

Public shows it likes Oakland's park system

With population virtually stable, school enrollments declining and productivity faltering, what one thing in Oakland County is increasing by leaps and bounds?

It's attendance at Oakland County parks. Since 1973, visits to county parks have increased 147 percent.

This year, the eight county parks will be visited one million times. That is the equivalent of every man, woman and child in Oakland visiting a county park once.

One reason is that with gasoline at \$1.25, we no longer find it so easy to zip up north so often.

The other is that the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission has made county parks more attractive.

ON AUG. 3 voters will be asked to decide on County Proposition A, the renewal of a one-fourth mill property tax for another five years.

If the parks system's popularity is any indicator, the answer will be a resounding "yes" for the fifth time. This newspaper certainly encourages its support.

The quarter mill raises \$2.5 million a year. It entirely supports the park system's capital budget, for land acquisition and development, and helps to keep down entrance fees in the operating budget.

Oakland is a county in which no single city has even one-tenth the population. So the county park system complements the local communities' recreation offerings with programs no one city or town-

ship could afford.

SINCE THE LAST millage was approved, the county park system has:

- Opened Michigan's only wave action pool at Waterford Oaks park.
- Opened Independence Oaks park.
- Established the Red Oaks golf complex.
- Purchased Glen Oaks Golf Course.
- Opened a center for court games — tennis, platform tennis, horseshoes and shuffleboard.
- Modernized campsites at Groveland Oaks.
- Expanded greatly its public information and teaching program.

IT'S A RECORD of high performance in an era when government is sometimes less than efficient.

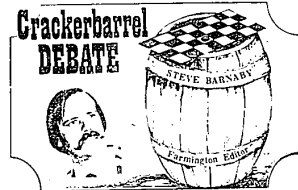
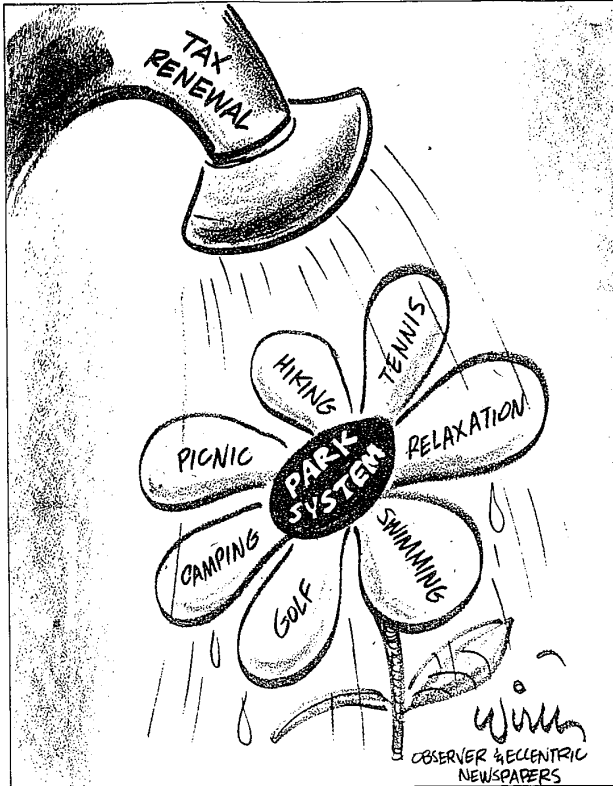
Chairman Lewis Wint, Director Eric Reickel, a staff of professionals and a lot of interested citizens have developed a program that appeals to many tastes.

Difficult as it is to find suitable land in urban areas, they have used the money we voted in 1976 to develop easy-to-reach parks in such places as Madison Heights and Farmington Hills as well as in the hilly, rustic areas.

The price has been a bargain — \$7.50 a year on a house with a \$60,000 market value.

In a time when it's good to have cheap recreation close to home, Oakland County parks are worth a visit.

They also warrant your "yes" vote next Tuesday.



Detroit (the city) wouldn't have been able to attract the GOP without the hotel facilities offered by Detroit (the suburbs). And most certainly, Detroit (the suburbs) would never have attracted a national convention without the facilities offered by Detroit (the city).

It has been a good number of years since I've heard such pride expressed by suburban Detroiters about "their city."

For many, it was their first trip downtown in a decade or two. For others, it was their first trip downtown, period. And all were impressed. They had to be because Detroit has grown despite the critics and doomsayers.

The convention showed us that.

AND FINALLY, we all must remember in the future that we are Detroiters.

The Republican convention is just the start of a new era for us. Certainly, there will be more difficult times ahead.

But unlike the past, we must pull ourselves together when we do experience difficulties. We have shared this good time together with great pride.

We must share all times together, good and bad, with the same pride and determination.

We all are Detroiters. The convention showed us that.

GOP bash restores pride

Metropolitan Detroiters have won back their pride.

The convention showed us that. From Delray to Bloomfield Hills, from Sterling Heights to Canton Township, Detroiters are standing tall because we pulled off the biggest party of the year and came away looking good.

The Republicans loved our party and so did the national media, which gathered by the thousands in a downtown area that a decade ago was given up for lost by many.

Republicans and media were cynical about coming to what was once notorious as "murder city."

They expected the worst, but we gave them the best. Delegates brought Mace and left their valuables at home. The media brought their cameras to record the crime, the rotting neighborhoods and the garbage heaped in the streets.

But their cynicism was groundless.

The convention showed us that.

Certainly Detroit, like any other major city, has its share of problems. But it never has been as bad as many persons in other parts of the country believed.

Frankly, it's nicer than most other metropolitan areas. That's a fact that metropolitan Detroiters quickly are finding out for themselves. For if there have been any big cynics about Detroit, it's Detroiters.

OVER THE LAST DECADE, since the 1967 riots, we have been our own worst enemies.

Many of us fooled ourselves into believing that the suburban cities and townships were enclaves, separate from the core city. While we fenced with one another, the rest of the country turned its head and called us all Detroiters.

They were right. The convention showed us that.

We all are Detroiters, no matter where we live in the metropolitan area. Economically, we are interdependent.

The convention showed us that.

Return of ice man, coalbins

There is an old saying that coming events cast their shadows before them. If this be so — and many wise men agree — we might be headed back to the days of woodburning stoves and ice boxes in the kitchen, furnaces and coalbins in the basement.

The shadow of these events came in a news report from Michigan State University several days ago telling that a clinic is set for Aug. 12 in which special emphasis will be placed on the return of the woodman and the preparation of wood from the state's forests.

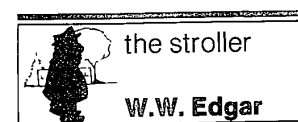
Spiraling inflation, particularly the high cost of energy for the homes today, is given as a reason for the clinic that will delve into all phases of this energy-saving move and the return of the woodman.

AS HE READ the release, The Stroller couldn't help feeling the time may not be far distant — on less things change very drastically — when it will be common for each family to have a stack of firewood somewhere close to the rear of the home and maybe a return of the coalbin to the basement.

While he was thinking of these things, he also envisioned the return of one of the most popular merchants in the days when he was young. That was the ice man, who made daily visits up and down the street back home, selling frozen water by the pound.

Almost every home had what was called an ice box that provided room for a huge chunk of ice in the top section. This was the granddaddy of the present day refrigerator, and it was both a curse and a blessing.

Sure, it kept the food fresh, but failure to empty the drip pan in the bottom often caused the flooding



of the kitchen floor. When that happened, there was havoc.

There were no such things as ice cubes. Instead, if you wanted iced tea, for example, you had to "shave" the ice. There were special instruments for the shaving.

ANOTHER SIGHT that came into The Stroller's view was the coal man delivering heating fuel to homes along the street.

Each home had an opening in the basement wall into which a chute could be fitted and the coal sent to the coalbin. Deliveries were made in lots as small as a half ton, but the coal man was kept busy.

Then there was the pile of kindling wood in the rear of the house. Each morning The Stroller had to perform the dual tasks of removing ashes from the bottom of the stove and bringing the kindling wood for the day. And at night it was his duty to visit the cellar (the common name for the basement) and bank the coal fire for the night.

THE CLINIC at Michigan State will revive these memories for many old timers, and will surely recall the stacks of "cord wood" that were the pride of each family.

How can one be a conscientious objector without a war to object to, you ask? Good question.

Vietnam was never a declared war, but people died anyway.

And as quick as you can sing along with Vince Vance and the Valiants' "Bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb Iran" ditty sung to the tune of Ba-ba-ba-barabaram, we could be involved in a war.

From the sound of things, it appears that many Americans are itching for a world conflict that will be fueled by xenophobic bumperstickers and fought over multi-national corporations' oil fields.

If you're in the post office registering with the Selective Service System this week and have sincere religious, moral or ethical beliefs against participating in war, you'll find there is no place to write "conscientious objector" on the registration form.

If you want to show your colors as a patriotic conscientious objector, you'll have to squeeze the words in above your Social Security number on the form or affix a sticker that says "I am a conscientious objector to war."

Such stickers and counseling are available by writing to the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia 19102, or by stopping in at AFSC's local branches in Detroit and Ann Arbor. The Detroit office is on the east side near Jefferson and Chalmers at 421 Drexel, and the phone number is 823-1100. The Ann Arbor office is at 1414 Hill St., and the phone number there is 761-8283.

THERE USED to be a little box on the registration form one could check off if he felt so inclined. I, along with 171,000 other young men during the Vietnam War who were granted C.O. status, felt so inclined.

That little box has been removed from the form because the Selective Service is afraid too many draft-age young men would use it as an easy out, say Selective Service spokesmen.

"I find it kind of contradictory for the government to be fearful of non-violent people," said Michael Mongeau, who works for the AFSC in Philadelphia.

The American Friends Service Committee is a group founded during World War I by the Quakers.

The Quakers, you may remember, disowned one of their most famous members, Richard Nixon, during the Vietnam war.



Did you know that at one 10-year period in Detroit's early history, the town gained more than 400 percent in population? This was the decade between 1830 and 1840, when total population jumped from 2,222 to 9,102. It more than doubled in population the next decade and again the following decade.



If you've already registered for the event of a draft, there are other ways of letting the government know about your pacifistic convictions.

If your anti-war convictions are based on religious tenets, you can write a letter explaining your beliefs and ask your priest, minister or rabbi to keep it on file. You can send a copy of that letter to the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, 2208 South St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19146 to keep on file.

Just don't let it slide until the day before your induction. It's doubtful the government will believe you have a long-standing, deeply held conviction against war when you apply for C.O. status right after being denied a West Point scholarship.

Be prepared to defend your decision and get ready to be called a coward. Myself, I believe Mahatma Gandhi is a perfect example of a non-violent activist who wasn't a wimp.

He brought the British colonialists to their knees without raising a fist through widespread civil disobedience. He and another non-violent activist, Martin Luther King, were respected by their enemies, cowards aren't.

TROUBLE IS, just try to convince someone weaned on Sgt. Rock and Audie Murphy movies that civil disobedience can be a courageous accomplishment.

The question pacifists are always asked is, "Would you stand by and watch while your sister was raped?" Of course not. But when you answer that question, they usually use that example as a metaphor for what country X is doing to the United States.

Joe Volk, peace education secretary at the AFSC's Ann Arbor office, answers that challenge this way:

"The crucial question is not whether you'd defend yourself on the street, but whether you're opposed to participation in war of any kind," Volk said. "You're a conscientious objector if you oppose organized killing of a large number of people in another country in order to achieve a political objective."

We've been taught American soldiers only fight to defend our democracy. Try to convince the villagers of My Lai of that.

"When we lose cities of 100,000 people or more and see 40 million people or more killed in a nuclear exchange, we will have defended the country and won the war," said Volk.

"Can you imagine what the country would look like after that? We may have acted out of revenge or retribution, but in no way can you call that national defense."

"If that ever happens, our soldiers are really being asked to punish somebody for threatening us no matter what the Joint Chiefs of Staff call it."

And good night, Dr. Strangelove, wherever you are.