

Applause, applause for Bloomfield Symphony

Felix Resnick as conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra?

Richard Post of Troy thinks it's a good idea.

Resnick is a violinist with the DSO. But more importantly to us, he's also conductor of the West Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra.

When the DSO encountered problems with its conductor, Antal Dorati, last week, Post wrote a letter suggesting Resnick as a replacement for Dorati.

That's high praise for Resnick and good luck for the West Bloomfield Symphony.

In six years, the West Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra has emerged as one of the premier orchestras in the state.

Agencies which provide grants for symphonies this year reclassified the West Bloomfield orchestra as an urban symphony. That removes it from the community orchestra classification and places it among the likes of the state's major orchestras such as the DSO and the Grand Rapids symphony.

Resnick has done some creative programming this year, with entire concerts devoted to rhapsodies, Latin music and fantasy works. It's a welcome departure from the old overture-concerto-symphony format other orchestras still use.

TWO THINGS make it imperative that the community support the West Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra as it seeks members for the 1980-81 season. First, as Dorati put it last week, "A great city needs a great orchestra." He was speaking of Detroit, but his words are just as true for the West Bloomfield community.

During economic hard times, corporations are continuing their support of community music, but frequently their contributions are tied to their profits which have fallen sharply. Individual memberships and season tickets are needed more than ever.

Second, there is still the threat of the Tisch ballot proposal. If it passes, state funds will be drained to aid local government. The Michigan Council for the

Arts can expect to have its budget gutted. That will hurt our orchestra.

Even if Tisch is defeated, the recession could still endanger state funding of the arts.

There are countless reasons why we need an institution like the West Bloomfield Symphony.

Its good music soothes the soul, and that alone is reason enough for its existence.

Its concerts are close to home — no need for a long drive to Detroit or Ann Arbor.

It is an excellent way to introduce young people to live performances of quality music. There is, after all, a difference between attending a concert and a movie.

IT IS A GREAT outlet for local performers who, for one reason or another, are unable to become full-time musicians themselves. They are outstanding at their vocations.

It is a showcase for these musicians to rub shoulders with the dozen or so members of the DSO who also play with the West Bloomfield symphony. It

also gives local musicians the ability to perform with other musicians, to accompany professional soloists, to be heard by someone other than fellow students and parents.

Finally, our orchestra is a cultural asset, a sign to industrial prospects that here is a community which cares, a lure to potential residents who seek more than a "bedroom" suburb.

ONE CAN always buy a ticket for one concert. But we encourage interested persons to buy a season membership to all five regular subscription concerts and the two special performances.

Besides getting a good deal on the tickets, you will find next April 15 that your contribution is tax deductible. The state cuts your taxes for supporting the young orchestra.

It also helps the symphony in its financial planning by giving it an ample working-capital supply at the beginning of the season.

The new season premieres Oct. 26 with music from the movies. Get your membership now.



Humor gone from political stump scene

The other night, while slumped in my easy chair, I saw something as rare as sarsaparilla soda pop — and just as refreshing.

Right there on the boob tube were politicians, presidents no less, laughing and joking in public.

Although this show was meant to be entertaining, it did make an important statement on how we, as a country, have changed in the last decade.

Our political leaders have lost their sense of humor. But then so have many of us and that's a shame.

Imagine Jimmy Carter humorously jousting at a press conference, or Ronald Reagan telling a funny tale on the campaign trail. John Anderson in all of his messianic ardor probably never has told a joke. It's disturbing.

When you examine our presidents, you can see that these generally regarded as great, or even good, had the confidence to let down their hair publicly and tell a humorous story or a fast quip.

THAT PROGRAM demonstrated this. There was a quick-witted John Kennedy, delighting in jocular sparring with the press. He smiled, they smiled and the country loved it.

Recalled was a speech at Yale when he was given an honorary degree.

"Now I have the best of both worlds," Kennedy told the audience, "a Harvard education and a Yale degree."

There was Harry Truman doing his imitation of newsmen H.V. Kaltenborn who had broadcast election night that Truman would mercifully be beaten by Republican opponent Thomas Dewey.

"Although the precedent is leading by one million votes . . . Truman imitated the then-familiar clipped Kaltenborn tones.

The public loved it.

Then there was Franklin Roosevelt in a pseudo-serious tone telling how he didn't mind being publicly criticized, nor did his wife or son, but Fala, his dog, didn't like it at all.

An ominous sign of things to come happened a few years after Roosevelt's quip when a young U.S. senator from California, Richard Nixon, used his dog Checkers to save his political career.

With a perfectly straight face, Nixon told the country that it was unjust to criticize his dog. He sold it, the American public bought it.

FDR, TRUMAN and Kennedy led the nation during threatening times. But they did it with grace and humor.

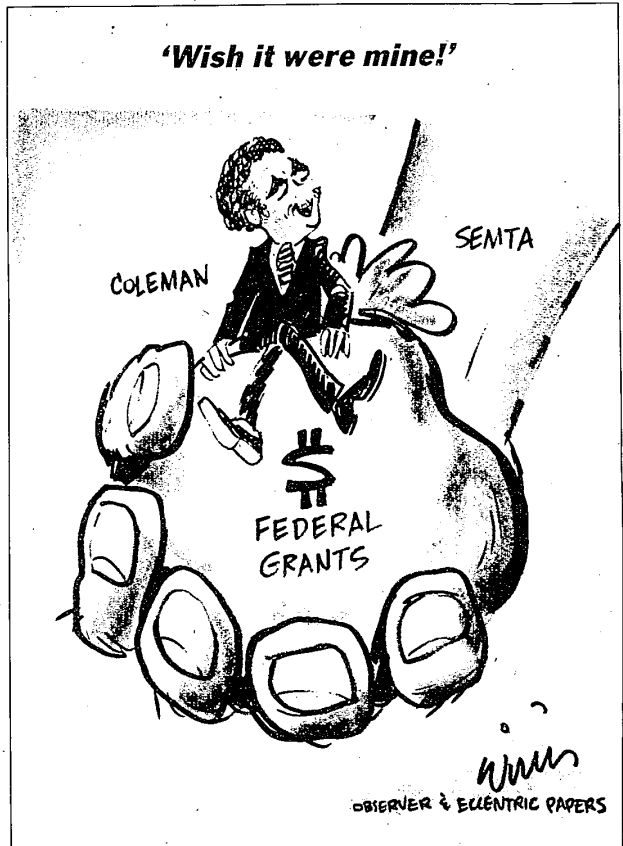
English statesmen Joseph Addison said best: "Mirth is like a flash of lightning, that breaks through gloom of clouds, and glitters for a moment; cheerfulness keeps up a kind of daylight in the mind, and fills it with a steady and perpetual serenity."

Someday, hopefully, this country will regain its sense of humor and then we will regain our serenity.



Did you know you can step back in time a century and a half at the Caswell House, part of the Troy Museum and Historic Village grounds on Watleys Road?

This attractive frame house, assembled with wooden pegs and mortised joints, was completed in 1823, even before Michigan became a state.



Tigers missed out on Babe

Now that the baseball season is winding down and the Tigers are in fifth place — again! — the same old howl is heard: The club is too tight to give its faithful fans a real pennant contender.

So what's new? The song been sung for a half-century, and always with the same lyrics — the Tigers are too stingy to buy the players they need.

It's more disappointing this year because Sparky Anderson promised so much when he took over the team early last season.

Sparky made it plain the roster he inherited was not his team. He shouted loud and long that things would be different after he had his team in spring training.

"That will be MY team," he told members of the Baseball Writers Association, and he went so far as to predict before the team left its southern training camp that it would win at least 90 games.

Well, you know the rest.

THE MELODY this year has a familiar ring. Years ago, when he was the rookie of the Tiger press box, The Stroller heard it.

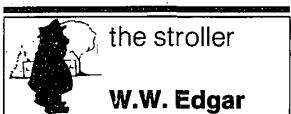
One day he had the good fortune to be the guest of owner Frank J. Navin at lunch and boldly told him the fans thought he was too tight to buy the players needed to win a pennant.

Navin just smiled. He explained some of the deals he had made that went sour over the years and vowed that he always was trying. It was just that luck was against him in dealing with human beings.

Then he shocked his luncheon guest with the remark, "I wonder what the fans would think if they knew that I once turned down the chance to get Babe Ruth."

Noting the surprised look on the young Stroller's face, Navin revealed how it came about.

"At the time," he said, "we had a group of young



pitchers. What we needed was a veteran to help steer those young hurlers in the right direction.

"In those days, there was no such thing as a draft. You had to play politics to get what you wanted. So, by pulling strings, I was told that the best chance of getting what I wanted was to deal with the Providence club of the Eastern League.

"At the time, Providence had a couple of veteran hurlers and I studied them. I finally picked a pitcher named Babe Oldham."

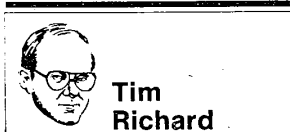
Then the Tiger owner, he was a good gambler, smiled again.

"Would you believe it," he said, "one of the pitchers I passed up was Babe Ruth. At the time he was a rookie hurler and it was a veteran I needed."

AFTER A MINUTE or two, the Tiger owner continued.

"Don't forget," he said, "Ruth didn't become the heavy hitting star until he reached Boston and was shifted to the outfield. If I had taken him, our manager may not have shifted him. He may have let Ruth pitch until his pitching days were done and then let him go."

Then, with a sigh, Navin concluded, "And if that had happened, we never would have had a home-run king who changed the entire concept of the game as Ruth did."



U.S. almost sent millions to wrong guy

Coleman Young climbed out of bed in Manocogan mansion a week ago Monday and for breakfast had ham, eggs, grits, orange juice, coffee and 18 stupid pills.

In Washington the same morning, Theodore Lutz had tomato juice, waffles, sausage, coffee and 18 stupid pills.

Actually, I don't know whether the mayor of Detroit and the administrator of the federal Urban Mass Transit Administration had tomato juice, orange juice, ham, sausage, eggs, grits, waffles and coffee for breakfast.

But by 2 p.m., it was pretty apparent they had consumed 36 stupid pills between them.

THAT WAS WHEN they announced, in the mayor's office, that the federal government was coming through with \$22 million.

The money, however, wasn't going to the city of Detroit, of which Young is chief executive. No official of the city of Detroit will touch a penny of it.

In fact, the ceremony should have been held a few blocks north, in the headquarters of the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority. SEMTA is the agency which is getting the \$22 million, including \$5 million for preliminary engineering on a subway/surface light rail rapid transit line.

Now, SEMTA is a state-created agency whose governing board and employees come from seven counties. The city of Detroit is a minority member of SEMTA, with only one-fourth of the SEMTA region's population.

ONE COULD HAVE been misled by the TV and some of the newspaper coverage. Said the Detroit Free Press in a gargantuan display of civic ignorance:

"The city of Detroit Monday was formally awarded a \$5 million federal grant to begin work . . . Ted Lutz announced the subway grant award during a visit to Detroit. . . . He said his action Monday formally awarded the grant to the city."

Now, no one doubts Young would like to see one-fourth of the federal budget, two-thirds of the state budget and all the local tax money south of the Mackinac Bridge go into the Detroit city treasury, to be administered by his appointees.

Fortunately for all of us, that isn't the case. This batch of bucks went to SEMTA.

WHAT MADE Young's and Lutz's act so baldly stupid is that Young is a rather unpopular guy in the suburbs. That's one reason we have a SEMTA instead of letting the Detroit Department of Transportation run public transit for everyone.

Once SEMTA really gets going on its 1990 transportation plan, this multi-county agency will almost certainly have to come to the voters for taxing authority to raise \$66 million a year. Oakland County on Nov. 4 will decide four advisory questions concerning SEMTA.

There's no way in heaven, earth or hell the region is going to vote that kind of tax if it appears only one-fourth of the region, Detroit, is going to get all the money.

Young and Lutz, with the help of the Free Press meatheds, certainly made it appear only Detroit will get the money.

The purpose of staging such a media event was to convince us that President Jimmy Carter has time to show his love to cities while wrestling with the problems of the world. That's standard election year procedure.

But those of us who support rapid transit, the subway and SEMTA were genuinely embarrassed that the head of UMTA acted as if the money were going to 2 Woodward Ave. instead of to General Manager Larry Salci in the SEMTA office up the street.