#### **Farmington Observer**

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a division of Suburban Communications Corp.



# Human values stand above property values

"You know, Steve, what's happening in our economy isn't all bad. Sure, it's hard to get through, but Americans have had too much, spent too much, gone overboard."

"This epistle came from a local real estate dealer who wandered into the office the other day to drop

off a press release.

The cordial greeting "How's business?" brought

"It's a good thing we've got land contracts or we all would be out of business right now," he continued. "But at least housing prices are beginning to "It's a good thing we've got iand contracts or mad would be out of business right now," he continued. "But at least housing prices are beginning to come down.

"Something had to happen to stop this inflation in the housing market, People were just paying too much for their homes."

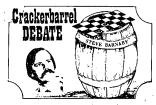
The conversation ended on a mutual note of sym-pathy for those who have paid top price for a home on which they probably never will get a full return because of the depressed housing industry.

THIS PENCHANT for "keeping up" property alues has caused us all a lot of unneccessary grief.

Frankly, we've too often let our hearts overrule our intellect when it comes to property values. Over the years, in countless council meetings, inevitably someone gets up and questions how this or that issue will effect the property value of his home. For years suburbia has been on a speculation spree, with homeowner hopefuls lining up to pay any price for a home. Instead of years, houses were changing owners in months.

any price for a home. Instead of years, houses were changing owners in moths. Meanwhile, developers were having a ball. Making lots of bucks, they were gobbling up land and building subdivisions farther and farther away from the metropolitan area. Historically, it is reminiscent of the hysteria which surrounded the Oklahoma land rush during the last century. But insteadjof racing to a plot of land on a horse, the new Americans jumped in their cars every Saturday and Sunday to seek out new land.

Now a calm is quickly coming over the land. And many homeowners are going to find themselves in an untenable position.



Not only is the buyer market drying up, but increased gasoline prices have stranded tens of thousands miles away from their jobs.

ECONOMIZING on driving is a losing battle. Prices just keep on rising with no relief in sight.

WHOA

GIDDYAP,

So many of us were wrong. It isn't the "value" of a house which is important. What is important is the value which we put on the community in which we live.

But instead of emphasizing community value, many of us have opted for property value — a very shaky barometer.

In Garden City, for instance, homeowners com-plain that a development of a group home for re-tarded will harm their property values.

In Birmingham, the city is entangled in a legal battle with the federal government over construc-tion of low-income housing. Residents, once again, fear for their property values.

It's a sad commentary on the American way of life when we turn away from the human values of a community for the property values of our homes which are manipulated by forces over which we have little or no control.



## Here's food for thought

Last weekend we had the family home from near and far and we asked them what they wanted for dinner. If it had been Thanksgiving, turkey would have been served, and ham would have been the regular for Easter. But for a non-holiday dinner it is usually up to the cook.

is usually up to the cook.

There were as many suggestions as people, but no noe forcefully demanded his or her choice, probably in fear that they would be asked to perepare it. Finally, someone made the suggestion that everyone prepare a separate course for dinner with an appropriate business.

eryone prepare a separate course for dinner with an appropriate wine.

We have all heard about progressive dinners where each participant is assigned a course and you travel around the neighborhood having soup her and salad there, and baked lasagna at the house that doesn't have a rug in the dining room. This was to be different. No one was to be assigned anything. You could bring whatever course you wanted. This meant that we might end up having five entrees or no entrees.

IT GOT TO BE fun because everyone had to do heir own shopping and they were very secret about

their own shopping and they were very secret about it.

Friday night arrived and so did everybody else with large grocery bags under their arms. The family was expanded slightly because our oldest brought her newly intended and we always have extra friends around at dinner time.

It was awkward at first because people needed preparing room but they didn't want to reveal what they had brought.

The newly intended was the first to offer his continuion. He had cooked shripm in his apartment the night before, put it on shaved fee with olives and cocktail sauce and served a shripm cocktail with a California white wine.

There was a pause because it was apparent there were going to be three entrees. Oldest daughter had prepared chees fondiew with little pieces of French bread to dip, so she served it as the second course. Old Mom had brought flarge shripm still their shells for shripm peampi and middle child had brought flates to be served with bernaise sauce, so part of each were frozen and the rest were served as surf and turt.

We had a couple of good French reds and a French while and everything flower alone.

part of each were frozen and the rest were served as surf and turf.

We had a couple of good French reds and a French white and everything flowed along.

I NEXT contributed a caesar salad which the family expected because that is the extent of my culinary accomplishments.

Middle child's guest provided a glorious cheese cake that she had whipped up in her room at Michigan State. Things sure have changed at college.

The grand finale was the little frozen lee cream apples with cordial inside which our youngest and only male heir ordered from Ray's Ice Cream down in Royal Oat.

It was a great experience because everyone went out of their way to do something special and it was amazing that it all went together well.

Everyone enjoyed the evening because they had an opportunity to participate and contribute something significant to the well-being of the group.



Did you know that in the geologic period known as Devonian, which lasted from 400 to 350 million years ago, the seas then covering Michigan developed extensive coral reefs? On these reefs — just underneath your present home — flourished a wide variety of shelled animals, corals, sponges and armored fishes.



### Substance takes a back seat to tactics

This is far from the happiest time to be covering

This is far from the happiest time to be covering metropolitan politics.

Tensions between Detroit and the so-called "suburbs" are high. Name-calling frequently takes precedence over problem-solving.

What's happening is that the 1980 census count has been taken, preliminary results will be known later this year, and the only question will be known later this year, and the only question will be how badly Detroit fares.

A new census means political reapportionment. The rush is on to get things done before reapportionment shifts a lot of power to the outlying area.

Consider these arenas:

SEMTA'S 1990 transit plan, usually referred to



**Richard** 

by lazy writers and politicians as the "Detroit sub-

vay."
The 15-member SEMTA board has five De-

troiters, three from out-Wayne County, three from Oakland, two from Macomb and two from the smaller counties. That board last December approved a rapid transit plan with an underground line for Woodward from downtown to McNichols

(Six Mile).

It's entirely possible that Detroit, out-Wayne and

Oskland will have nearly equal populations, or even that Detroit will be the smallest of the three. If the SEMTA board is reapportioned, and with all the delays the transit plan is running into, will the new board scrap the plan and go to an ail-bus system which some of the more backward suburban politicians prefer?

#### from our readers

### Headlee defends term limitation

A great newspaperman recently wrote in a highly re-pected newspaper:

"The longer a person stays in office, the less idealistic he becomes, and the more important it is for him to be re-elected, because government has become his full-time

re-elected, because government, and of war horses.

"Fresh new ideas rarely come from old war horses.

"Election year seems to come so often. And when it comes, politicians rarely make the hard decisions that might affect them negatively with voters.

"The solution seems obvious."

So said columnist Henry Hogan in the April 3 edition of the Observer & Eccentric newspapers. Mr. Hogan's column uring term limitation for the U.S. president and Congress followed an earlier column by Steve Barnaby in the Farmingion Observer stating, "Now here's a fantasyland tale that even Mickey Mouse would be hard pressed to top."

Mr. Barnaby was referring to the intention of Tazpay-ers United for Term Limitation to place constitutional limits on the number of terms which Michigan's elected state officials can serve.

ers United for Term Littleston to pinch learned and ilmits on the number of terms which Michigan's elected state officials can serve.

We believe there is a demonstrated need to return to the effectiveness of a citizen legislature by limiting the elected term of governor to one sit-year term, state senators to two four-year terms and state representatives to not more than three two-year terms in the state of the state

spending.

Despite editor Barnaby's uninformed comment that 
"property tax limitation really didn't bring the homeown-

er any property tax relief at all." the Tax Limitation amendment has, in its first year alone, forced 57 of Michapsa 53 counties to roll back millage to the cost of living rate, thereby saving taxpayers in those counties more than \$50 million. The bonding provision of the Tax Limitation Amendment cancelled \$41 million in future tax burdens. Most of us remember how the same elected officials who supported the Tax Limitation amendment buckled under pressure from the special interest groups last July when the legislature passed and Governor Miliken signed, "enabling legislation to the Tax Limitation amendment."

autenoment."

The ex post facto maneuver was totally contradictory and, in my stated judgement at the time, illegal under the newly amended constitution.

Politicians who say one thing during a campaign and quite another while at the public trough in Lansing can only be brought under control of all of the people only through term limitation.

Property tax relief has been a number one requirement of the people of Michigan for five years. Elected officials have been working against us while telling us they're

working for us.

Today we still need proper implementation of the Tax
Limitation amendment. The legislature can do it, but it

Limitation amendment. The legislature can do it, but it has proven it won't. Has proven it won't. Problems like workers compensation, inadequete transportation, creating more businesses and jobs, well-are overruns and lilegal teacher strikes have haunted Michigan without legislative concern for a decade. Meanwhile, State Givil Service Director Richard Ross considers Michigan's 68,000 state employees well paid now.

now.

"In the last 10 years, their average pay has doubled," he said last week. That goes for elected officials as well. State legislators, who earn \$27,000 per year (plus expenses and expansive staffs) in their 130 working days each year, recently passed themselves a charity program enabling them to retire at age 55 and collect benefits up

64 percent of whatever they were earning the day they

to so percent or whatever they were earning the day they left the legislature. A citizen legislator is a person who does something else for a living besides serving in state government, a person whose livelihood isn't dependent upon reelection. Citizen legislators don't have a vested interest in doing what is politically expedient, and they know they are going to have to live with the laws they help write after they've left office and have returned to their home communities.

munities.

The key to good government is responsiveness. If we had had citizen legislators in Lansing during the past several years, citizen action to limit state spending as was done with Proposal E in 1978 wouldn't have been re-

done with Proposal E in 1978 wouldn't have been required.
Further, a legislator who is in touch with the will and he minds of the people would have dealt with the current problem of runaway property taxes.
But the carer politicians, with their minds on maintaining the status quo and fighting to keep all of their old privileges, arregantly ignore the people as they respond to the will of special interests.
The longer they are in Lansing, the more they introduce special interest bills, the more they interfectively spend our money and the more the disassociate from their home districts.
They just plain get out of touch with people.

They just plain get out of touch with people. As columnist Henry Hogan said:

as coumnist Henry Hogan said:
"There are two ways we can slow down this process.
The first is not to have elections as often as we do. The second is to limit the number of terms a person can serve the public in any one capacity."

To help return Michigan to a government of the people, by the people and for the people, we need a citizen legislature.

lature.

To obtain your petition, write, Taxpayers United Federation, Inc., Suite 363 Hollister Building, Lansing 48933.

It's obvious we citizens will have to do the job our-

RICHARD HEADLEE, Taxpayers United for Term Limitation