

'Do nothing' council shirks responsibility

Farmington Hills City Council quickly has abdicated its responsibility as a policy-making body — and the city is suffering because of it.

Since the conservatives took a majority of council seats in January, little of consequence has been done. Plans are approved, zoning designations changed and a budget approved, but that's about it.

Taking the initiative and proposing new ideas for the city's betterment are unknowns to the council majority elected on the "do-nothing" principle.

While boasting they would follow the will of the people, their non-action would indicate that Farmington Hills residents want nothing done.

But recent actions by residents indicate otherwise. Within the past month, two petition drives have

been launched by residents to tackle issues which the council majority was reluctant to face — a tornado siren warning system and establishment of a city-run emergency medical service.

Both of these issues are ingrained in council responsibility. They have to do with the health, safety and welfare of city residents — the main concern of any city council.

IT IS DIFFICULT to understand why persons with such regressive ideas about government even bother to run for office. They evidently feel that the less government does, the better.

But these are times which call for action by city government. Problems exist today which will affect the city for years to come.

Cutting the budget by 1/2 of a mill, standing by itself, is hardly the kind of action which will build a city of the future.

But even more difficult to understand is why residents support political candidates who work against the interest of the city. Farmington Hills has essential needs which have yet to be attained.

It needs an emergency medical service. It needs a tornado warning system. It needs a new zoning designation for industrial and commercial growth.

But in all of these cases the City Council has opted to shirk its responsibility.

This city still is wanting for senior citizen housing. Many promises were made by conservative candidates during the last election that the city would build senior citizen housing without federal aid or regulation.

But by this time it is obvious that the promise only was hollow political rhetoric — exemplary of the conduct which the conservative council criticized during the last election.

IT IS TIME for Farmington Hills residents to reassess their city leaders. The council's report card up to this point is a D.

But even worse is the political apathy of many residents who have thrown up their hands in disgust. Plans for the next city election must be made now so candidates can be elected who care enough about the city to take their own initiatives rather than leaving it up to referendum petition drives.

STEVE BARNABY



ERA ardor dampened by deadline

The ERA litmus test will come long before its 1982 deadline.

And from the lackluster turnout at recent Detroit Equal Rights Amendment rallies, that should be anything but a surprise.

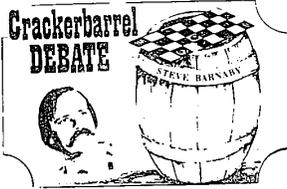
The voting public's commitment to the long-standing proposal has been severely challenged by the National Republican Party's ERA platform betrayal.

While this country's female population should be outraged by this action, it is questionable whether it will unite to defeat Ronald Reagan in November. Republicans are ecstatic about their election chances in November, not only for the White House but for attaining a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives.

If their July optimism turns to a November reality, it would be the ERA death knell. For if the GOP can wrest a majority in the U.S. House, it can do so in a number of key state legislatures where the ERA fate rests.

Political demonstrations have become something of a cliché and just as meaningless. Americans have become indifferent to thousands of marching militants, no matter the cause.

THE CHICAGO rally proved that. Even though hundreds of thousands gathered to support the ERA, reinforced by a bevy of celebrities, that failed to win over three-fifths of the Illinois legislature.



A dismal rally was attempted at the Kern Block Sunday that clearly demonstrated a lack of commitment by ERA supporters.

Touted as a major rally, it featured the governor's wife, Helen Milliken; Detroit City Councilwoman Erma Henderson; excommunicated Mormon Sonia Johnson; and Eleanor Anderson, daughter of independent presidential candidate John Anderson.

But even those heavyweight public figures couldn't bring out what one would call a respectable crowd. It is doubtful whether most Republican delegates were even aware of it.

For much of the day, persons from the news me-

dia stood around looking at one another waiting for something to happen. Nothing much did.

THE ACTION was across the street at Detroit's Kennedy Square where a much larger demonstration was being put on for the captive nations. At times, the din of that rally could be heard over the ERA speakers.

While the National Organization for Women's (NOW) rally on Monday was larger, it got little attention and was just another demonstration during convention week.

Stop ERA conservatives have learned a valuable lesson, one which ERA supporters would be wise to heed.

The real work in winning a cause rests with grass roots efforts over the telephone, through the mail and from door to door.

Conservatives have done just that, electing candidates who oppose ERA and defeating others who don't. ERA supporters have neglected that type of political action.

IF THE ERA is to be part of the U.S. Constitution, supporters must regroup and be willing to tackle grass roots efforts.

But ERA defeat is in the air. And like any dying political movement, it suffers from supporters who have given up the fight.

Blame officials if the fights are brutal

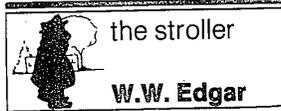
In recent days, the public prints have been the sounding board for the hues and cries of the do-gooders who abhor the so-called brutality in what they call the "fight game" and in many cases are asking for its banishment from the sporting scene.

This is nothing new. Every now and then during the past century, the same hues and cries have been heard, and at one time they were heeded. In fact, the bouts were held on rafts in the lower Mississippi River as a means of getting around the ban.

What these critics overlook is that the so-called brutality is the fault of the officials and the various athletic commissions who allow one-sided matches to continue when it is obvious that there is no question regarding the ultimate winner.

A GOOD case in point happened just the other evening in Minneapolis when heavyweight champion Larry Holmes made a punching bag of his opponent and even asked the referee to stop the slaughter. His plea went unheeded for several rounds, and the critics had a field day calling attention to the brutality.

After a round or two of this mismatch, it was evident Holmes' opponent should not have been in the same ring. And whoever sanctioned the match must never have seen either fighter in action. So the fault lies in the lap of the athletic commission that sanctioned the match and foisted it on the public.



It long has been forgotten that what is now called the fight game started as the manly art of self-defense. It was inaugurated as a means of showing the public how the humans could protect themselves with their hands. It never was meant to be brutal.

Delving in to the records, you'll find that when James J. Corbett defeated the legendary John L. Sullivan for the heavyweight title, he was referred to as "Gentleman Jim." He gained the title by out-boxing Sullivan.

Years later, Jack Johnson, who many claim was the best boxer ever to hold the heavyweight title, outpointed Jim Jeffries to gain the crown.

NOT UNTIL Jack Dempsey came along WAS scientific boxing was cast aside, and he quickly earned the title of "The Manassa Mauler." Dempsey couldn't box, but he gained his victories by in-

licting brutal beatings on his rivals. That is until Gene Tunney, a boxer, took the title from him.

One reason for the so-called brutality in the prize ring today is the fact that the contestants haven't learned their trade. If you watch closely, not one is a body puncher. They all go for beating their rival with blows to the head.

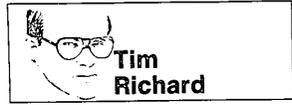
It is common knowledge that Joe Louis, during his climb to the heavyweight throne and his long reign, never was called upon to meet a body puncher. No one knows how he would have fared had he met one.

Old Sam Langford, one of the greatest of the fighters who never gained the title, always preached, "Kill the body and the head will die." But few of the latter-day fighters have heeded his advice.

From the opening bell these days, the fighter has only one goal — to knock the other fellow's head off. As a result, we have old timers going around now in a condition commonly known as "punch drunk."

Most cases, they were allowed to continue taking a beating about the head when they no longer had a chance to win.

So, the manly art of self-defense should not be banned. But the blame for the present brutality is at the feet of the athletic commissions who condone mismatches and one-sided bouts.



One day's work, 3 days of showtime

One year ago almost to the week, I sat in a noisy pub in Brighton, England, with a lunchtime half-pint of stout. In English pubs, if there's an empty chair at a table, you just sit down, even if others at the table are total strangers.

We shared the table with a man who I judged to be in his early 30s. From his clothes and conversation, he appeared to be an independent tradesman — plumber or repairman, perhaps.

Far from being stuffy and reserved, the English are the most cordial, warm people in the world. In no time, we were chatting about the newspaper he was reading.

His opinion was that most British newspapers were junky — full of soccer, sports, scandal, crime, sex. His theory as to why this was so was interesting: Newspaper owners wanted to divert the general populace's attention from the serious issues of the day and simply keep them entertained.

I couldn't agree with his analysis because there are many serious and well-written British newspapers — the London Telegraph, the Manchester Guardian, many local papers. Yet there was no denying his observation that the vast majority of people read newspapers that were mainly entertainment sheets.

I WAS REMINDED of our conversation this week as the Republican National Television Show hit the airways.

I hesitate to call it a "convention." The major sessions are geared to prime TV time. TV reporters get big advantages in floor time over newspaper reporters. Serious floor debate has been eliminated, for all practical purposes, because it looks bad on TV.

Most incredible of all was the lineup of movie and TV stars who got on the air one evening. In terms of fostering understanding of national issues and alternative solutions, Wayne Newton and Susan Anton couldn't have helped a single voter.

You may have heard there are 2,000 delegates and 8,000 media people at the convention. From this, you could draw the erroneous conclusion that there are four reporters for every delegate.

Not so. I would estimate half or more of those media people are producers, camera men, electricians, go-fers, receptionists, switch-pullers and other technical types. There really aren't so many reporters.

AMERICA HAS a presidential election campaign that lasts 14 months. A major industrial state like Michigan is visited several times by every candidate.

And yet it is not incredible that Ronald Reagan has only one address, known as "The Speech." Is it not incredible that in 1976 Jimmy Carter had only one address, known as "The Speech." Is it not puzzling that George Wallace had only one address, known as "The Speech?"

Like the English newspaper favored by the populace, American television is giving us vast amounts of entertainment, star personalities, appearances and hoop la, but relatively little solid information, given the millions that are spent on it.

One thing is clear after this week's gaudy spectacle in southeast Michigan: It took four solid days to broadcast, but all the major activities required only a day and a half.

Reagan has had a majority of the GOP delegates for six weeks, right? The roll call of the states and his acceptance speech could have been handled in 90 minutes, right? He could have announced his choice of a running mate, had it ratified and introduced the No. 2 man in another 30 minutes, right?

As I said, it's all a television show, and it's mainly entertainment.