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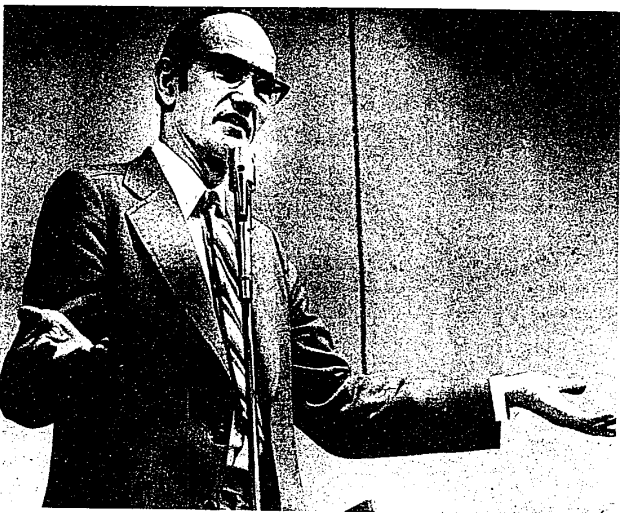
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Farmington, Michigan

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Bringing the gospel of changing the state's tax system was Robert Tisch who visited Farmington last week. (Staff photo)

Tisch brings campaign to tax weary Farmington

By MARY GNIEWEK

Tax critic Bob Tisch let off steam and rallied support among 150 Farmington area residents who packed a meeting at the downtown community library last Wednesday to hear him speak about the tax cut amendment which bears his name.

Tisch, a folksy type county drain commissioner from the Lansing area who laces his speech with a stream of verbal pokes at Governor William Milliken, is seeking statewide support to get another version of his 1978 ill-fated tax proposal on the November ballot.

Two years ago voters opted for a milder tax reform authored by Farmington Hills insurance executive Richard Headlee, but skyrocketing property taxes are turning an angry homeowner tide in Tisch's favor this year.

Petition forms distributed during the talk by members of the Farmington Old Village Association which invited Tisch to town spelled out what the amendment would do.

Foremost, it would roll back assessed valuation of property to 1978 levels, then cut taxes by 50 percent. All licenses, fees, special rates and taxes would be rolled back and only the sup-

port of at least 60 percent of the voters in the state could increase those costs.

THE STATE would be required to reimburse local government for every dollar lost because of the rollback. "Give control back to the people," Tisch argues. "Let taxpayers pay taxes for programs of their choosing."

The radical amendment also would exempt anyone over age 62 from paying school operating millage, generated \$25.8 million of the \$30.8 million (83 percent) Farmington Public School budget this year.

Under Tisch, persons with annual income below \$5,000 would pay no property tax while those with incomes between \$5,000 and \$10,000 would get a 50 percent tax cut.

Tisch says his plan would cut \$2 billion of fat out of the \$3 billion state budget. Opponents argue the amendment would have a far more severe impact, drastically cutting funds to every state department.

Comparing his amendment to Proposition 13 which California voters approved two years ago, Tisch said personal income is up 14 percent in California, welfare rolls are down 8 percent, and the unemployment rate is below the national average.

He believes high taxes cause budget problems while states with low tax rates operate with a budget surplus. He'd like to see that in Michigan.

"The people in Lansing are so convinced this amendment will pass that no one is signing petitions," claimed Tisch, who needs 280,000 signatures of registered Michigan voters by July 9.

"I'M CERTAIN we'll get on the ballot. We have all kinds of support in Oakland County this time."

Tisch speaks of Milliken and inflation in near synonymous terms.

"The people of Michigan want the state government to stop being irresponsible with state money," he says.

"The cost of living for housing and transportation is highest in the nation here in Michigan. We've increased at double the rate of inflation."

Milliken, who supports shifting the state government to state sales tax, has called the Tisch amendment "totally irresponsible."

Yet the assembled crowd Wednesday, whispering among themselves about high taxes and inflation, seemed supportive of the Tisch plan. Several grabbed additional petitions which they vowed to circulate.

Blight fight is uphill battle for Farmington Hills woman

By MARY GNIEWEK

Diane Uhl is just about ready to throw up her hands and concede defeat. The Farmington Hills woman is tired of battling neighbors, city hall and the insurmountable debris that clutters her neighborhood near Eight Mile and Middlebelt roads.

A working mother raising two daughters alone, she'd like to sell her two-story colonial home on Eldred. She's afraid no one will buy it because of the surrounding blight.

The neighborhood is characterized by rusty refrigerators on lawns, disabled cars raised on cement blocks, branches and brush that have been at roadside since the April 1979 ice storm, and rubble in a ditch that runs along the gravel road.

Ms. Uhl feels victimized in her attempts to make improvements. A Farmington Hills zoning inspector checking the area for violations divulged her name as the complaining

party to one of the ordinance-breaking neighbors.

Since then, she's been the target of petty vandalism. A glob of green cement-like substance was poured in front of her doorway. A thick coat of oil still oozes from her newly laid porch carpet. And lightbulbs in fixtures on both sides of the front door were stolen.

"I DIDN'T WANT the neighbors to know I was the one who called," she said. "What it amounts to is a case of harassing a woman alone."

She says several neighbors feel the same way — sick of blight and helpless against city hall — but are afraid to step forward for fear of reprisal.

"You get tired of it after a while," she said. "Everyone is afraid of city hall."

"I'll be glad to get out of here," she says. "I cite one violation after another: neighbors who burn rubbish in open piles at night, a nearby creek used as a junk pile."

"If this sort of thing was happening at Twelve Mile and Drake, the city

wouldn't allow it to continue," she argues. "They don't care about this side of town."

In the six years she has lived in Farmington Hills, the problems have been a continuing saga.

"The zoning department thinks I'm just a crabby old witch. But why do they bother having inspectors if they don't issue tickets? There was a man out here three weeks ago and the neighborhood is still a mess."

City Inspector Bob Boschma admits Ms. Uhl's name "slipped out" when a hostile neighbor asked why he was in her backyard.

"I don't recall her telling me not to say who called," he said.

YET ZONING SUPERVISOR Hal Rowe says the city's policy is not to divulge the name of the complainant unless a written request is made at city hall.

Boschma said Ms. Uhl's neighborhood is one of his clean-up target areas.

"I wrote violation notices to the majority and tickets to several," he said.

"It comes along slowly. If progress is being made, we'll give them additional time."

A violation notice is a 10-day warning to the property owner to clean up the mess. If the owner fails to comply, a court summons is issued.

Farmington District Court Officer Howard Aldrich said judges tend to be lenient on blight cases since the fine for non-compliance is \$500 a day.

"They'd rather have them pay maybe a \$30 fine and see them comply than enforce the \$500 fine," Aldrich said.

Supervisor Rowe claims the situation has improved since two inspectors, including Boschma, were added last September, boosting the force to six.

"It's a never-ending process," he admitted. "You think you have one block cleaned up and move to the next, then it starts all over again."

While Diane Uhl waits for her neighbors to comply, she worries about the next act of vandalism that may occur.

"They'll be back," she says. "I'm going to hire someone to stand guard."



Diane Uhl shows some of the damage done to her home since vandals have targeted her for reporting neighbors to the city. (Staff photo)

New technique corrects nearsighted vision

By MARY GNIEWEK

Nearsighted vision may become a thing of the past as more American eye surgeons learn a Russian technique for correcting the problem.

The technique, Radical K, is a 10-minute operation that can be performed in a doctor's office under local anesthetic with full sight improvement guaranteed in two weeks.

Dr. William Meyers, a West Coast eye surgeon, has performed more than 100 Radical K operations in the past year in California. He'll teach the technique to local eye surgeons in a class sponsored by the Society of Michigan Eye Surgeons this spring.

"The patient is anesthetized with drops and 16 incisions are made in the cornea to nine-tenths of its thickness," explained Dr. Lawrence D. Castlemann, a Farmington Hills eye surgeon who recently attended an International Medical Symposium in London, England.

"People are nearsighted because their cornea is too long," he said, explaining the new procedure.

"Leaving a four millimeter oval center, cuts are made on the outer part of the cornea, which flattens and weakens. As it flattens, light is focused further back and correct vision is restored."

Castlemann has performed more than 2,000 lens implant operations on cataract victims in his Southgate clinic since 1974. Though that 25-minute operation is his specialty, he's interested in Radical K, which was discussed at the symposium attended by the pioneer founder, Dr. S. Fyedorov.

le," Castlemann said. "Once the eye healed, the boy was no longer nearsighted."

Fyedorov began experimenting on animals in 1972 using a razor blade sharpened to nine-tenths the thickness of the one half millimeter thick cornea to make incisions.

He adapted the operation to humans in 1974 and shared his discovery with a New Mexico eye surgeon, Dr. Leo

Borris, who brought the technique to the U.S.

"It's only done in Russia and the United States," Castlemann said.

"It will be very beneficial for athletes, police officers and others who can't wear glasses."

Results on Meyer's patients have been good.

"Incisions would be extremely rare because you're not cutting all the way

through the cornea," Castlemann said.

Once the procedure is done, the eye is patched for just a few hours and the patient is given medication for discomfort.

"Full improvement is expected in a couple of weeks," Castlemann said.

One bug being worked out is finding a suitable instrument for cutting.

"AS YOU PRESS the eye with a knife, it becomes softer," Castlemann

said. "The cuts may not be as deep."

A new laser honed blade that would require almost no pressure to make an incision will be available soon from a Texas firm.

"We hope the operation is low risk. Only the test of time will tell," Castlemann said.

The London symposium also addressed the latest proven techniques of restoring vision to cataract victims by

surgically implanting a plastic lens permanently in the eye.

Heading the symposium faculty was Dr. Harold Ridley, the British surgeon who introduced the technique more than 20 years ago after studying the accidental implantation of plastic canopies in the eyes of World War Two Spitfire pilots.

Service clubs host Brickley

Lieutenant Governor James H. Brickley will address the first joint gathering of the Farmington Area Service Clubs on Wednesday, May 14, at the Farmington Elks Club at 6 p.m.

The topic of Brickley's talk will be announced at the meeting.

Advance ticket sales are available to members of the Farmington Community Lions Club, North Farmington Kiwanis Club, Farmington Area Lions Club, Farmington Exchange Club, Farmington Kiwanis Club, Farmington Area Jaycees and the Rotary Club of Farmington, which will act as host.



Dr. William Meyers explains how the outpatient eye operation improves vision. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

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Put carrots in your shopping basket this week. Hilary Keating Callaghan tells how to make a Carrot Quiche in today's Shopping Cart Section.