

editorial opinion

Religious freedom as basic as ERA question

There's an old saying — one person's rights end when his or her fist reaches the tip of another's nose.

A fellow named Marion Callister is in grave danger of getting his nose bloodied.

Callister is a federal district judge who has been assigned a case brought by opponents of the Equal Rights Amendment. They want the time extension to pass the ERA rescinded.

Simple enough? Not so.

ERA advocates have a problem with Callister — he's a Mormon. And as we Michigan folks know, from former Gov. George Romney, Mormons, as a religious institution, oppose passage of the ERA.

A campaign is being waged by such organizations as NOW to have Callister removed from the case. Their contend that because the Mormon church is against the ERA, so must be Callister. Compounding the problem is that he is a regional director of the Mormon church — sort of like an archbishop.

Locally, the Michigan Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs is meeting this week-

end to discuss, among other things, Marion Callister.

Sponsoring the seminar, in the Farmington Hills Holiday Inn, are local BPW chapters, which include most of the west side suburban communities.

A BRIEF conversation with seminar coordinator Marlene Danol reveals why various women's groups oppose Callister's hearing the case.

"There is a question of whether the judge will be fair," she said. "We feel that if he is a Mormon, he couldn't help but be influenced by the teachings of the church."

Callister disagrees. He feels his standing in the church will have no influence on a legal judgment. Besides, the legal question is not the ERA, but the time extension for its passage.

He's correct, and there are a number of historical examples to verify his feelings.

The most familiar to many Americans is former President John F. Kennedy. It wasn't too many years ago that a Catholic, it was thought, just couldn't get elected to the presidency.



Kennedy spent a great deal of his campaign trying to convince the country that the pope wouldn't be a special advisor in the White House. He even went to a Protestant ministers' convention in Texas to make his point.

He won the election and, indeed, his religious background wasn't a part of that administration's decision-making process.

Second case in point — Supreme Court Justice William Brennan. A Catholic, Brennan was appointed by President Dwight Eisenhower to the co-equal governmental branch.

Back in the early 70s, the high court wrestled with the topic of abortion. It's well known the Catholic Church is opposed to abortion. But Brennan put aside his religion and was in the majority when the court supported abortion.

IT WOULD BE unforgivable to discriminate against Judge Callister because of his religious background. Religious freedom is as basic to this country as equal rights for women should be.

To deny Callister that right, which removing him from the case would do, would be a step back to the dark ages of this country's history.

Many of us who are strong ERA supporters are offended by this drive to remove Callister. It is a moot and defenseless point designed only to hinder the important point at hand — obtaining equal rights for all Americans.

We melt our heritage for cold, hard cash

As we were sitting around the breakfast table one Saturday morning, we noticed an ad in one of the Detroit papers saying a national group was in town paying top prices for silver and gold.

The ad said the group would pay so much for gold and silver coins, a range of prices for gold watches and so much an ounce for sterling silver hollow ware.

Our discussion had started with the number of burglaries that had been occurring locally since the price of gold and silver skyrocketed.

In the middle of the conversation, my wife said we had a lot of things around the house which we never used that were just inviting someone to come in and take them. With that, she headed for the basement and started digging into old cartons.

Fanning the band

One of the more sensible proposals we've heard for entertaining the troops at July's Republican National Convention in Detroit is to trot out the Detroit Concert Band.

The entire metropolitan area will be putting its best foot forward — hotels, entertainment spots, tourist attractions — as we bask in the glare of national and even international attention.

It makes sense, then, to encourage the Republican National Committee and Civic Host Committee to engage the Detroit Concert Band not only for playing the national anthem but for concertizing when the Grand Old Party comes to town.

The band is already internationally famous for playing in a BBC TV documentary on John Philip Sousa. But it's capable of excellence in a wide range of classical, pops and show music as well as traditional marches. The Detroit Concert Band's rank among professional bands is approximately the same as the New York Philharmonic's among symphony orchestras.

If our tourist facilities are to be at their best for the convention, it's reasonable to put our best entertainment foot forward, too.

No cause for doom

"The people who prophecy doom every so often for the suburbs and insist on suburban dependence with regard to the central city have made no impact whatsoever.

"Suburbs do not appear to have weakened people's morale, or otherwise to have changed them. Studies of suburban social behavior indicate that whatever differences there are between suburbanites and city dwellers have to do with the fact that the suburban population is more likely to participate actively in some organization.

"Many studies indicate that neighboring participation is active in voluntary organizations in the suburbs to a higher degree than in the central city — unless you look at the same type of population in both. Then you will find a negative difference between them."

— Scott A. Greer, professor of sociology and urban affairs, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Eccentricities
by HENRY M. HOGAN, JR.

SHE CAME UP with an old silver flower bowl and a pair of candlesticks. She weighed them on the kitchen scale and came up with 9.3 pounds.

I was then dispatched to the placers of the ad. They were working through a local gold and silver shop and weren't hard to find. All you had to do was follow the traffic.

When I got inside a very small shop, I was probably No. 45 in line.

Everyone in line had bags of stuff. The people in line varied from two ladies selling a sterling silver salt and pepper shaker to a man who had a coin collection that must have taken a lifetime to build.

WHEN IT WAS YOUR turn, they took your items and cut a deep line in them with a knife and applied two types of chemicals to determine whether it was solid or plated.

They seemed to be rejecting more items than they purchased, explaining the rejects were not solid metal.

When they looked at our candlesticks, they said they had weights inside that were not silver, so they would have to cut them up and just weigh the raw silver. When they were finished, the beautiful old candlesticks were just a pile of cut up silver.

They then weighed everything and came up with 6.4 pounds. We know that the kitchen scales aren't too accurate and that there probably were weights in the bottom of candlesticks, but you wonder how fairly you are being treated.

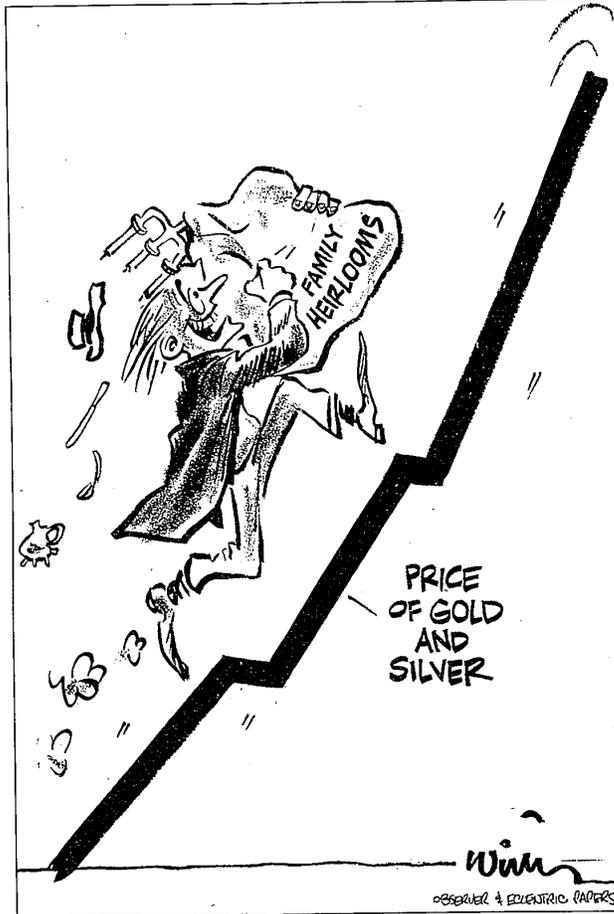
After weighing the items they multiplied the pounds by 14 and the advertised price. When I asked them why they weren't by 16 since there are 16 ounces to a pound, they explained that there were only 14 Troy ounces in a pound.

THE AD SAID they would pay in cash, but they claimed there had been such a rush on Saturday that they had run out of cash and were issuing checks.

I wondered to myself how many people really owned what they were selling, because the buyers asked for no identification and no proof of ownership.

I took my check and went home feeling sad. Even though we never used the things I brought in, they were still beautiful, and the purchasers only wanted to melt them down and sell them at the highest price.

I felt this craze to take advantage of the high value of metal was probably leading to the destruction of some of our priceless heritages.



Veteran views boxing commissioner

Politics is a funny game. If you don't believe so, take a look at Gov. Milliken's latest move in appointing Hiawatha Knight, a black woman, to the office of state boxing commissioner.

This strange move, considered by the skeptics as a means to garner more vote, makes her the only woman boxing commissioner in the land.

To make the move all the more laughable to the Stroller is the fact that when she was asked what her qualifications were for the job she answered that as a young girl she often traveled to a home to "watch" Joe Louis on the radio. And after Louis retired, she followed the ups and downs of Mohammed Ali, who won the heavyweight title three times.

the stroller
W.W. Edgar

Aside from her following the boxers on radio and television, the new commissioner has spent a great deal of time in physical education at the high school level. But that is far away from the dingy gyms where the boxers train.

However, in accepting the new position where she succeeds Chuck Davey, a retired fighter and now is a successful insurance broker who held the position for 15 years, she joins a group of colorful characters who have governed the boxing game in the state.

ONE OF THE most colorful was Frank McDonnell, a boxing writer on the now defunct Detroit Times.

Soaking wet, Frank couldn't have weighed more than 120 pounds, but he had the proverbial courage of a lion. He never considered the amber fluid an enemy and oftentimes imbibed much too freely. But he was always good for a laugh in the manner in which he went about his work.

The Stroller was a witness to one of the highlights of McDonnell's career, and it is one of the rich chapters in Detroit's boxing history.

On this particular occasion, Max Baer, then the heavyweight champion of the world, appeared in a bout at the Olympia and put on quite a show, snarling at the ringsiders and shouting at the public in general.

As was the custom in those days, when the fight card ended the sports clans gathered at Slim McClelland's after-hours "studio" on State Street. As the hours passed and the dawn was coming up like thunder McDonnell couldn't stand Baer's rantings any longer. He chided him and when the champion argued back, Frank — all 120 pounds of him — took a punch at him. It was the first, and only time on record, that a boxing commissioner took a punch at the heavyweight champion of the world.

YEARS LATER when Frank Fitzgerald became Michigan's governor, he appointed John Hetteche, a successful Ford dealer, to the commissioner's post. Hetteche wanted to be the racing commissioner, but he had to be content with the boxing job.

Immediately, he started to change many rules that had been on the books for years.

One of these moves was to prohibit a referee from stopping a fight as long as both fighters were on their feet. It was a silly rule and almost caused the permanent crippling of a fighter.

It happened in a bout at the Naval Armory between Benny Goldberg, a good left hander, and Jimmy Urso, a good little fighter who never had opposed a southpaw before. He was lost in the flurry of Goldberg's punches, but just wouldn't go down.

It got so bad that the fans stormed the ringside, gathered around Commissioner Hetteche, and made him stop the fight.

discover Michigan
Bill Stockwell
Did you know that Detroit Edison Co. serves more than 700,000 customers within an area of 7,600 square miles of southeastern Michigan? Its employees total more than 10,700 men and women, and it is one of the largest electric utility companies in the nation.

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