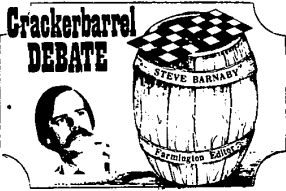


editorial opinion

SEMTA gets room to maneuver



Playing hard can squelch summer fun

The dangerous thing about summer is that it's just so much fun. Summer is my time of year. Water sports, hiking, bike riding, camping—all are wonderful ways to while away the summer months.

But, please, beware. Unfortunately, the temptation exists to throw caution to the wind when that thermometer hits 70 degrees. The interminable months of cold weather have dulled our senses. We drive too fast and play too hard.

Such frivolity can be a killer. Oh, I'm not trying to spoil the party. As I said, I really enjoy summer, too. But what's it worth if someone we love dies needlessly because we didn't take the necessary precautions?

Every year, I write a column similar to this one because I know that before fall dawns, a lot of folks are going to die. Swimming is the most lethal culprit. I cringe every time I hear about grieving parents forlornly standing on the shoreline, waiting for scuba divers to dredge their child's lifeless body from the water.

Sure, it sounds grisly to read about it. But it's better to read about it than see it happen. Do yourself a favor and make sure that you and the kids learn how to swim. It's never too late to take swimming instruction. It's a lot of fun, great exercise, and aids in insuring the future happiness of the family.

CARELESS DRIVING also is a big killer, especially when it comes to mowing down some poor guy or girl on a bike. Remember that being a little late is a heck of a lot better than injuring or killing someone.

Children, especially, are unpredictable when it comes to keeping a wary eye on the road. They have a strange affinity for darting out in traffic at the most inopportune times.

The most important thing to remember is to think before you act so we all can have an enjoyable summer.

Boost for Laura

It could have happened to any of us. Born prematurely 23 years ago, Laura Pappas of Farmington Hills was placed in an incubator and overexposed to oxygen. It cost her most of her sight. She can distinguish only light.

Nevertheless, Miss Pappas has been able to graduate from Western Michigan University in music therapy — she plays a half-dozen instruments — and moves about with the guidance of a Leader Dog named Flame, a Belgian Tervuren.

Laura and Flame are among 350 teams who graduate each year from the Leader Dog School in Rochester after a four-week course.

Running the school is an expensive proposition — it costs \$3,500 to train each team. The Leader Dog School's chief sources are 35,000 Lions Club members throughout Michigan.

The Leader Dog School is the most famous effort of the state's 500 Lions Clubs, but there are many other works. Among them are the Welcome Home in Grand Rapids, the Farmington School in Taylor, eye examinations, glasses and Braille equipment.

The Lions Clubs, as we said, are a major force in underwriting this work, but they don't work alone. They are helped by the public — us. Each year we help by:

- Buying a white cane lapel pin from a Lions Club member.
• Obeying the law that requires motorists to

You have to look carefully at the 19-6 resolution passed last week by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

It warns the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority, Gov. Milliken and Detroit Mayor Young that Oakland will pull out of the seven-county SEMTA agency Oct. 1 unless two things happen.

One is that OCART, an Oakland Countywide bus system, be in operation. OCART was announced nearly a year and a half ago and still hasn't been funded. Oakland folks are getting impatient, with justification. The other condition is that SEMTA's rapid transit plan be "void of a costly and extensive sub-surface, elevated or other capital intensive transit system for one city." That's the part you have to read carefully.

THERE ARE hard-line anti-subway people — the Oakland County Road Commission comes immediately to mind.

There are hard-line pro-subway people — the mayor of Detroit is most vocal.

There are two main arguments for a subway.

One is that a rapid transit line would be a disruptive influence on downtown Detroit streets. If a rapid transit line were to be built where it wouldn't be disruptive, it might be too far away from major buildings, and patrons would be discouraged from using it on cold, blustery days.

The second argument is that a subway costs 10 times as much to build per mile as surface transportation. Thus, a subway would create a lot of jobs. Young wants as much money as possible spent in Detroit. If there were federal funds for digging holes and filling them up again, Young would be first in line, palm extended upward.

Building as little of the line as possible underground, to avoid traffic problems and encourage patronage, makes sense.

Building as much of the line as possible underground, to generate unnecessary jobs, is wrong.

ANTI-SUBWAY persons see the Oakland County board resolution as disapproving, in advance, of any subway. But if you'll look carefully at the

wording, there's an honorable way out.

The Oakland commissioners spoke of an "extensive" subway. "Extensive" is never defined. But the wording never precludes any subway at all.

Thus, if SEMTA came up with a plan that minimized subway construction, it would presumably be acceptable to Mayor Young and to the coal-headed majority of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

Oakland County commissioners aren't experts in determining how much subway is or isn't needed. Mayor Young is no expert. The Oakland County Road Commission is no group of experts, and is biased, to boot. The Michigan Legislature is no crowd of experts.

If there are any experts, they are in the employ of the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority.

Besides having to do a good planning job, SEMTA will have to resist being politically stampeded into building too much or too little subway.

That's a tall order. But it deserves to be done.



'Frills' raise us above mediocrity

If you are on Michigan's highways Saturday, you are going to notice far more than the usual complement of yellow school buses rolling along with traffic.

Inevitably, some motorist is going to wonder aloud where they're all going with their loads of students, or where they've been.

Just as inevitably, a second person is going to answer caustically in words such as these: "They've probably found a new way to waste taxpayers' money on one of those damn frills."

Such an individual is a confirmed No voter on millage election days. He wants the schools to teach only readin', ritin' and rithmetic. He doesn't believe that education goes an inch beyond the formal classroom.

Baloney. THE NUMBER OF high school band and orchestra members on the highways Saturday may reach into the thousands.

In separate cars, hundreds of parents also will be making the trek to Traverse City, Grand Rapids, Kentwood, Grandville, Wyoming, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Chelsea, Saline or Plymouth. These are the sites of state band and orchestra festival performances, the finalists qualifying by having placed at the highest level in district judging.

For instance, Bloomfield Hills will have an orchestra at Ann Arbor, where Clarencoville's concert band also will perform. The West Bloomfield symphony band is assigned to Ypsilanti, as are the Andover band, Adams High School's wind ensemble and Thurston's honors band.

The Adams symphony band and the Thurston concert band both go to Chelsea. Bentley's symphony band will be among 15 groups playing at



Plymouth, which will have three of its own units on stage. Nothing could be healthier.

THROUGH THE YEARS I've noticed that those who would castrate a school budget start off by asking for elimination of the arts, music, sports and other extra-curricular activities.

They say, yes, it's all right to teach journalism, but cut out the school newspaper and the yearbook.

Have speech classes, but eliminate the debating team. Include broadcasting courses, but don't go to the expense of having students operate a school-owned radio station such as the ones at Southfield and Plymouth.

Teach dramatics, but eliminate school plays and musicals. Deny such budding stage professionals as Plymouth's Linda Dwyer, Charley Burr and Dennis Cockrum their scholarships at Eastern Michigan University.

Do all these things with budget slashes and accomplish the big goal of bringing all students down to one common denominator: Mediocrity.

A WEEK AGO TODAY, The Detroit News published the names of 1,006 award winners from among the more than 6,000 entrants in its annual Scholastic Writing Contest.

I'm proud that 280 of these awards went to students attending 47 junior and senior high schools in O&E communities.

Power Junior High in Farmington led with 29. Then came Birmingham Seaholm High with 21.

English, it's not

Our languishing language

We're changing our language constantly. Words meant one thing five or 10 years ago. They mean something else now. Listen: Remember when "hippie" meant big in the hips. And a "trip" involved travel, in car, planes or ships. When "fix" was a verb that meant mend or repair and "be-in" meant simply existing somewhere.

When "neat" meant well organized, tidy and clean. And "grass" was a ground cover, normally green. When lights and not people were "turned on" or off. And the "pill" might have been what you took for a cough.

When "joint" was a place where the gang used to go. And money was money, not "green stuff" or "dough." When "camp" meant to quarter outdoors in a tent. And "pop" was what the weasel went.

When "groovy" meant furrowed with channels and hollows. And "birds" were winged creatures like robins and swallows. When "square" meant a 90 degree angled form. When "fuzz" was a substance that's fluffy like lint. And "bread" came from baskets, and not from the Mint.

When "roll" meant a bun, and "rock" was a stone. And "hangup" was something you did with the phone.

Bloomfield Hills Junior High, 19; Our Lady of Mercy High (Farmington), 16; Bloomfield Hills Andover High, 15; Bloomfield Hills Lahser High, 12; Livonia Bentley, 12; Garden City's Radcliff Junior High, 11; Livonia Stevenson High, 10.

I've given only the leaders in the same sense that in a basketball story we list those who scored "in double figures." Of greater importance was that every one of our towns was on the list.

Every entry had to be published material from the school paper, just as will be the case in the upcoming Schoolcraft College fourth annual high school journalism contest.

If I were the superintendent, principal, English/journalism teacher, the student awarded, or parent of that boy or girl, I'd fight to the hilt any attempt to destroy that type of extra-curricular activity.

The same goes for the musical groups as dramatized by this very weekend's statewide schedule.

I LOVE THE WORDS of Disraeli: "It is a wretched taste to be gratified with mediocrity when the excellent lies before us."

William Lyon Phelps once said, "Being educated means to prefer the best, not only to the worst but to the second best."

Maybe the founder of the Interlochen Music Camp, Dr. Joseph E. Maddy, put it as succinctly as anyone when he spoke these words years ago: "The purpose of education is obvious. It is to educate, not equalize."

May our boards of education and the opponents of so-called "frills" please pay heed.



Laura Pappas and Flame stop within 10 feet of a pedestrian displaying a white cane or dog led by a Leader Dog. Observing the law that allows harnessed Leader Dogs to enter public buildings. Miss Pappas, the 1978 White Cane Queen, reminds us that White Cane Week begins Friday, and that there are 16,000 unsighted persons in Michigan. The message, we think, is clear.

Advertisement for Farmington Observer, a division of Suburban Communications Corporation. Includes contact information for Steve Barnaby, Editor, and other staff members.

Advertisement for 'Eccentricities' by Diana Hoggan. A list of words and their historical meanings, such as 'hippie', 'fix', 'neat', 'grass', 'joint', 'dough', 'camp', 'pop', 'groovy', 'birds', 'square', 'fuzz', 'bread', 'roll', 'rock', and 'hangup'.