editorial opinion OCC's open doors would be good PR

An unwanted gift

The board at Oakland Community College is be-coming public relations-conscious. It is concerned about maintaining enrollment, gaining private con-tributions and general good will. That is good. But trustees themselves could start at their own board meetings to be a little more sensitive to the nublic.

public

public. At best, OCC trustees are less than polite to the public. At worst, they risk running afoul of the state Open Meetings Act. Consider the Aug. 30 meeting, which was not atypical.

THE BOARD had no sooner opened its meeting than it recessed to go into closed session, (We note here that many persons at OCC still re-fer to these by the euphemism "executive" sessions. The Open Meetings Act does not provide for "exec-

utive' sessions. Moreover, a legislative body such as a college board of trustees cannot hold an executive session, any more than it can hold a judicial session. session)

Persons kicked out of the board room had the impression the closed session would last an hour. It lasted for an hour and 45 minutes.

Meanwhile, the public and OCC's own well-paid administrators had to cool their heels while waiting to be readmitted. That is less than polite on the board's part. And it's poor public relations.

most of the public and its administrators involved in that business. Long, closed sessions have the effect of discouraging public attention to, and serutiny of, a governmental board. We doubt GCC is deliberately trying to avoid attention and discourage serutiny. We expect all the board needs is a gentle remind-er that it's no nice to close a meeting indefinitely only minutes after the meeting has begun. THERE IS A better way. Whenever the board foresees the possibility of a closed session in making the agenda, the closed ses-sion can be scheduled at (say) 10 p.m. Thus, the board take care of its major items of business and

THERE'S ALSO some question whether the beard was within the law in closing the Aug. 29 meeting to discuss what if discussed. The Open Meetings Act says a board "may" (not mist) close its doors "for strategy and negotiation sessions connected with the negotiation of a collec-tive bargaining agreement when either party re-quests a closed hearing."

LOVE and KISSES Coleman

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The board actually discussed a tentative agree-ment made with the Faculty Association. When you have a tentative agreement, you are no lorger in negotiations. You are in deliberations.

We suspect the board did this out of an old habit, not because it really had anything to hide.

IN SUM: Open meetings are public policy in

The public has a right to know what alternatives a board considered. The public has a right to know to whom a board listens. The public has a right to know what board members said in their delibera-tions. The public has a right to decent logistics and good acoustics.

Openness is good public relations.



the sewers

LINE SEW EITS Was the same old 'them versus us' hat wek them the Detroit City Commit held a public hearing new sewage treatment rates proposed by the De-troit Water and Sewer Department. Business representatives pined suburban politi-ding out the new rates. They complianted of lack to communication, of being whot. Mathematication, of being whot. Ma

COUNCIL PRESIDENT Erma Henderson put her finger on the critical spot. Before she came onto the council, she said, there had been talk of "region-

ism. But Detroit "owns" the sewage treatment plant. e said, will continue to "own" it and will never

give it up. A good analysis but a wrong solution based on a

A good analysis but a wrong sourner owner premise. Detroit, as most readers know after these years of arguments, operates a water and sewer depart-ment which serves not only its own 1.3 million peo-ple but another three million non-residents in 70 to 000 outlying communities. The DWSD director is an appointee of the mayor. The seven board members — four city residents and three non-residents — are appointees of the mayor and subject to removal in an instant. All em-ployees must be, or become, city residents. We in the outer city have no power to change it.

THE FUNDAMENTAL error Mrs. Henderson THE FUNDAMENTAL error Mrs. Henderson and Detroit politicians make has to do with owner-ship of the plant. If Detroit really had an invest-ment in the plant, and if the suburbs didn't, then Detroit would be on sound ground in insisting on continued control.

continued control. At this point, let us consult the report of May 1, 1976 from three "masters" appointed by U.S. Dis-trict Judge John Feikens, who is handling the case of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency vs. the city and its DWSD.

of the US. Environmental Protection Ågency vs. the city and its DWSD. "The Detroit sewage treatment facilities have been financed by three sources of funds. One has been grants from the United States and the State of Michigan. Another has been borrewing. The third has been charges imposed on users of the system. "None of the evidence adduced in the hearings permits any calculation of the relative amounts of capital that have been generated by user charges imposed on various classes of users in Detroit and in the suburbs. "It is clear, however, that suburban customers have been tied into the Detroit system for long but varying periods of time, and that suburban cus-tomers have provided substantial portions of the capital invested in the system through user charges." (Italies mine) "All of the bonds that have been issued to gen-erate funds for the sewage system have been reve-nue bonds."

nue bonds." The masters could have added that the federal and state funds came from taxes paid by suburban-ites as well as central city taxpayers.

CLEARLY, we wouldn't be "taking away" any teroit property by changing the way the DWSD is

run. The time has come to talk about regional govern-

"The time has come to talk about regional govern-ment." Not just regional cooperation. Not just sharing information. Not just public hearings. Not just'a contraction of the second second second second operated by a regional government. Prankly, I had hoped Judge Felkens would do more that way by appointing a special court admin-istrator to run the sewage plant. Instead, Pelkens appointed Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, which is like appointing the tox to guard the chicken coop and cutting a hole in the fence." Felkens' appointing way with the chicken coop and cutting a hole in the fence. "Felkens' appointment was immaginative, even heatward tooking. And today we still, have the "them inversion us, attitudes over sewage treatment; rates."

American

When Ted Kennedy's name is mentioned as a possible candidate for the presidency of the United States. those who oppose him usually cite, among other things, that it would be promoting a political dynasty similar to a monarchy because his brother was pr...bend. The interesting part of this proposition is that political dynasties are nothing new in the country. They have extended over several generations, not just one, which would be the case if Ted went to the White House.

THE LONGEST dynasty involving the presidency was the Harrison tamily. Benjamin Harrison was a signer of the Declara-tion of Independence, his third son, William Henry Harrison, was ninth president of the U.S. (for only 31 days), his great-grandson, also named Benjamin Harrison, was the 23rd president. Another dynasty was the Adams family. John Adams was a signer of the Declaration of Independ-ence and became second president of the U.S. His son, John Quincy Adams, was the sixth presi-dent.

The Roosevelts were also in the running if you are looking for dynasties, but the line of succession is a little more remote.

Theodore Roosevelt; the 26th president and a Republican, was the fifth cousin of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the 32nd president and a Democrat. Ted-dy was also an uncle of Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of dy was a. Franklin

Franklin ran unsuccessfully for vice president in 1920 and was the first and only person to run and be elected four times as president.

THERE WERE also some families which at-tempted unsuccessfully to last more than one gen-eration in the presidency or vice presidency.

William Howard Taft was 27th president of the U.S. His son, Robert, was a serious caudidate for the Republican nomination in 1952 until Dwight Eisen-hower entered the picture.

Adlai E. Stevenson was vice president under Grover Cleveland, and his grandson, with the same name, was the Democratic nominee for president in 1952 and 1956.

There have been many other political dynasties in this country which have controlled states or cities for more than one generation.

Those who use this argument against Ted Kenne-dy have failed to read their history books.

Who will win this year's boos for being the first to run a Christmas gift commercial?

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Philip H. Power Chairman of the Board (on leave of absence)

Richard D. Aginia President Chief Executive Officer

ban Communications Corporation

GEIGER'S ATTITUDE during that interview shows that Labor Day strife will continue to plague this state's educational system. Geiger has been a big cheese in the MEA since the early 1970s. He comes from the teaching ranks in the Livonia School District. He spends countless hours being interviewed on radio and television and, for the most part, the has the answers down pat. But one uncomfortable subject keeps coming to the fore — Crestwood. You remember that little affair. Crestwood teachers struck. Crestwood teachers were fired. Other state teachers kat on their hands and the firings stood. That incident was a henchmark in teacher union-school board relations throughout this state. Geiger vows that teachers just won't allow other

teache iterated that feeling again Sunday. But he also ad-mitted that as MEA president he doesn't have the



power to make it happen. And therein lies the fallacy that is the MEA. In reality the education associations throughout the state are autonomous units. They, for the most part, bargain separate contracts which contain varying pay scales, cost-ol-living clauses, class sizes and fringe benefit packages.

Iringe benefit packages." THE ATTITUDE among teachers is obvious. They get what they can for themselves and the heck with the educator in the next district. Unfortunately, teachers are hampered with the philosophy that they are professionals, and profes-sionals don't dirty their hands with picket signs un-less it's absolutely necessary. Necessary doesn't in-clude when the guy in the next district gets axed for hitting the bricks. Geiger agrees that most teachers feel they are professionals, but denies they will ever again left heir brothers and sisters doown if fired. The track record shows otherwise. A few years back when John Melchor, former Garden City Edu-cation Association president, and coileagues wend off to jail, teachers again remained silent. Melchor and his band recently were thrown out off to jail, teachers again read and replaced with less militant leadership — an indication that teachers militant leadership — an effective baregianing mit.

BUT TO a be strong, effective bargaining unit, the MEA, must decide for what it will strive. It teachers choose to be autonomous, individualistic professionals, the Labor Day striffe will continue. Kids will be sitting at home when they should be in school. Parents, the tarpayers, will become even more disconcerted with the state of education, in Michican

Michigan The next time a teacher is fired for striking, the true colors of teacher unionists will be revealed. Time will tell if Geiger is correct. I doubt it



Geiger vows that teachers just won't allow other achers to be fired without taking action. He re-

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Eccentricities

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SUBURBS

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Will teachers stand up?

The rating battle obviously was won by the pigs-kin preview. Today, of course, many of those same persons are wondering how it is that some teachers are out on the picket line rather than in the classroom. Others are wondering just how much their taxes will in-crease because of the newly ratified teacher con-tract in their district.