

Press fights McNamee bill on county printing

By TOM LONERGAN

A bill that would give counties a break on publishing minutes of board of commissioners meetings recently sailed through the Michigan House of Representatives and is pending in the Senate.

Sponsored by State Rep. Ruth McNamee, R-Birmingham, at the request of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, the legislation would give counties less expensive options to publishing the entire minutes of county board meetings in newspapers.

The bill passed the house last month, 84-9.

The Michigan Newspaper Association (MNA), based in Lansing, plans to fight the bill in the Senate. However, the loss of ad revenue to its member publications is not the only reason MNA is against the bill, said Executive Director Warren Hoyt.

"MONEY is relatively insignificant," he said.

"We're opposed to any bill that impairs the public's right to know."

Mrs. McNamee says the bill "does

not violate accessibility of public information to the public.

"I did think of the press," she said. "I do know it's revenue, so in none of the three alternatives is the press bypassed."

If passed, the bill would allow counties to choose whether to publish 1) the full minutes, 2) a synopsis of the county board proceedings or 3) a notice that the full minutes are available from the county clerk's office.

OAKLAND COUNTY Clerk Lynn Allen said publishing the full minutes costs the county between \$30,000 to \$38,000 annually.

Allen said the statewide county clerks association supports Mrs. McNamee's bill.

"I've only found two people that ever read 'em (the published minutes) and I've been here 11 years," Allen said.

"In fact, nobody reads them."

Oakland's minutes are published in a variety of area weekly and daily newspapers, said Allen, because there isn't one paper that circulates throughout the county.

Allen said the county mails copies of

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— State Rep. Ruth McNamee

meeting minutes to residents who request them.

Mrs. McNamee said the bill is a response to demands for government spending cuts. Hoyt says the legislation won't cut very much.

"The savings are rather insignificant when compared with total county expenditures," Hoyt said.

IN OAKLAND'S case, \$30,000 would be saved from the county's projected

\$87 million 1980 budget, according to Allen.

Hoyt said the bill "takes government further away from people." In urban counties, Hoyt added, most county buildings aren't in a central location providing easy access to the clerk's office.

"The majority of the people aren't in and out of the county building all the time," Hoyt said.

"The majority probably don't know where the county building is."

Hoyt doesn't like the idea of a county having an option of printing a report or

synopsis of a meeting.

"The public has a right to know the exact details," he said.

"You can't depend on just the watchdog of the county, anymore than you can the newspaper."

Mrs. McNamee agrees few persons read the full published minutes, most often found in the back pages of newspapers. And if they are read, some county's minutes may not contain a lot of information, she added.

"There are some people in public office who want everything they say to be in those minutes. That's overkill."

UM-D faculty chats to focus on women

Six University of Michigan-Dearborn faculty will present a series of informal chats about women and women's issues during November. Sponsored by UM-D's Women's Center, the series is called "Brown Bag Chats with Faculty."

The series begins Nov. 6 with the final session set for Dec. 6. The talks begin at noon. They are open to the community and participants are invited to bring their lunch.

Schedule for the series is:

Nov. 6: "Changing Feminist Issues," Barbara Forstia, associate professor of psychology.

Nov. 13: "Sex Roles," James Gruber, assistant professor of sociology.

Nov. 15: "Sex Role Comparisons — China and Sweden," Marilyn Rosenthal, assistant professor of sociology.

Nov. 21: "Women and the Law," Helen Graves, assistant professor of political science.

Nov. 26: "Transitions," Joan Bowker, assistant professor of sociology.

For additional information, contact the Women's Center at 593-5147.

Free shots are offered

The Oakland County Health Division will offer free immunizations from 9 a.m. to noon Nov. 8, at the First Methodist Church, Warner and Grand River in Farmington.

Shots for measles, German measles, mumps, polio, diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough will be available.

A parent or legal guardian must accompany children under 18 and bring previous immunization records.

Those adults bringing children other than their own must have a release form from the county health division or clinic personnel.

Questions may be called to Bobbie Rehwoldt in the health department at 858-5165.

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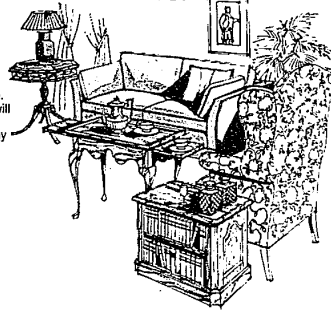
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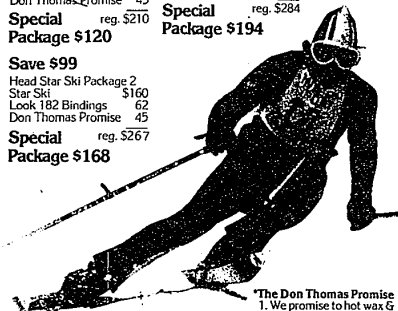
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MEET HOWARD FAST



The author of *Freedom Road*, *April Morning*, *My Glorious Brothers*, *The Immigrants*, and *Second Generation* will be at iBrowse Saturday afternoon, November 10th, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., to speak on selected topics and autograph copies of his latest book, *The Establishment*.

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