

editorial opinion

Enjoy it now;
teachers' target is '79

This week, nearly all kids here are back in school. Remember this week in 1978. Next year may be vastly different.

The goal of Michigan Education Association affiliates—the teachers' unions—is to write all collective bargaining contracts so that they expire Aug. 31, 1979.

Meanwhile, the MEA locals are setting up regional bargaining structures. These structures have officers and set bargaining goals, so that all MEA locals are at least trying to get the same things.

If the situation in one school district becomes desperate, then thousands of teachers in neighboring districts can be mobilized. Next year may be the Year.

LOOK AT IT from the teachers' point of view. The law says they have the power to bargain collectively. The law also says they can't strike, and if they do strike, they may be replaced.

That set of circumstances was brought about by the Crestwood case in Dearborn Heights in 1974. Some 180 striking Crestwood teachers were fired and replaced.

In a small district like Crestwood, it's fairly easy to find 180 teachers who have been laid off from other districts, who are recent college graduates who can't find jobs, who would like to return to work after raising children.

It doesn't automatically follow, the MEA tells us, that if one union strikes, the others will hit the bricks, too. Rather, if a Crestwood-like situation develops, the problem is there. Next year may be The Year.

SCHOOL BOARDS are less than enthusiastic about regional bargaining.

Why, they ask, should kids be without teachers in School District A when the fault lies with four heel-dragging board members in School District B?

The prospect of board members in District A putting the heat on board members in District B is highly possible. Teachers would like that.

An MEA spokesman said, "It's unreasonable to have a \$4,000 difference in a master's degree maximum (pay) from one district to another." She's wrong, of course, though her simplistic logic will have a strong appeal to some teachers. Different school districts have different abilities to pay, just as General Motors pays its professionals far more than American Motors, and AMC pays better than Checker or Ecto-Tool.

The union will deny it, but a logical outcome of regional bargaining goals and regional unionism could be regional school districts.

Meanwhile, we all remember the built-in advantage the teachers have. The state requires 180 days of schooling a year, and that means pay for 180 days.

When the auto worker hits the bricks, he loses a paycheck. The striking teacher, however, may lose some work temporarily, may have next summer's vacation disrupted, may lose a chance at summer school—but still gets paid for 180 days work a year.

EVEN IF tax limitation is rejected by voters Nov. 7, we have de facto tax limitation: Voters simply are saying "no" to most new taxes and stopping others in fine detail before approving them.

Voters will approve new taxes if they think they're getting something they need for the money. If future school tax proposals ask more money for quality paychecks, there will be trouble.

Nationally, the economy looks as if it will be taking a dip late this year or early next year. That will hurt tax collections in Michigan.

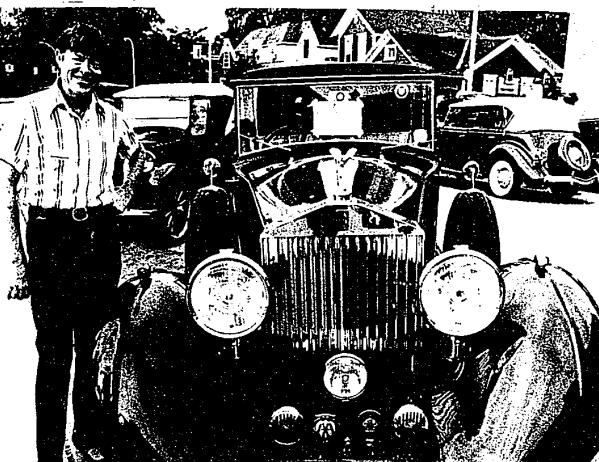
So, 1979 may be the year when militant teachers unions and militant taxpayers square off, with school boards in the middle. Good luck, school boards!

New road hazard

Sleepy-eyed working folks, heading in the morning for office or plant, have a new hazard to watch out for these days. The kids are up and about earlier now because they are on their ways back to school.

In summer the kids got a little later, and most of their chasing-around activity was in the middle of the day. Conditions are different now. Their high spirits are still up, but their hours of peak activity are when drivers and going to or coming from work.

Very shortly, still another road hazard will be apparent. It will be getting light later, and sunset will be coming earlier. Those dawn and dusk hours can be some of the most dangerous for youngsters on foot, on skateboards, on bikes.



Bill Maybury and his 1935 Rolls Royce. (Staff photo by Bob Woodring)



Tim
Richard

Road boys in own world

This is Michigan and Oakland County, I think.

One must have doubts when reading the fulminations of the hired guns at the Oakland County Road Commission. It's difficult to believe they are in the same state and county as the rest of us.

Two recent examples are at hand.

THE NEW, high-powered assistant managing director of the road commission, a bright young fellow named James Briney, made a recent speech to the Rochester Kiwanis on a whole raft of issues.

One was public transportation, which he erroneously referred to as "mass transit." Dial-a-ride buses aren't mass transit. Line-haul buses aren't mass transit. A rapid rail system—which we don't have yet—could be called mass transit, but it's only one part of public transportation.

The Milliken-Ryan proposal and the SEMTA (Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority) could take money away from the state motor vehicle highway fund that is counted on for future road needs. In fact, SEMTA drains that fund now," said Briney's text.

It's not quite so. What happened was that about five years ago, the Michigan Legislature raised the gasoline tax two cents. It all went into the motor vehicle highway fund, to be sure. The first 1.5 cents went for roads. The other half-cent went for buses.

Thus, SEMTA didn't take anything away from roads. It was all new money, and one-fourth was earmarked for SEMTA and other public transportation systems in the state. Briney's speech gives a far different impression—"take money away from roads." It's a false impression.

It didn't happen Briney's way. Not in this Oakland County. Not in this Michigan.

JOHN GRUBBA, head man at the road commission, couldn't have had the same western Oakland County referendum in mind that the rest of us knew about when he issued a statement after the Aug. 7 primary.

Grubba professed that "of over 10,000 votes cast by the people, 7,000-plus favor M-275 as planned."

Eight communities voted. Seven of the ballot proposals didn't mention M-275 at all. Those seven asked only whether folks favored construction of a north-south trunkline road along the approximate route of the M-275 plan, now abandoned by the state highway commission.

Was Grubba talking about another Oakland County, perhaps in the Land of Oz? How could he think M-275 was the ballot issue? Well, except for one township, M-275 wasn't on the ballot—not in this Oakland County, in this Michigan.

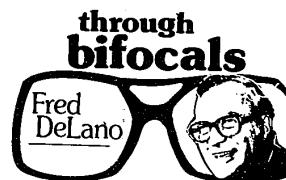
M-275 is dead. Gov. Milliken's highway commissioners saw to that. If a Detroit named Fitzgerald beats Milliken Nov. 7, one would be unwise to wager hard-earned cash that Fitzgerald's highway commissioners would change things.

The best that western Oakland economic interests can hope for is something like the "McConnell plan"—a parkway from the I-75 and I-96 intersection to M-59 and beyond.

The western Oakland referendum was, if anything, a boost to the McConnell plan. Grubba and the defeated promoters of M-275 can do western Oakland nothing but harm with the concession that voters favored M-275.

Grubba and Briney may wish it had happened that way. They may dream it happened that way. They may have daytime fantasies it happened that way.

But it didn't. There was no SEMTA "drain" of the highway fund. There was no referendum in favor of M-275.



familiar to you, most of them residents of O&E's affluent Oakland County precincts:

Broadcasters J. P. McCarthy, Dave Diles, Bruce Martyn, Ben Johnson, the late Don Watriss, Joe Gentile, John Carroll and Milk Hopwood; newspapermen Al Coffman, Mark Belair and two who since have died, Lloyd Northard and Dave Teft; plus an assortment of chaff that included Attorney Fred Bueser, travel expert George Brooks, advertising account executive Bob Rhein, lobbyist Don Gardner and, yes, the writer.

A semantics venerable enthusiast could have done worse than label this group "a strap of jocks."

IT WAS HOPWOOD, who then lived at Walnut Lake in West Bloomfield, who proved a colony carried more value than just an annual invitation to attend the Kentucky Derby barbecue (at a substantial fee).

Maybe a year or two after the Lexington fete, when Millie had left his job as sports director at CKLW, he accepted a PR promotional assignment that took him to England.

His client arranged booking into one of London's finest clubs where, upon registering, this gleeful product of the University of Illinois appended after his name the initials "GSK."

From then on, no Englishman could do enough. Whenever Hopwood trod, it was upon the proverbial red carpet. Millie's tongue-in-cheek reference to a Kentucky tradition had been interpreted backwards, he reasoned, as "Knight of the Scarlet Garter."

He never learned whether there even is such a noble title, and most of us around Detroit don't know what's happened since last hearing from Millie in Texas. Maybe he adopted "JP" as his symbol. That will get a guy clubbed in any sand trap, any where.

Back to basics

Readin', writin' – lost arts



by HENRY M. HOGAN, JR. —

THE TREND is unfortunate because lack of reading affects creativity. They say a picture is worth 1,000 words, but a picture takes away the imagination factor.

So often you hear people say that the movie wasn't as good as the book. In many cases, they are saying that while reading the book, they had conjured up mental descriptions of the characters and places that may have been very romantic. When they saw a movie version which was very specific about characters and locations, it didn't live up to the expectations arising out of their mental euphoria.

Kids who don't seem to read today are missing the opportunity not only to learn more things about life, but a tremendous hobby that can add relaxation to the hectic pace of today.

We have seen educators develop the new math and take higher math to new heights.

We must force them to direct more time and energy to the other basics of readin' and writin'.

Farmington Observer

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