

# editorial opinion

## The year 1977: a harbinger of beginnings and endings

And so it is 1977. So far it doesn't seem to be a whole lot different from 1976 but all can rest assured that it will be different in that we have seen the last of bicentennial minutes, quilts and newly minted coin sets. Surely, it will be a year without Phil Hart representing the interests of humanity in the U.S. Senate.

Hopefully it will be a year that will see implementation of a total metropolitan mass transit system, because just as the outer cities are dependent upon the core city, so is the core city dependent upon the outlying communities.

So it is 1977—an end and a beginning.

IT IS THE beginning of a new century of history for our adolescent nation and time to nation-

ally resolve that we conduct our affairs in a manner more high-minded than we have in the last 100 years.

It is a time to resolve to retain our national will to survive for the next 100 years—and above and beyond survival—to creatively and thoroughly deal with the new host of problems that will beset us.

So it is 1977—a finality.

It betokens the end of an era when we were the haves and the rest of the world were the have-nots.

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The most precious commodity in the world any-

more is energy and just as international monetary systems are based on gold, so are most energy systems based on oil. And nations that were once have-nots now possess riches in the form of oil that no one ever imagined.

In 1977 and for many years to come, we will need their oil and we will pay for it. Those na-

tions will become more rich and we will become less rich.

This new year and many years to come will offer us new challenges and opportunities to show the world the restless, uncompromising spirit that made the great democratic experiment a success that shook the world to its foundations.

## Only a great man passed...

Sometimes when we reflect on memories of people who meant a great deal to us, we come smack upon those little things we forgot or failed to do or say.

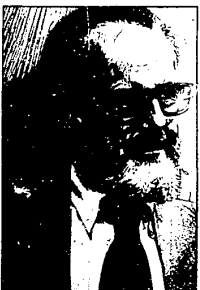
The painful realization the gentle Phil Hart is gone for all time reminds me of the story that I never told him. Oh, I thought of it every time I saw him the last dozen years. That wasn't too often but it does add up to a number of times that I was too shy to prod his memory and remind him of a kindness.

It wasn't that I forgot. No, it was just so personal that I was afraid of embarrassing him and he was the kind that embarrassed easily.

Difficult days were upon the Ida family that autumn back in 1964. Linda, our 14-year-old eldest daughter had been ill for nearly two years and doctors gave no hope for her survival. Cobalt treatments had left her brain damaged and she was severely afflicted.

Linda could not walk and she could not use her hands. She slept in a hospital bed and each morning we would bring her out into the family room. Earlier in her illness she had been well enough to have a home-bound teacher and had completed two grades of school in just short months, but now she was more limited.

TELEVISION had become the focus of her life. This was true also, because she was so socially restricted.



Shirley Iden Writes



She had one or two good friends who would visit, but most of the other young teens who had been her classmates and playmates were occupied with their personal activities.

This meant that Linda had no exposure to boys her age at all. We couldn't count her brother Bruce because he was three years younger. And so, she came to dwell on two male personalities to fulfill her adolescent fantasies. One was her father Jack and the other her romantic ideal, television actor Richard Chamberlain.

Chamberlain those days was the suave Dr. Kildare of the TV tube and a great success.

Linda talked about Richard Chamberlain constantly and waited impatiently for the one hour a week she could enjoy the high drama of his show.

We collected pictures of the television doctor for her and she dreamed of possessing a picture of him personally to her.

One day a neighbor visited with fall flowers from her garden and listened to Linda's wistful prattle about her hero. She didn't say anything to us. But she thought she knew how to get Linda her picture.

Our neighbor's daughter worked in the Detroit office of Hart. When her mother told her about the sick child and her wish, she asked the senator to see what he could do.

HART picked up the telephone and called California and spoke to Chamberlain's representatives. Within 48 hours a package arrived at our home with a large glossy photo of a little girl's hero inscribed: "To Linda with love, Richard Chamberlain."

It was more than she'd had to be happy for in a long while and Linda looked at that picture for many hours in the next days. But in just two days,

she lost the power of speech and then her sight.

Ten days later our daughter died quietly, holding my hand, at home with us the way we felt best.

Her last happy memory was of the picture meant only for her and of the thought that Richard Chamberlain loved her.

None of us ever forgot Phil Hart's kindness to Linda. I learned later that he and Janey had lost an infant son and endured another child's serious illness too.

Several times at political events, I tried to bring myself to broach the subject of Linda with the senator but I never did.

One time stands out. It was the summer of 1972 during the Governors' convention in Miami. By this time, the senator knew me by sight if not by name and we always spoke when our paths crossed.

This night was the Sunday of convention week and the entire Michigan caucus met in a large room. I found myself sitting between Hart and Senator Levin with other non-delegates. The senator remarked how delighted he was to be back there with the not-so-involved ones at this particular convention.

THE THREE OF US shared embarrassment when McGovern, favorite of the convention, but not yet the candidate, appeared. He was practically hooded out of the hall by the Wallace delegates, who were the majority, of course.

Hart expressed his chagrin that the Wallaceites should insult a presidential candidate that way. Although I had been thinking of mentioning the Chamberlain picture, I didn't think this was quite the time. And somehow, the right time never came.

Since Hart's illness became public knowledge, I have thought many times of writing to him and thanking him for a small favor that was so big to my little girl. Again, I didn't follow through.

There must be many people walking around who are able to reminisce about kindnesses extended by this very special man.

Phil Hart had genuine compassion and concern for other people. There were not the least of the many qualities that made him a great man.



## "Between the lines"

by Carl Stoddard

## Where'd everybody go?

Southfield tends to be a bustling, hustling city. Dignitaries flit in and out. Residents mount campaigns for this and against that. New buildings mushroom from vacant lots. Schools churn out streams of pageants and lists of honor roll students. City officials announce plans for new city services. And a marvelous array of talented and interesting individuals troop into town with their own stories to tell.

Then the holiday season begins. Dignitaries go home. Residents forsake campaigns for champagne and parties. New buildings are abandoned by construction crews. Schools close. City hall closes, or at least tapers off dramatically. And that army of unique individuals disappear.

In newsrooms across the country, the holiday season brings on the drought. Local television stations start emphasizing national and international news. Newspapers start digging harder for any news they can find.

A car accident that might normally be ignored suddenly becomes the big news item of the day. Stories about Santa Claus, families without Christmas trees and tips on how to drive safely New Year's Eve abound.

I have worked as a journalist in Southfield for nearly four years and I never cease to be amazed at the phenomenon.

SOUTHFIELD IS probably one of the liveliest cities in all of metropol-

itan Detroit. Throughout most of the year, the toughest part of our job here at the Southfield Eccentric is deciding what news events we can cover. More than once, we have wished aloud for a staff twice as big as the one we now have working here.

As tough as those news decisions usually are, the steady flow of news keeps us busy and keeps the newspaper filled with news of Southfield and Lathrup Village. So it's with a certain sigh of relief that we bid goodbye to the Christmas and New Year's holidays and offer thanks to the brighter days of the new year.

And, for at least another year, we won't need to sit around the news room and ask each other, Where'd everybody go?



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## from our readers

### READERS' FORUM

### Movie-goer is miffed by cold

Editor:

I have just returned from the Americana Theater after spending \$3 a ticket to see a movie where there was no heat.

I feel that is really taking advantage of the public. Charging full price and turning off

the heat for the second show is totally unfair.

By no means should the owners of the theater be allowed to do this especially when the temperature is 17 degrees.

RITA GOLDEN, Southfield

## Ecology Calendar

Ecology-minded persons who wish to save cans, bottles or newspapers for recycling may use the following facilities.

- To prepare glass for recycling, thoroughly wash the containers, remove all metal caps and rings from the glass and separate the glass by color.
- To prepare cans, separate steel from aluminum cans, paper need not be removed.

Newspapers should be tied in bundles with heavy string or a rope or secured in heavy paper bags.

• **SOUTHFIELD**—A glass recycling center operates 24 hours a day at the Burgh, 20800 Berg Road, north of Civic Center Drive, a block east of Telegraph.

• **SOUTHFIELD**—A mobile aluminum recycling unit is in parking lot I of Northland Center Tuesdays from 1:30-4:30 p.m.

• **LATHRUP VILLAGE**—A recycling center operates at the Public Services Building, 1901 Twelve Mile, adjacent to Southfield-Lathrup High School.

Volunteers collect newspapers the first Saturday of each month, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

• **FARMINGTON**—A glass recycling center operates Saturdays, 9 a.m. to noon at the west end of Farmington Hill City Hall parking lot at Eleven Mile and Orchard Lake Road.

## Farmington Observer

Division of SUBURBAN COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION

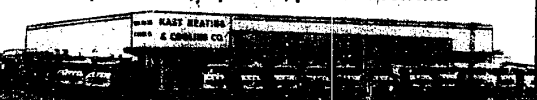
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