 10. It was the operation of politicians pledging your money and my money without our approval.

THERE HAS BEEN controversy since Patrick Henry regarding taxation without representation. Now we have spending without consultation. It's the direction America has been going for decades.

Rep. Jack H. McDonald has a Farmington address but lives in Virginia. Former Rep. John C. Mackie, to be bipartisan, did the same. They come back to Michigan for votes, not instruction

from the bosses who elected them.

In Detroit, we have the name-candidacy scandal. It is a scandal only because voters have allowed themselves to be duped so often. They have often elected incompetents and they will again under these conditions.

Several years ago when he was a political unknown, A. T. F. County Treasurer Louis C. Funk developed such a state. There were 11 candidates. Only Funk was serious. One other, Garry Funk, was a DIT dropout who went on a Florida vacation—in advance of the election—but Funk got the designation on the ballot. One other was employed in Funk's office and another was the wife of a Funk employee.

Maybe Funk was the best man, but neither he nor the intelligence of the voters proved it.

Once elected, political people develop a proprietary interest in their paycheck and office. In Plymouth, the mayor feels the people are best served if they don't know who he and city government are doing. It's the same with most local governments. Promise 'em anything, but don't let 'em know what you're doing.

IN ANN ARBOR, Sheriff Douglas J. Harvey—a Keystone Kop in the finest tradition—keeps saying that he and his deputies are the great investigators of the co-ed murders. His performance has been ludicrous. Then he attacks Gov. Milliken for bringing

in the State Police, who have done this kind of thing before. And have you noted the secrecy, the bounty the Supreme Court dicta? Nobody in this business wants to wreck a case for the police, but this is ridiculous.

The political posture is fostered by the people, and this is the terrible tragedy.

Hundreds will spend time and money going to Lansing to try to shout down a set of guidelines for sex education in the public schools but can't get excited about a \$1.5 billion general fund budget.

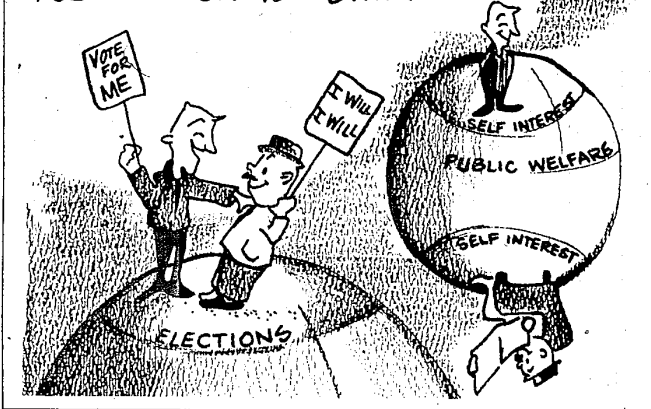
People don't really relate to their government until they can see something happening to them right now, like another chunk to be withheld from the paycheck, or a decision which will divert money from a program to stock depleted lakes with fish, or otherwise deprive them of luxuries.

It is a curious fact that people generally see things in black and white when the facts present them in grays.

SO McDONALD will live in Virginia, the name candidates will continue, and political people will operate independently of the people who elected them to represent them until the flight of these two forces from each other is stopped and reversed.

Until that time when the Relevance Gap is closed, political people will be what they are—or worse—and the people will get the kind of government they deserve.

## POLARIZATION IS SWIFT



Tim Richard writes

## Who Can Control The Lake Levels? If Man Can't, Maybe Nature Will

ST. IGNACE You can't see it from the majestic height of the Big Mac Bridge or from U.S. 2 that parallels the shoreline, but Lake Michigan is higher this year.

You can see it up close, though. Wide beaches that you could walk on for miles are narrow today and in some cases washed out entirely.

There are extensive marshes now, and the annoyance of mosquitoes seems to have increased proportionately.

What was a babbling brook last year is today a fairly deep river. A funny thing: The current no longer flows out to the big lake all the time; half the time, the current flows from the lake, changing as often as every five minutes. The subtle variations in air pressure on the lake seem to be the cause.

The change isn't all bad. The toothy, tasty northern pike have found their habitat extended now that the little river is deeper.

TIMES — AND RAINFALL — change.

There are rainfall cycles of about 20 years. The low point seems to have come around 1963-64. We are now in a period of greater rainfall and deeper lakes.

In that low-water era of six years ago, this reporter recalls

a tract by an amateur politician in the Kalamazoo suburb of Portage. His theory was that the reason for low lake levels was that the City of Kalamazoo's tapping of underground water for its domestic supply was lowering the water table. His proposed solution was that Kalamazoo be prohibited from building any more residential sewers in order to recharge the aquifers.

That was one of the more preposterous ideas. Other frightened suburban leaders blamed the activities of the Upjohn Co. or one of the paper mills. All sorts of water diversion schemes were hatched.

The answer in 1963 was simply lack of rainfall. This spring we made up for lost time, and the lake levels—notably of Superior and Michigan—are rising.

THE UPPER Peninsula congressman, Philip Ruppe, is attuned to the problems those high waters are causing his constituents; many of whom make their living off the tourist trade. One Ruppe idea is to provide matching federal assistance for the construction of shoreline protective devices. "For the individual shoreline homeowner, the cost of constructing protective breakwaters and abutments is often prohibitive," he told Con-

gress, adding that shoreline erosion has also caused pollution problems.

Lake Superior's level is regulated by a U.S.-Canada joint commission, with the Army Corps of Engineers operating water level control gates near Sault Ste. Marie. But because of heavy precipitation the last two years, Ruppe said, the Army engineers have simply been unable to control the lake.

FEDERAL AID? Well, maybe and maybe not.

The Upper Peninsula has problems of many sorts. It also has a tendency to pity itself quite a bit.

Then there's the question of timing. The new fiscal year started July 1, so not much can be done this year. By the time Congress gets around to making an appropriation and the public works bureaucracy to setting up a program, the rainfall cycle may have reversed itself.

Then again, the problem may be insoluble. It's one thing to put a couple of 170-pound men on the moon but quite another to control water levels and shorelines in lakes with thousands of square miles of surface.

One suspects that a Mother Nature herself will ultimately take care of the matter.

## This Is The Week That ...

## This Dog Leads A Man's Life

By Don Hoenshell



Bach II has got a kennel of people (trying to entertain him and as dogs measure such things, if they do, it's not a bad life. Picture a three-pound King Farouk on a canopied bed waiting for slave girls to peel him a grape.

That's Bach II, a dachshund who's got it made. Forget Dow Jones, the pot holes in Five Mile. And who's Joe Namath or Howard Hughes?

This one's a dog having his day. He lolls in the sack whenever the whim strikes him, opening only one eye if he feels it will tire him to open the other.

DACHSHUND OWNERS — rather, courtesans to dachshunds — are often attacked bitterly by wholesome types who remember that the name means they were bred originally to go into badger holes and haul out their quarry. That's why the big chest and mighty forelegs

Somewhere along the line they developed a Canine Rights program (Black and Tan is Beautiful. We Shall Overcome. We Reject The Concept of Second Class Dogdom) and now look what happens to the Hunter.

Bach I was once asked by a friend to go hunting and he bit him. That's civil disobedience in

its finest hour. Bach II used to smell your breath for mints, and for discrimination. He sipped beer from a shot glass but gave it up forever one afternoon, the victim of a hangover. Smarter than the rest of us, eh?

Remember bringing your first-born home from the hospital, he's sitting and watching it breathe all night? Bach II had an audience of eight, standing room only, and his protection is better than a president gets in Saigon.

Children — er, dachshunds — have to learn the proprieties, such as going on the paper. Right Dr. Spock — er, Murphy? The Secret Service, ranging in age from 7 to 14, watches for signs, then rushes Bach II to the paper. This avoids him getting a whack on the fanny with a newspaper.

Bach II, like Bach I, is a gourmand, not a gourmet. He eats a lot of what he likes. Not picky at all. But if it were known he likes marinated herring or watermelon, guess where next week's allowances would go.

AFTER THE FIRST GLOW of parenthood passes, the decision is reached to go shopping for the little one. Collars go for \$3.90 to \$15, and up if it has jewels. You

could adopt an orphan in Vietnam for the cost of a leash. A dog's ain't that?

Now we have the happy prospect of watching him grow, if he survives love. Tell a kid Bach II would like her to do the dishes and she'll work tonight. If Bach II is watching, we can have miracles. The King ordaineth, unworthy subject!

Everybody knows that Bach II will chew the heel off a shoe, eat a hole in the davenport and desecrate the book you've been reading and left on the floor. He will mock the discipline of his German heritage. He thinks he's French and, thus, a free soul.

And we'll get angry with this one with the mischief. Someday he'll go too far, step over the line and do something that in anyone else would deserve a spanking. So you do and what happens?

Would you believe you'll wind up in the dog house?

R.T. Thompson writes

## Schools Look To Monday Vote In Plymouth

What's ahead for school systems in the communities covered by the Observer Newspapers? Will voters approve requests for additional millage as they have for so many years or will they follow the recently developed trend and stamp an OK on millage renewals only?

Some of the answers will be provided Monday when the electorate in the Plymouth School district, which includes the City of Plymouth, Canton and Plymouth Townships and small portions of Northville Township and Washtenaw County, go to the polls to decide three millage issues.

The first is for a 4.5 renewal of an issue that expired in December, the second is for two additional mills needed, according to the School Board, to keep the system at the same level as in 1968-69.

The third item is for an additional 1.5 mills to continue extra curricular programs on the same level as during the past school

year.

THE MILLAGE REQUESTS are being presented to voters for the second time; an earlier proposition was soundly rejected in June. The only difference between the voting then and that of next Monday is that the board placed a request for a renewal of 4.5 mills and for 4 additional mills in the same package.

The decision to come back in a second election with the package divided into three issues was made by the board several weeks ago. It was reached after considerable study with the thought there was a change of getting two of three passed but little hope of presenting a 4.5 and a 4 proposition as in June and receiving a favorable vote.

It is our feeling that the Plymouth Board needs support on all three issues Monday and we hope the taxpayers in the school district feel the same way — but frankly we doubt it.

It has long been our thought that school boards, and we

mean practically every one in Observerland, fails to take into consideration that every taxpayer in the district should be kept informed of the financial status at all times.

We believe there is a tendency on the part of boards to get the information across to the group the trustees hope will react favorably.

It is a well known fact that there is a built-in resistance in every community, a group that includes retirees and senior citizens who have a stationary income and can't afford additional bites for taxes. It is almost a solid bloc against any tax increases, whether warranted or not.

WE HAVE A STRONG feeling that school boards in general tend to try and hold down interest in millage elections by not making all-out efforts to get the message across.

It appears the boards prefer to have a small solid bloc of their

own to cast favorable votes with the hope it will be enough to overcome the built-in resistance.

Whether this strategy is right or wrong isn't for us to decide. We have a definite belief that every parent in the school district should be made to become interested in the financial picture.

It would be an admirable situation to have every parent, whether eligible to vote or not, to make his or her pitch, favorably or unfavorably.

It's time for the majority to act and decide the future of the school system, not a scant minority in favor trying to get enough support to overcome a solid bloc.

The eyes of just about every other school system in southeastern Michigan will be focused on Plymouth Monday to learn what the voters think.

There are other elections coming up in nearby communities and the outcome in Plymouth may be a prediction of what lies ahead.

## Editorial &amp; Opinion

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Philip H. Power, Publisher

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Don Hoenshell, Editor