

## editorial opinion

# Prophecy overshadows federal grant decision

I'll bet you think I'm going to yell.

I suspect all you regular readers of the Crack-barrel are awaiting a tirade from the old editor berating the injustices of Monday evening's Farmington Hills council session, where that august body torpedoed a \$450,000 federal grant.

Sorry, folks. It would be purely academic and futile. The decision has been made and Farmington Hills will survive, although some folks will be a little worse off for a bit.

Let it suffice to say that it was a foolish decision fostered by a majority on the council, some of whom were cowed by an irrational crowd. Fortunately, the political pendulum swings swiftly and while the more conservative faction had its day, somewhere down the line the situation will be rectified.

More interesting to note was the conduct displayed by many of the persons who were packed like sardines into the plush, federally funded city hall.

A person might be tempted to say it was a reflection of the community's attitude. But I'm loath to do so. Only about 500 persons were there, leaving another 50,000 or more residents unaccounted for, many of whom probably had something better to do than be hysterical.

**THE FAVORITE** of the evening had to be the dean of Hills politics, Councilman Earl Oppenheimer. Watching him flip and flop like an old emery trout caught on an angler's hook after 20 years of evading the lure was, to say the least, amusing.

First he wanted to vote no, then yes and, finally, of course, maybe.

Peering over the crowd to the back of the room we saw General Joan overseeing her troops as they besieged the council with more empty rhetoric than it has seen in many a year. Joan Dudley, sort of like Farmington Hills' Billy Martin. Yesterday a council member, tomorrow a council member.

But for today... you figure it out.

Of course we can't forget Sgt. Alkateeb, mouth for the masses. He said only one thing for us to remember in that meeting. Good old Joe promised us he wouldn't run for another term and maybe he would even resign before his first term was up.

Promise, Joe?

And how about that Keith Deacon. First, he yells at the crowd for their lack of knowledge because they hadn't been paying attention for the last three years. Then he aids in granting their wish. Never could quite figure out Keith.

The hero of the night was political newcomer Donald Wolf. This governmental affairs "expert" garnered two standing ovations and four healthy rounds of applause. Make room for him on our next ballot, Floyd.

Scratch down on your note pad that he has promised to lead the way in letting "Farmington Hills help itself."

## League's work cut out

Our friends in the League of Women Voters have their work cut out for them this year. Michigan's Nov. 7 ballot will have 11 state proposals to confuse the voter.

The league, you will recall, is the nonpartisan group that researches public issues and works to inform all voters about them. The 4,000 Michigan members decided last year to make a two-year project of studying the financing of government services.

It's not theoretical study. No less than six ballot proposals—including two tax limitation amendments—have fiscal implications. Most of the 11 ballot proposals were put there by special interest groups with something to gain, and so it will be refreshing to have the League of Women Voters shed its impartial light.



Most importantly to remember is someone who wasn't even there but whose voice echoed loud and clear on this very issue when it was being considered back in June 1977.

I quote:  
"We are making an application under false pretenses if we think these three year goals can't be met. We must be sincere."

"How can we purport to represent the community when they can't even come down on the right side of elderly housing. If they can come up here to close a street, they can come up here to close a community."

It sure would have been nice to have Fred Lichman sitting at that council table last night.



## An untouchable tax-raiser

In many Oakland County circles, it is fashionable to rant, in the styles of Headlee and Tisch, at "politicians" and "bureaucrats" as the perpetrators of excessive taxing and spending.

Students of statecraft, however, know the real world is considerably more baffling to deal with. Politicians and bureaucrats aren't entirely to blame.

For a case in point, let us look southward at neighboring Wayne County. There an arbitrator has made an award to Local 502 of the National Union of Police Officers, representing 650 deputies in the sheriff's department.

So incensed are the folks who have to pay the bill—the Wayne County Board of Commissioners—that they have voted to appeal the arbitrator's decision to the State Supreme Court.

In their view, the arbitrator is the bad guy. The board is 28-1 Democratic, and the object of their disaffection is William Haber, Ph.D., revered expert on labor economics, former dean at the University of Michigan, former head of the Michigan Democratic Party's Haber Commission on party reform, and so on.

**THE COUNTY**, you must understand, is reeling under a \$12 million deficit. Vice-chairman Richard Manning (D-Redford) says the wage and fringe improvements in Haber's award would cost the county nearly \$2.5 million this year and more than \$3.8 million next year.

The real blow, however, is that the county figures it will have to lay off 600 regular and 300 federally-subsidized CETA workers. In other words, 900 workers—15 per cent of the total general government work force of 5,000—may get the axe in order to pay off the deputies.

(If it strikes you as odd that the improvements for 650 deputies are the equivalent of the total costs for 900 other workers, the explanation is that many of the other workers are paid only partly by county funds and largely by federal funds.)

The county can't lay off the deputies to cut costs. The arbitrator's award says it is "mandatory that the sheriff maintain a minimum standard of personnel safety, and that the number of budgeted positions in each division, as of July 1, 1974, shall be maintained. The detective bureau shall be



Tim Richard

maintained at its budgeted strength as of July 1, 1974."

The deputies are to get wage increases of 7.7, 5 and 5 per cent over three years, dental insurance, a group plan for insuring their personal automobiles, a cost-of-living increase for retirees, removal of the ceiling on cost-of-living allowances, use of 25 per cent of the county's computer time for processing of union grievances—and on and on.

**TOUGH LUCK** for the politicians, you say? Think again. If deputies can't be laid off, then senior citizens services, hospital services, public health services and the like may go. You may have to stand in longer lines to do business with the county. The suburban goal of an out-county service center may go down the tube.

The people elected the county commissioners. Yet they don't have the freedom to balance and juggle between essential services. An arbitrator has thrown a cloak of sanctity over one group of employees, and other services can go hang.

Haber isn't one of those elected politicians or bureaucrats Headlee and Tisch talk about. Yet he may wind up having more to say about the course of county government than any single politician, bureaucrat or group of voters.

Arbitrators and courts are running up the costs of government all over the place. Haber isn't the only one running amok.

In such an atmosphere of adjudicated expenditures, we should be wary about bowing to the altar of "tax limitation" for our governmental salvation. Our collective bargaining and arbitration laws, rather, demand some scrutiny.

## through bifocals



## A judge who was explicit in sentencing

Chances are extremely slim that any of you ever had the pleasure of knowing personally one Jose Manuel Miguel Xavier Gonzales. He made it to the big leagues in only one sense, and then only indirectly as the motivating force behind a literary gem.

Cosmopolites probably would have nicknamed him Joe. To our Jewish friends he might have been Manny. The Irish probably would have dubbed him Mike. In a priest's confessional, Xavier would have fit to some degree.

It took an Irishman, Foley by name—who admits there's a bit of Scotch in his blood (water on the side, please)—to bring Senor Gonzales to my attention.

**OF ALL THE** Foleys in the phone directory, the one referred to happens to go by Thomas J. Foley. Although it is his nature to smile and laugh more than frown and growl, this strapping six-foot-plus ex-footballer wears black so often one might think him a professional mourner.

He isn't, of course.  
In real life, Tom is a judge of the Third Judicial Circuit of Michigan, headquartered in Detroit's City-County Building.

**IN NO WAY** can this be interpreted as a campaign plug for Tom. He doesn't need it, for like nine other incumbents on the Wayne County Circuit Court bench, he is unopposed for re-election.

What it is, instead, is an explanation of how I came to know of Jose Manuel Miguel Xavier Gonzales.

Like every Irishman I've ever known, Tom enjoys a chuckle. Oldtime football fans may remember him as Red Foley, an outstanding end first at Southeastern High School and then the University of Detroit under Gus Dorais.

He had to be tough both places, just as he did as a Navy lieutenant on the USS Sangamon, which was one of our ships blown out of the water at Okinawa.

From the Detroit legal firm of Goetz, Goetz & Foley, specializing in corporate law, Tom jumped to the bench in the election of '66. His unopposed re-election in '72 has kept him there to this day, commuting from the home he has occupied for 25 years in Plymouth Township.

**NOT TOO LONG AGO**, Michigan's Supreme Court instructed all circuit judges that their records be absolutely explicit at the time of sentencing. Red Foley asked the chief justice if such as the following would be explicit enough. It is a verbatim transcript of a sentence imposed upon a defendant in the Federal District Court of the Territory of New Mexico in 1881. He thought I might enjoy it too. So may you:

"Jose Manuel Miguel Xavier Gonzales, in a few short weeks it will be spring. The snows of winter will flee away, the ice will vanish, and the air will become soft and balmy. In short, Jose Manuel Miguel Xavier Gonzales, the annual miracle of the years will awaken and come to pass, but you won't be there.

"From every tree top some wild woods songster will carol his mating song, butterflies will sport in the sunshine, the busy bee will hum happy as it pursues its accustomed vacation. The gentle breeze will tease the tassels of the wild grasses, and all nature, Jose Manuel Miguel Xavier Gonzales, will be glad, but you.

"You won't be here to enjoy it because I command the sheriff or some other officers of the country to lead you out to some remote spot, swing you by the neck from a knotting bough of some sturdy oak, and let you hang until you are dead.

"And then, Jose Manuel Miguel Xavier Gonzales, I further command that such officers retire quickly from your dangling corpse, that vultures may descend from the heavens upon your filthy body until nothing shall remain but bare, bleached bones of a cold-blooded, copper-colored, blood-thirsty, throat-cutting, chili-eating, sheep-herding, murdering son-of-a-bitch."

**MUCH THE SAME** yarn is told in H. Allen Smith's "Lost in the Horse Latitudes," but Smith went on to quote what the accused then told the judge. In part, it allegedly went like this:

"That I have taken human life I do not deny, but it was under circumstances of the greatest provocation. So determined was this court to add another to its already long list of slaughtered victims that I early foresaw my doom was sealed.

"You and your blood-thirsty jury remind me more of a lot of buzzards hovering an expected victim than of a body of men supposed to guard and honor the principles of human justice. Hear me, you half-starved hyena! You cannot break my spirit!

"As I gaze into your bloated, whiskey-fogged face, I find no surprise at your conduct. With mock solemnity and cruel sarcasm, you have consigned me to an ignominious death.

"Very well, you disguised barbarian, you wild-eyed, dirty-nosed, pot-guzzled, carnivorous offspring of a cross-eyed maggot. I want you to understand that your words hold no terror for me. "As for hanging by the neck until I am dead—may God blast your dirty old soul."

Was that the end of it? Not quite. Legend has it that Jose Manuel Miguel Xavier Gonzales broke jail a couple of days later, escaped into the hills, and was never recaptured.

## Why we should redesign the WC

High above Cayuga's waters at the noble old institution called Cornell, they've done some research on bathrooms.

Their startling discovery was that bathrooms of today are the ugliest, most impractical and most unsafe rooms in a house.

Most of us, of course, didn't need the fine old college to tell us that. As with the weather, however, we complain about the shortcomings and do nothing about it.

Picture, if you will, a glamorous creature about to wash her golden locks, squeezing into a room the size of an oversized closet, sticking her head into a ceramic bucket with three metal fixtures poised ready to bang her noggin.

If our charming image survives the ordeal of

## Eccentricities

by HENRY M. HOGAN, JR.



getting her head clean without bruises, she then must face getting her body into a slippery tank and taking a bath.

**BATHTUBS ARE** an outgrowth of the old

wooden washtubs, but slightly bigger. They were designed for medieval knights, who seldom grew much above five feet.

No one has bothered to make tubs bigger because they wouldn't be able to fit them in the ordinary bathroom.

They are designed with the drain at the same end as the spigot, which makes cleaning them a chiropractor's dream.

And once you get into one, if you haven't lost your balance and split your head open, you wash and then soak in the same dirty water.

As a practical matter, you can't come out of a bathtub clean. All you can really hope to do is rearrange whatever dirt you happen to bring into the tub with you.

And while you are soaking in dirty water, you don't dare lean back and relax for fear of sliding into the water.

**THE THIRD FIXTURE** in the bathroom is called a water closet in polite society. This has changed little since they brought it into the house from outside and added water.

It was not designed with comfort in mind, nor was it designed with men in mind.

It's time for bathrooms to be redesigned with people in mind.

They should be bigger than living rooms, since many folks spend more time there (depending on where your TV set is located and what your reading habits are), and because it is the one place in the house where you can get complete privacy.

They should be safer, more beautiful and more practical.

I guess what we need to start it all off is a congressional investigation.

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