

## editorial opinion

Tim Richard writes

# Let's take a long look at the questions on M-275

Some unanswered questions after last week's State Transportation Commission public hearing on alternatives to an M-275 freeway:

Those who want a freeway point to "growth" in the lakes area from Novi to Clarkston. To be sure, there has been a population increase there, but what about population losses elsewhere?

From 1970-78, Birmingham lost 2,570 persons or 9.8 percent; Ferndale, 3,650 or 11.8 percent; Hazel Park, 3,084 or 13 percent; Oak Park, 4,362 or nearly 12 percent; Pontiac, 10,000 or 12 percent; Royal Oak, 9,238 or 10.7 percent; in Wayne County, Garden City lost nearly 3,000 or 7.1 percent; Lincoln Park, 5,284 or 10 percent; Redford Township, 8,101 or 11.3 percent; and those are just the so-called "suburbs."

Growth? State Rep. Alice Tomboulain calls it "Chinese checkers," with populations shifting but

not growing. I call it a "scorched earth" policy where we burn our lands behind us and keep moving. The freeway backers don't answer that argument.

THERE'S A TOUGH question that needs to be addressed by those who style themselves environmentalists. The East Michigan Environmental Action Council (EMEAC) launched an erudite broadside against both M-275 and the McCornell Freeway, which it jeers at as M-275 Jr. We published significant excerpts from its report, and I have personally pored over the entire thing.

The question is: Aren't most of the arguments against M-275 really arguments against all freeways?

There are lake environmental questions about the proposed M-275 route, but didn't those same questions apply to I-94, I-96, I-75 and US-10?

I have the uncomfortable impression that about 20 percent of the environmental case is anti-M-275 and 80 percent is anti-all freeways.

STATE REP. Rick Fessler, R-West Bloomfield, argued eloquently that M-275 is needed to serve persons wishing to reach "the playground of southeast Michigan."

Yet Fessler and state Sen. Donald Bishop, R-Rochester, have been sponsors for years of companion bills to set standards for development of public boat launches. The Department of Natural Resources analyzed the bills and said their standards would prevent any new boat launches from being developed in Oakland County.

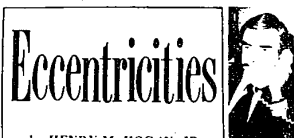
A clarification is in order. If more public boat launches are bad, then is it not also bad to build a freeway going past lakes where the common peons can't launch their boats anyway? And wouldn't eas-

ier access just crowd such already crowded spots as Cass and Orchard lakes?

HAVING MADE my quota of enemies for the week over the freeway argument, I turn to the field of education, where the board of Oakland Community College persists in adjourning into "executive" sessions.

Under the Open Meetings Act, there is no way any board can hold an "executive" session. They're closed sessions — a harsher term but more accurate.

The last time the OCC board voted to close the doors, it did so in order to discuss labor negotiations. A closed session for that purpose is legal when one party requests it, and no board vote is required. But no audible request was made the last time the board closed the doors. Trustees just did it automatically, virtually without thinking.



by HENRY M. HOGAN, JR.

## Big investment, little benefit

Editor's note: The column which appeared here last week wasn't Hank Hogan's but our editorial stand on M-275. Here is the Eccentricities column which should have appeared.

During the last year, the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEM-TA) has purchased, for itself and the Detroit Department of Transportation (D-DOT), 57 new General Motors RTS buses.

It would have paid around \$92,000 for each bus, but Michigan law requires that all new buses be lift-equipped for the handicapped, so SEM-TA paid an additional \$10,000 per bus for the lifts.

This fall, SEM-TA will purchase 167 additional new buses. Again it will have to pay the additional \$10,000 per vehicle.

When the roughly 1,000 buses in the SEM-TA and D-DOT fleets are replaced over the next five years, taxpayers will have paid \$10 million for wheelchair lifts.

FEWER THAN 6,000 persons in the metropolitan Detroit area are confined to wheelchairs.

In the last six months, seldom have more than three persons a day used the wheelchair lifts. There are two reasons.

First, it is difficult for wheelchair users to get to bus stops to catch a bus.

Second and more important, the region already has an extensive small-bus program for the elderly and handicapped where small lift-equipped vans will pick up people at their doorsteps and deliver them directly to their destinations within each county.

If proposed federal regulations go into effect, any new subway which might be built, as well as the Redford People Mover, must be designed to offer equal access to the handicapped.

Since the People Mover (a monorail type of service which will loop downtown Detroit) will be above ground and the subway below, taxpayers will have to pay additional millions of dollars over the next 10 years.

HOW HAVE WE gotten ourselves into this mess?

It isn't because transportation authorities haven't been sympathetic and responsive to the needs of the handicapped. The elderly and handicapped small-bus program proves that.

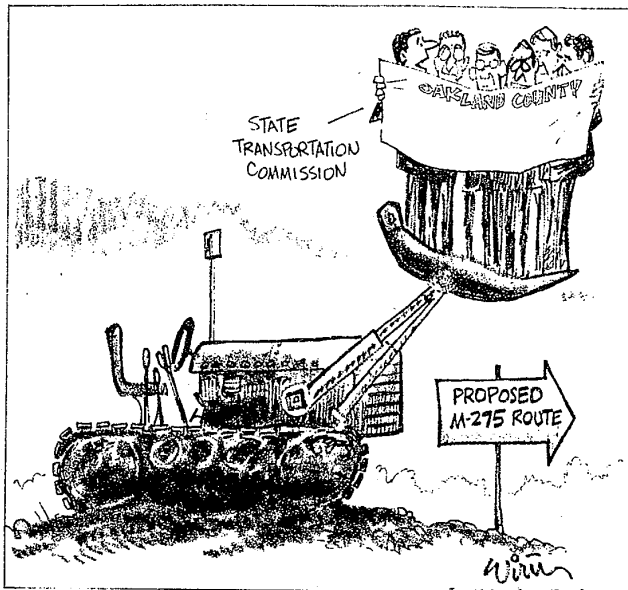
For some reason, the handicapped movement doesn't seem content with having their individual needs met. They are on a crusade of equal rights to ride buses, even though they have already achieved special rights by originally pushing for the small-bus program.

While we are all sympathetic to the plight of those less fortunate than ourselves, we are all being used to accomplish something that isn't necessary.

The cost of government will continue to escalate as long as we ignore the practical and legislate on the basis of theory or guilt.

The columnist is also a member of the SEM-TA board of directors.

## 'The builders are restless'



## 'Jock mentality' protects Bo

A bit of family folklore came to mind the other day as I read about the latest antics of Wolverine folk hero Bo Schembechler.

The story revolves around my older brother, then 7 years old. I was 4.

I was perched on the playground swing, teasing my brother to consternation by asking him questions which he couldn't answer.

Finally, utterly frustrated, my brother resorted to a typical 7-year-old's solution — he punched me.

It was then, my folks say, they knew I was going to be a journalist.

It's one of those stories that everyone gets a big kick out of retelling at family reunions — two kids clashing in a battle of witlessness.

WHAT ISN'T SO funny is when a grown man, a person who is held up as an example of the All-American way, pushes a student reporter around because he can't answer a question.

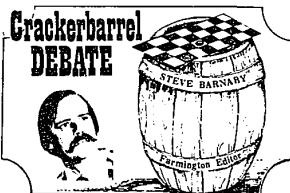
In case you didn't hear about the incident, let me fill you in on the details.

It seems that a reporter from the student newspaper, the Michigan Daily, approached Bo and asked if he would emphasize kicking more when recruiting because of the football team's dismal record when it came to field goal attempts.

The team has missed nine straight field goal attempts. Two misses cost Michigan the Notre Dame game.

Bo took umbrage, pushed the reporter's microphone away and said, "Don't make me look bad, understand, son, or I'll throw you the hell out of Michigan football."

IT WAS THEN that Bo resorted to the push tactics as witnessed by some other reporters standing nearby. Bo's words of wisdom were recorded on tape.



At the least Bo owes the reporter a public apology. And if justice were administered on an equal basis in this country, Schembechler should get the boot — just like Woody Hayes.

But you can bet there will be neither a public apology nor a firing. You see, there is a difference between the situation in which Bo finds himself and the one Woody was in last year. The difference demonstrates how sick our sense of justice in this country has become — especially when it comes to sports.

AS YOU RECALL, last year, Woody was dumped as Ohio State's gridiron coach after punching an opposing player for having the audacity to intercept a pass during the Gator Bowl.

In truth, there isn't a lick of difference in the two incidents, and the punishment should be the same. The difference comes in the jock mentality.

You see, Woody had become victim to the cardinal sin of sports — he had lost too many of the important games. His team lost to the University of Michigan several times and Ohio had to live with the disgrace of going to a bowl game with less stature than the Rose Bowl. In short, he was expendable.

Bo, on the other hand, is still in the running. With the exception of the Rose Bowl, Schembechler wins the big ones. He's the winningest coach in college football.

But the tide is turning, as is Bo's temper. Last year his team lost to Michigan State and had to settle for a co-championship Big Ten Title. This year his team lost to Notre Dame.

Woody shoved a jock while his pupil, Bo, shoved a working newsmen. In the jock mentality, the former act is a mortal sin, the latter a mere flare of temper.

It will be interesting to see what will happen if the boys in blue and maize lose to arch-rival Spartans this year, and Bo has another temper tantrum. The reaction could be different.

the stroller



## A monument to Ty Cobb

The young writer on the other end of the line was frank. "They are going to unveil a monument to Ty Cobb down in Georgia," he said, "and I have been assigned to write a piece about the all-time star of the Detroit Tigers."

"But I am only 31 years old. I never saw him play and never even have seen him. That's why I am calling on you. Your old friend, Charley Gehring, told me that you were the fellow who could help me."

Through the years The Stroller always has made it a point to help young fellows along the journalistic trail as a sort of full payment for the many boosts he got along the way. So he agreed to help the young writer — willingly, over the phone.

"I REMEMBER COBB very well," he told the young fellow "I and remember him as the only player he ever saw who swung three bats instead of two on the way up to the plate."

The Stroller also passed along the tale that Cobb had ordered the grass in front of third base watered every morning, so his bunts in the afternoon would be slowed down. And he also recalled for the young writer that he had seen Cobb circle the bases on a bunt — the only ballplayer who ever had done that trick. That's how much havoc he raised with the infielders when he got on base.

While the young fellow admitted he was taking notes, The Stroller also recalled the afternoon when Cobb raced into the stands in Philadelphia to attack a fan who had been molesting him, a move which brought about the most unusual strike in baseball history.

"I have a lot of that material," the young fellow cut in. "Gehring, who was a rookie when Cobb was the Tiger manager, told me a lot of those things. I would like to know more of him as a man when he was out of his baseball uniform."

THE REQUEST brought back memories of the most frugal man he ever had seen, in uniform or out.

In the days when Cobb was the Tiger manager in the mid-20's stiff-rimmed straw hats were the vogue. As the season drew to a close, it was the custom to recognize a good play by throwing your stiff-rimmed hat in the air instead of applauding. There were days when the outfield was littered with straw hats.

On these occasions Ty ordered little Jimmy Dugan, the Tiger trainer, to gather up all those hats. Then, Cobb ordered them packed and sent down to his home in Georgia.

Asked what Ty did with the hats, Dugan laughingly answered, "He pays his help down there with them. He tells them that's what the white man wears up north, and they are glad to get them."

THE FRUGALITY of the "Georgia Peach" — as the baseball fans remember him — peaked after he had ended his baseball career. He was invited to play a series of golf matches with Babe Ruth, who also had ended his baseball days.

They headed west and agreed to a match at Grosse Ile Country Club. Cobb, always a great competitor, arrived two days early and asked to practice with Joe Devany's son. Joe was the pro and his boy knew the course. In fact, Cobb asked him to caddy for him on the big day.

So great was the crowd that the match had to be halted at the 14th hole with the score even.

Back in the locker room Ruth's caddy came in after a bit and said, "Mr. Ruth, your clubs are all cleaned and they are in the bag over there."

"Okay, boy," Babe answered and peeled a \$20 bill off his roll and gave it to him.

A few lockers away, Cobb's caddy, the pro's son, said the same thing to Cobb. His clubs were cleaned and ready.

"What are the caddy rates here?" Ty asked. When the caddy answered, "Two dollars," Cobb looked up and said, "but we only played 14 holes," and he gave the lad \$1.75.

This was Ty Cobb out of baseball uniform. And The Stroller wonders whether any of those trails will be carved in to the monument.

## An observation

A television repairman of our acquaintance makes the following observation on the seasonality of his business and on man's nature:

"The average man gets his TV repaired only in the fall, so that he can watch football. But he lets his family watch a crappy picture the rest of the year."

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