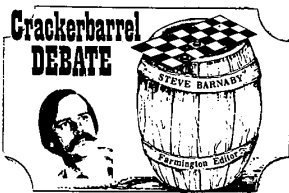


editorial opinion



Hiring error perils program effectiveness

Farmington Hills council members must ask themselves, and administration officials, some hard questions in the hiring of Maureen Lowe as the Neighborhood Improvement Program consultant.

It's beyond belief that top administration officials would hire a person to work on the same program in Farmington Hills for which she was named as an undicted co-conspirator in Oakland County.

Even more mystifying is that Mike Dorman, assistant to City Mgr. George Majoros, hired her.

Dorman was instrumental in calling to the attention of county officials the irregularities in the loans and grants program back in 1976. Mrs. Lowe was one of those involved in the irregularities.

Documents indicate that both Dorman and Majoros were aware of Mrs. Lowe's involvement back in 1976.

Finally, it's difficult to comprehend why the entire council wasn't told of Mrs. Lowe's background by administration officials at the time of her hiring.

INSTEAD, the council received a glowing report from the administration that Mrs. Lowe could aid the program because of her expertise gained at the county level.

Some council members admit they knew of the problems encountered by Mrs. Lowe at the county level either just before she was hired by the city or shortly afterwards. Yet very little initiative was taken by these informed legislators to direct the administration to think before hiring or, even more wisely, to look for another candidate for the job.

Even stranger is that some council members knew nothing about the Lowe case and claimed to be totally unfamiliar with her credentials, or lack of them.

Under normal circumstances, the administration doesn't consult with council members when hiring a person, even if that person is a consultant, as is Mrs. Lowe. But under these unusual circumstances, common sense dictates that Majoros should have consulted with the entire council before making the move.

The sad part is that the hiring of Mrs. Lowe taints a very important social improvement "people" program and will erode public confidence in it.

Whether Mrs. Lowe stays in or leaves the city's employ doesn't erase the record of faulty judgment used by city officials in hiring her or the reluctance of council members who knew of her past to take some initiative.

Class message

One thing you must say for modern academicians: The shortage of students has made them competitive and aware of their audiences. Gone are the days when a political scientist, for example, could spout abstractions about the constitution and let it go at that.

The evidence comes from Eastern Michigan University, which last week announced that Prof. Lewis C. Bender is giving a seminar course called "The Politics of Tax Revolt."

The announcement is hyped up with the possibilities of getting Richard Headlee and Robert Tisch, authors of two competing ballot proposals in Michigan, into the classroom. Yet Prof. Bender seems bent on getting some scholarship, too, into the course.

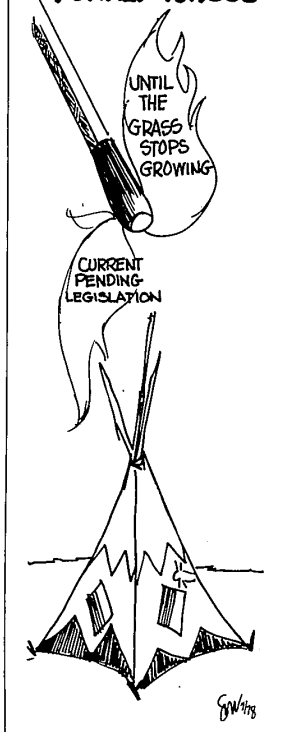
Bender opines, for example, that the "tax revolt" may cause more centralization of government as well as more "cleaning up" of government to cut costs. But it also could render local government impotent and totally dependent on state and federal government, he goes on.

"One of the most disastrous ramifications would be if this revolt became a national trend with revenues being cut drastically at the local level, bringing us to a point where the federal government subsidizes states totally."

It would be a unitary form of government with local and state governments operating as administrative agencies of the federal government.

Whoever said that academicians are mere theorists?

FORKED TONGUE



Youth is the victim

Drinking-driving figures to be twisted

The latest drinking-driving reports are hot off the press from the University of Michigan Highway Safety Research Institute and the Michigan State Police. Between them, they provide more food for misinformation on the young driver.

The dirtiest, most mud-slinging campaigns I have seen in nearly two decades of covering Michigan politics are the issues over zoning, race, communism or taxes. They are over alcohol.

The theory of the anti-drink forces seems to be that they are on the side of the deity and can tell any wild tale they wish. At this writing, it looks as if the proposal to raise Michigan's drinking age to 21 will be on the Nov. 7 ballot. Therefore, we all face the depressing prospect of hearing a lot of junk statistics on youth and drinking between now and then.

THE U-M report on "Fatal Accidents Involving Alcohol, 1968-1976," is depressing not because it's wrong but because there is so much that can be twisted.

The statistics you'll hear most go like this: In 1971, before the age of majority was lowered to 18, the proportion of drivers in the 18-20 bracket who had been drinking and were involved in fatal accidents was 27.7 per cent. In 1976, it was 48.1 per cent.

If you wade through the entire report, however, you'll come across this tidbit which knocks all the figures into a cocked hat. Dr. Jaiirus D. Flora, a researcher and associate professor of biostatistics, says: "Had the law not changed, I think we would have still seen some increase in the rates of drinking related accidents for drivers of all ages, particularly in 1974."

Why 1974? "In 1974, the Fatal Accident Recording System was introduced by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The system puts great emphasis on obtaining complete data—on not having missing data on key variables, one of which is alcohol involvement."

"So in 1974 and since then," Dr. Flora continues, "the missing data rate on alcohol involvement was reduced from about 12 per cent to about two per cent."

In other words, the pre-1974 data will show a lower rate of alcohol related accidents. But I can guarantee you the zealous pushing for the 21-year-old drinking age won't tell you that. They won't tell you comparing drinking-driving statistics over the years is an apples-oranges business.

MICHIGAN STATE Police have been doing a bad job on driver-drinking statistics for years, and

View from a Powwow: Indians were left in plight

If I had it all to do over again and were looking for a cause to adopt, I think it would be that of the North American Indian.

Too few of us have too little contact with the Indians of today, and even when we do, we are prone to accept the prejudices of the past. Mentally, even if it's in the subconscious, we're using the eyes of a movie camera to perpetuate hostility.

In the United States and Canada alike, the white man took his land and forced the Indian into servility. Treaties were broken and his culture, traditions and heritage were made victims of white man's greed.

History probably would tell us 'twas ever thus, that whatever lies in the path of expansion by the conqueror must be considered expendable.

This does not excuse those conquerors from leaving the Indians in a plight that to this day screams discrimination and cries for remedy.

AN ORGANIZED demonstration aimed at gaining relief for Indian oppression is taking place in Washington this very week. The white man's "wagon train" is being attacked with words and resolutions rather than flaming arrows, and the government may respond with its easiest sop—more promises.

How unfortunate it is that the Indian cannot master the full hub and cry of a nation responding in his behalf. An appeal to moral debt is all right as far as it goes, but the real weapon that would do the Indian more good is voting strength. That he lacks.

"The forgotten minority" is one label that has been given to the current effort on the part of Indians to bring Washington to heel.

In an age when minority attention is a politician's solid door-opener, the fear persists that once the television lights have been turned off and the Indian marchers all have gone back home the problem will be pigeonholed again.

Just as the white man himself, or at least some of his clan, may be crying for a true leader to emerge in these troubled times, so does the Indian

through bifocals



need a genius to lead the fight. Maybe Chief Pontiac lived too soon.

ALL THE INDIANS weren't marching on Washington last weekend. Hundreds of others were engaged in a two-day powwow in a wooded glade where the Sydenham River flows into the St. Clair River at the northern tip of Canada's Walpole Island across from Algonac on the Michigan shore.

They came from throughout the Midwest, performed ceremonial dances handed down through the centuries from generation to generation, competed in canoe races and—in deference to the established tribal rites of their conquerors—even selected a Miss Powwow.

Chippewas, Potawatomis, Ottawas and the Six Nations of the Iroquois—the Mohawks, Senecas, Onondagas, Oneidas, Cayugas and Tuscaroras—all these were represented and more. We were among the many gawking tourists.

Mostly this was a fun thing, a festival like any other. That meant booths where the specialties of Indian food were available, as well as those where countless beaded and feathered souvenirs were on sale.

Most impressive sight was the chief. There was no mistaking the meaning of that giant headdress. He wore it well and with dignity. His name is Don Isaacs and it is his fourth two-year term as head of the reserve. When we left across the waves, it was with the happy feeling that we were friends.



Tim
Richard

I have been blistering them for years, but they keep it up.

"Of those fatal accidents where the drinking condition was determined, 50.5 per cent indicated that alcohol was a factor," says the "Michigan Traffic Accident Facts" report for 1977.

And how, pray tell, do the state police know alcohol was a "factor?" They don't. It's a distortion.

For proof I point to the depths of the U-M report in which Dr. Flora says, "Well, I should point out

that the report form police officers use (the UD-10) formerly had, prior to Jan. 1, 1971, five entry options relating to alcohol involvement. The form was changed at that time, so that thereafter it had only two entry options: Had Been Drinking, or Had Not Been Drinking."

To an anti-drinking theodist, this fine distinction means little. But to be fair to the young people, we ought to know if a person involved in an accident had one glass of beer two hours before an accident or whether he had a pint of booze immediately before.

The louts who prepare our state police statistics must realize that "had been drinking" isn't exactly the same as "alcohol was a factor." The state police figures are based on sloppy data. They are worse than useless. They are positively misleading.

And that is why we face the depressing prospect, between now and Nov. 7, of a lot of junk statistics on youth and drinking.

You pay more with reform

Come November, most taxpayers will be overwhelmed with the opportunity for tax "reform."

There are two principles the taxpayer should understand. First, "reform" does not necessarily mean less; it usually means shifting the burden from a larger voting bloc to a smaller voting bloc. The second principle is that there is no such thing as a free lunch.

Since the early 1930s, the American philosophy has been to tax on the basis of "ability to pay." It's not very democratic because all persons are supposed to be created equal, and our Congress and state legislatures are elected on the principle of "one person, one vote."

Every time Congress changes the tax laws, the people who get the most from the federal government through grants, gifts and aid are relieved of more of their responsibility to support their government.

IT SHOULD NOT, therefore, be shocking that America is going through a taxpayers' rebellion.

For too long, our governmental officials have been thinking about how to make more voters happy by expanding services and have ignored totally the people who have been paying the freight.

On top of that, government-caused inflation has been slowly eating away the purchasing power at the same time tax bills have been going up because increased wages mean higher tax brackets, even if people buy less at the grocery store.

The tax rebellion in California has focused on property taxes because they are about the only tax that has to be submitted to the people to vote on.

If all property is appraised fairly and tax rates are uniform, property taxes are one of the fairest ways of raising taxes. The only inequity is allowing non-owners of property to vote for increased taxes on property.

THE PROBLEM with Proposition 13—or the Tisch amendment, as it is called in Michigan, which will cut property taxes in half—is that it won't cut spending. It will only force this legislature to find new sources of revenue.

Eccentricities

by HANK HOGAN



The Headlee, or tax limitation, amendment, is more realistic in the sense that it doesn't cut present taxes but restricts new taxes to the same level as personal incomes in the state increase.

We will see a third proposal from the legislature which will shift the burden of taxes on property to an increased income tax. This solves nothing because the legislature can continue to increase spending and tax rates without a vote of the people. It's a political move to move the tax burden from an area where people can voice their feelings at the polls to a political arena where fewer people will be forced to pay more.

THERE WAS A super ad a while back by Texaco which had a big black headline that said: "They used to call it Great Britain." The ad told how Britain slowly moved the tax burden to a point where anything over \$25,000 of income is taxed at a 97 per cent rate.

We know the result. Eventually you tax business and jobs out of existence and force your greatest minds to seek citizenship somewhere else where they have an opportunity to capitalize on their talents.

Hopefully, Michigan voters will not jump at a tax "reform" that merely encourages the legislature to move the burden to those entities that are creating or keeping jobs in the state.

It might look like a free lunch, but it's not. What is needed is a message to the legislature and a system to hold down future spending before we are referred to in an ad:

"They used to call it the Great State of Michigan."

A Division
of
Suburban Communications
Corporation

Farmington Observer

"Successor of the Farmington Enterprise"

Steve Barnaby
Editor

22520 West Nine Mile
Southfield, MI 48075
(313) 352-5400

John Reddy, General Mgr.
Thomas A. Riordan, Executive Editor

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

Philip H. Power
Chairman of the Board
(on leave of absence)
Richard D. Aginon
President
Chief Executive Officer