

## Choice or no-choice?

"It's my first chance to vote in a presidential election and there's nobody I want to vote for."

The lament from our college student daughter drew my sympathy. I've felt the same way myself as I approach this presidential election, but at least it's not my first time for being a part of our time-honored electoral process.

I thought how much more fortunate I had been — my first presidential vote was during World War II and I could really exercise my convictions in marking the ballot for FDR. Of course, in doing so I caused a minor revolution at home and had a father wondering for months — no, make that years — how any flesh of his could possibly vote for "that man."

And the second time around, too, I felt I was really part of the voting process. That was 1948, when Harry Truman and Thomas Dewey were the main candidates. I remember I walked into the voting booth thinking I was going to vote for Socialist Norman Thomas, but instead I ranked myself with Truman's slim majority in preference to wasting a vote. It was people like me, I realized later, who made the difference in that election. And I've always been glad I didn't miss my chance to vote for a man I later came to admire greatly.

BUT IT SEEMS different this year for my daughters, two of them first-time presidential voters.

It's not just that both the Republicans and the Democrats nominated candidates who were not our first choices. That has happened before; and our political system says we then line up behind the candidate nominated or exercise our right to be a political independent.

The problem I find, and see visited upon my daughters, is with a system that isn't working as it once worked and should work.

Throughout this campaign I've thought about the need to vote for one of three men I really don't want to vote for. Any other action is again wasting a vote. But I've also thought about so many people I wish I could vote for, from those in my acquaintance to other national leaders.

And I've decided that the reason my choice and my daughters' is so limited is that seeking the highest leadership is almost off limits to those who are really functioning members of society, exercising true leadership.

MONEY AND LEISURE somehow becomes the main prerequisites for seeking the highest office.

We put restrictions on financial contributions to campaigns, but still seem to have the very rich as candidates for top office. Our presidential primaries were supposed to give more people a voice, but these have only lengthened the campaign time — again weighing things for the wealthy who don't have other work.

We put candidates into television debates, but then we decide they don't show their true personalities that way.

I'm not a political expert, but I'm sure we're doing something wrong. There has to be a shorter, more direct, more open, better way to pick a president for this country.

I hope sometime, somehow we can find it. I'd like my daughters and granddaughters to feel good about walking into that voting booth.

Rabbi Sherwin Wine will be the keynote speaker for "Conference for the Fellowship of Religious Humanists" scheduled for Friday through Sunday, Oct. 24-26.

The conference is hosted by Birmingham Temple and Birmingham Unitarian Church.

Theme of the conference is "A Secular Religion, How do We Create It?" with the aim of bringing together humanists, secularists and naturalists from all

walks of life to explore and plan for a new secular religion.

"The greatest danger in America today is the fundamentalist mood of America's right," said Rabbi Wine. "We who stand opposed to this ideology must provide an equally dynamic commitment."

A WORLD day service, created for a new humanist holiday will formally begin the conference on Friday evening.

Saturday morning workshops and discussions will circle around the heroes of secular religion — Margaret Sanger, Protagoras, Albert Camus, Erich Fromm and Bertrand Russell, Wine said.

Kenneth Fattou, minister of the Unitarian Society, will answer the question "Do you have to be Religious to be Religious?" during his talk.

Willard Gaylin, from Hastings Center, will talk on "What It Means to Be Human."

"The Dance of Life" on Sunday morning will honor World Day and the human story in poetry, music, graphic arts and dance.

Marilyn Rowens, creative ritual director of the temple, said, "The word religion turns secular people off, and yet our deepest human need is to share some system of thought and creative ritual."

"If we can't invent a new word, we must invent a new secular religion. The \$20 fee includes lunch on Saturday."

Registrations and inquiries will be taken by calling the temple office, 474-1410.

Some events will take place in the temple, 28611 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills; some in Birmingham Unitarian Church, 651 Woodward.

## Bike repair taught

Randy Martin, a man who knows all about bicycles, will get his students geared up for a season of trouble-free biking in his Bike Repair classes co-sponsored by Farmington Community Center and Farmington Bicycle Hut.

His second set of classes begins at 7 p.m. Tuesday at Bicycle Hut, 39501 Orchard Lake Rd.

Fee is \$12 for three classes and must be paid to the Farmington Community Center, 24705 Farmington Rd.

Students will learn everything from operation and basic routine maintenance to more intricate repairs of multi-speed bikes.

## 8mm film making is series topic

The Farmington Community Library sponsors a two-session series on 8mm film making for serious film makers or avid viewers.

The first session, at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, is an introduction to the topic by John Prusak, president of Detroit Area Film Teachers Association. He will discuss the craft and show several examples of excellent student-produced films.

At 7:30 p.m. Oct. 20, the library will show an original 90-minute 8mm suspense film produced by Brian Belanger, a college student and Farmington resident.

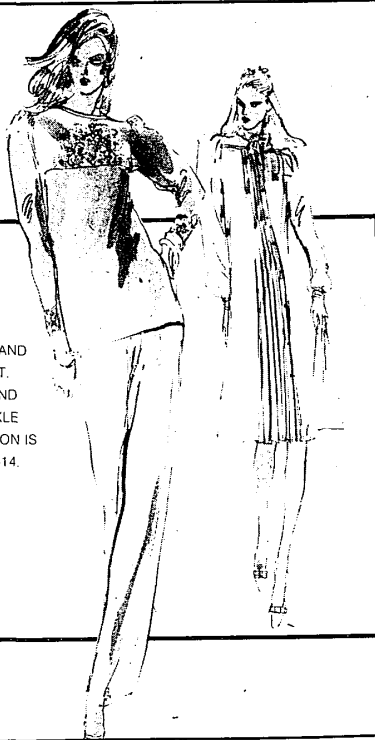
Belanger's film, "The Suburbanites," premiered here in Farmington Players Barn and has recently won an award.

Both programs are without charge, sponsored as a public service by the library's young adult department.

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12:00 Petite Salon  
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