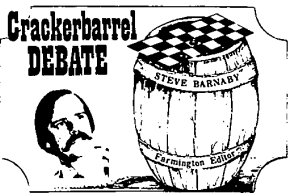


editorial opinion



Equal rights get the gong

The feudal lords, with the aid of one grand dame, put the royal kabosh on supporting the Equal Rights Amendment up at the castle on Eleven Mile and Orchard Lake roads.

Folks should know, especially those of you who vote in local elections, that lords Earl Oppertbauer, Keith Deacon and Joe Alkateeb voted against prohibiting city officials from attending seminars and conventions in states whose legislators have yet to approve the ERA to the U.S. Constitution. Farmington Hills' own Maid Marion, Jody Soronen, gave the resolution its death blow by casting her votes with the "guys."

The scenario would have made you sick. The anti-ERA folks even brought in the heavy guns by importing Elaine Donnelly, Michigan's chief honcho for Stop-ERA, to give her spiel.

I guess what really makes a person squirm is all the giggling that went on during the debate. Some persons just aren't adult enough to see the equal rights battle as serious.

But the giggles are nervous ones, believe me. Ever since the council became dominated by females, 4-3, councilmen and many, many administrators alike have been making some pretty dumb remarks about "the ladies."

IN PUBLIC, of course, everyone is for equal rights, but

Take Alkateeb for instance. Frankly, I thought Joe was beyond making foolish remarks in public. You all remember his less than eloquent attack on the Rev. Meredith Moshauer a few years back.

Well, this year's offering by Alkateeb is that the ERA is unnecessary because women are "pretty much" equal, anyway. Sorta like horseshoes, right Joe? Oh well, better to be a little bit equal, than not equal at all.

Of course, good ol' Earl Oppertbauer stood his ground by looking at the "practicality" of the situation. Just wouldn't be practical, he says. It would be bad for the morale of the employees if they couldn't go to a seminar in Alabama.

But it sure is practical to underpay women at city hall and keep them out of department head positions. As we all know, right now a woman is struggling to be hired by the Hills' police department. Remember when plantation slaveowners said it just wouldn't be practical to free the slaves?

Shame on all four of you.

Territory time

The signs of spring are too many to count, but it's not official, in our book, until one loud-mouthed fellow says so.

He's the red-winged blackbird. The male arrives first, staking out a territory in the cattails along a lake or stream. He sings out to lure mates.

If you want to have a literary fun game, try asking people to spell the song of the red-winged blackbird. To us it's a screech with a trill mixed in, and as unspellable as a rebel yell, but it means spring.

The male red-winged blackbird seeks a harem, and so he has a lot of calling to do as he invites ladies to his chosen territory. Among birds, the more brightly colored the male is, the less monogamous he tends to be. You can't tell a male from a female among Canada geese; but since they mate for life, they have no need for colorful sexual differentiation.

If Samson's strength was due to his hair, the red-winged blackbird's prowess is due to that red patch on his shoulder. Experimenters have painted that patch black and found the sheik was immediately deprived of his territory and harem by a bachelor bird. Once the black paint wore off, the experimental bird was able to regain his section of the marsh and his ladies.

There's not much unique about the red-winged blackbird. His kind is found almost from coast to coast. As an insect-eater, he has to head for warmer climes in winter, and he's not much for cities or hills. He's a bright and bold fellow, and when he stakes out his territory and tells you it's spring, you'd better believe it.

Bits of Americana more fun up close

I once met a man in France who said he knew all about America because he had spent time in New York and Hollywood.

We have many seasoned travelers whose knowledge of our country is limited to airports and first-class hotels.

But America is more than that. It is a combination of different people and local customs which cannot be understood until experienced.

Over Easter vacation this year, our family, in its annual celebration of sun worshipping in the South, had its choice: A three-hour antiseptic jet flight; a 24-hour, switch-the-driver-every-two-hours, mesmerizing jaunt down I-75 having all of our needs taken care of within 100 yards of the freeway exit; or venturing out the long way, through the mountains on two-lane roads and seeing the countryside.

We decided to do the last by renting a motorhome.

TRAVELING in a motorhome is not exactly primitive camping. The unit we rented was 26 feet long, slept six, had a stove, refrigerator, freezer, air conditioning, television, hot water shower, toilet and even cruise control.

While it is big, the unit was easy to drive once you learned how to make wide right turns and had somebody look out the back window when backing up.



Tim Richard

New neighbor is in anguish

I shouldn't laugh at another human being's discomfort. It isn't nice.

But the truth is that I did laugh at the anguish Joe H. Stroud went through in his column in last Sunday's Detroit Free Press.

I'm good enough at editing so that I not only look for spelling and libel; I can also tell when a writer is having fun, when his words are a chore or when he doesn't believe his own words. Joe Stroud was in anguish. He announced he is moving out of Detroit and into a suburb.

You have to appreciate Joe's position: The Free Press is a "booster" of Detroit, in chamber of commerce terminology. Last year I analyzed, in great detail, how the Free Press carefully applies such words as "civic statesmen" to the folks at Renaissance Center while suburban businessmen come off as "promoters" and other unflattering appellations.

YEP, JOE was in anguish. "A wrenching change." Two older children gone off to college or elsewhere. Concern for "my wife (who) has chosen not to work outside the home; many of the new neighbors consist of husbands and wives who both work."

The deciding factor, it seems, was "the pull of the idea of the dream house, the home that suits your current needs, the home that your resources make possible."

He was defensive, nevertheless, about his move. He tells us he's leaving a good neighborhood, not abandoning ship: "We have struggled over the years to help, in such ways as we could, with the strength of the neighborhood institutions."

He tells us he isn't fleeing: "I do not turn my back on a bad neighborhood or bad neighbors now; there are good people trying to see that a good neighborhood continues to work."

He blushes as he writes: "In some ways, the move troubles me deeply, especially since I have so often written about the struggle to make the city work." Indeed, it isn't until the 10th paragraph that he mentions his new home is in a suburb.

"I have loved being a city dweller and not a suburbanite." The tone is like a Bible Belt Baptist confessing he's becoming high-church Episcopalian.

IT IS WRYYYY amusing that a man's mind is so full of small-town politics that he must use one-fourth of the editorial page of a big daily paper to apologize for buying a new house in the 'burbs.

Actually, Joe Stroud will be right at home in the suburbs, if he's that worried about Detroit. Ren-Cen is essentially a suburban concept — Henry Ford II of the Pointes, Max Fisher of Franklin Village.

The Detroit Symphony's chief fund-raiser is from Bloomfield Hills. They will find the symphony's major patrons in the suburbs. If Southfield were bombed, the orchestra would be gone.

Friends of the Detroit Library say 60 per cent of its members are non-residents of the City of



We stuck to the freeway through Ohio and Kentucky except to venture out into state parks to find secluded places to eat our meals and eat at Colonel Sanders' original Kentucky Fried Chicken establishment.

When we got to Tennessee, we stayed in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, traveled winding mountain roads with streams trickling by, ate country ham with redeye gravy, hog jowls, collard greens and pork barbecue.

We saw tobacco fields in North Carolina, bought fireworks in South Carolina, passed up the opportunity to buy chenille bedspreads and Jimmy Carter souvenirs in Georgia, and ended up camping in the Florida Keys.

In the Keys we bought stone crab and shrimp from fishermen for our dinner, snorkeled in the reefs and camped by the side of the Gulf of Mexico, dipping into the Gulf five feet away from our motorhome.



Detroit. In other words, they're suburbanites.

Covering a state Natural Resources Commission meeting in the Belle Isle nature center, I overheard two ladies behind a desk say they were volunteers, one from Birmingham, the other from the Pointes. Joe should be very comfortable with neighbors like that.

DETROIT DOESN'T subsidize its bus system. The state and federal governments do, with suburban money. D-DOT's pension funding comes from the state.

As a commuter, Joe will pay Detroit's non-resi-

CAMPsites ARE available everywhere with water, sewer and electrical hookups. Of course, not all the sites are picturesque. We passed up one located behind a funeral parlor in Key Largo.

We toured the Everglades, walked endless miles of white beaches including one nude beach north of Palm Beach, but also played tennis and ate gourmet meals at fine restaurants along the way.

Because we were on wheels, we were not tied down to any place and moved on when the spirit moved us.

We met many interesting people at the campsites, including a ham radio operator who let our daughter speak to people all over the world.

While we carried a variety of clothes, seldom was a topcoat or tie needed.

AS WE HEADED for home, the motorhome was filled with the best of our experiences: bags of oranges and grapefruit, a country ham, pralines, even a palm tree that took up most of the shower stall, mountain taffy, homemade candy, keylime pie, boiled peanuts.

We have seen not just the cement swimming pool in a Florida hotel but little pieces of Americana.

More important, it was a family experience of 17 days of rather close living; everyone shared the chores, whether it be dumping the holding tank or cooking shrimp on a grill by the side of the Gulf, which we all enjoyed doing.

dent income tax, without which the city would be in worse shape.

The art institute subsidy . . . the library subsidy . . . urban grants . . . the historical museum subsidy . . . the "municipal overburden" subsidy to Detroit schools . . . the bilingual education subsidy that goes mostly to Detroit . . . the riverfront development subsidies . . .

Joe Stroud will have little problem adjusting to a new neighborhood.

Besides, moving from Detroit's Rosedale to a suburb hardly is a cultural shock.

Tales of Ben and Bobby

If one must start a newspaper column with words, then Bifocals is ready to greet the dawn.

It's actually a reincarnation, for I've been this route before. Nothing reflecting the genius of a Bishop, Royko, Fitzgerald or Waldmeir, mind you, let alone a Doc Greene.

But a handful of mythists who allege they now and then enjoyed a column of the same name in our Farmington and Plymouth papers some years ago have sold me on giving it a new go.

Although I've been known to have trod upon a governmental toe or two in my time, offbeat characters and situations actually interest me far more than the burning political issues of the day.

If it's deep thinking you seek, look elsewhere. Quite likely you won't even have to turn the page.

A DELICIOUS NOTE from Ben Hogan down in Fort Worth, and a chance meeting with a namesake of Bobby Jones, have helped me zero in on the advent of that greatest segment of the year, the golf season.

Another hint that it's just about tee time was found in our classified section last week. It was a five-line ad asking anyone interested in caddy—boy or girl, age 11 or older—to report to Great Oaks Country Club in Rochester at a given time on a given date.

Private clubs are about the last stronghold for the caddyding profession, and even many of them have turned to the more profitable electric carts.

However, if you can count yourself among the legion of ex-caddies, as so many of us can, you will recall those summers as being among the most fun of all, even at a Depression rate of 35 or 50 cents a nine. You also will recall that that's when the golf bug bit.

LET ME TELL YOU why Hogan and I are corresponding. It has its roots in conversations with local pros Mac McMinnery, of Gormans and Oasis and Gary Whilener of Whispering Willows and Idyl Wyld. Gary also is tournament chairman of the Michigan section of the PGA.

Anyway, these guys and many other club pros get just as big or bigger a hearthrob out of teaching some handicapped but determined golf nut how

through bifocals



to break 100 as they do in cutting your average from 79 to 78.

Take Mac, for example. He's teaching a man who had played golf beautifully for many years with two arms and two hands how to play with one of each. He left the rest of the garbage in a hospital after an errant Vermont ski run two years ago.

Mac's project includes a volunteer or two with similar but lesser problems, lesser because they've become used to playing golf that way after years of working at it.

Budd Lynch, who lost an arm in World War II, is one of them and that guy can hit the ball a country mile.

BACK IN '49 Hogan was in a near-fatal auto accident. It was doubted that he ever would play golf again. Yet he came back to become the greatest star of his era. Oakland Hills was one of the many courses that succumbed to his concentrated wizardry.

Jones? Well, this Bob Jones is a steel salesman in Plymouth who once played to a seven handicap. He's down in the Carolinas this week, playing at Hilton Head. If a guy must play this game, that's not a bad name to have.

Now Ben heads a golf equipment manufacturing company. To be honest with you, I've urged him to lend his name to a national golf promotional campaign, maybe capped by a national championship, for the so-called handicapped. He did not say no.

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Steve Barnaby
Editor

22710 West Nine Mile
Suite 200, Detroit, MI 48275
(313) 352-5400

John Reddy, General Mgr.

Thomas A. Flordan, Executive Editor

George J. Hagan, Advertising Director, Fred Wright, Circulation Mgr.

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