

# Local LWV gives good return on investment

The League of Women Voters, unlike comedian Rodney Dangerfield, gets a lot of respect. Unfortunately, respect doesn't pay the bills.

That's why once a year, the West Bloomfield-Farmington Area League calls upon local residents and businesses for funds.

The LWV has worked for 60 years to inform voters and encourage citizen participation in government.

Carefully preserving its nonpartisanship, it neither supports nor opposes any candidate or party.

Members thoroughly study issues, discuss them and take a membership consensus before taking a stand.

In these days, described by LWV Finance Chairperson Sheila Outley as "the era of the vanishing volunteer," league members spend hours monitoring local government and interviewing government officials before compiling factual information devoid of editorial comment.

Because they make no snap nor partisan judgments, we think the West Bloomfield league deserves our monetary support.

THE LEAGUE'S \$3,000 finance goal is modest. Consider that all work is done by volunteers. The funds are needed to help defray such expenses as meeting room rent, printing and supplies.

"We are confident the community will reap the benefits of a contribution many times over," says Jo Ann Roberts, league president.

Current West Bloomfield local study items are:

- Study of West Bloomfield schools.
- A re-study of the township form of government.
- Study of public personnel, hiring and promotion practices in West Bloomfield.

Study of township ordinances to determine whether they facilitate orderly growth, land preservation, road and transportation improvements and Civic Center Site development.

A joint study and campaign with Farmington Hills members on emergency medical services.

An updated study of common sewage and drainage problems.

The league has shown continuing support and action for the library, master plan implementation, parks and recreation improvement and woodlands protection.

It was the West Bloomfield league which first promoted the saving of the township's wetlands, a parks and recreation commission and emergency medical services.

Other study and action programs are statewide and national in scope.

BUT THE LWV is best known for voter services. It sponsors candidate meetings, compiles and distributes voters' guides and participates in other civic services. We are proud to note here that The Eccen-

tric will be publishing the LWV's state and Oakland County voter guide about Oct. 20.

League membership is open to all citizens — men and women. Current members include many office holders on township and school boards, councils and commissions.

Contributions may be sent to West Bloomfield-Farmington LWV; c/o Sandy Schwartz, 3030 Woodland Ridge, West Bloomfield 48033.

For information, call Mrs. Schwartz at 851-4616 or contact the other finance committee members: Diane Davis, Bonnie Olds or Mrs. Outley.

We like what the league says about voting:

"Voting is not easy in a democracy. It was never meant to be. It takes guts. It takes brains. Become immune to emotional appeals. See through stock distortion tactics. Spot phony issues."

The LWV merits your respect. They need your bucks too.

## Tisch plan would wreck majority rule

Much has been written charging that Proposal D — the so-called Tisch amendment — would wreck state government.

That's not the worst thing about the Tisch amendment.

The worst thing is that Tisch would give us minority rule on taxes. Throughout history, tax increases, tax cuts and bond issues have been voted by a majority — 50 percent plus one.

Even the Tisch amendment itself could be passed Nov. 4 by 50 percent plus one.

But the Tisch amendment would require future tax measures to receive a 60 percent vote for passage. And any legislative attempt to touch an existing tax credit or rebate would require an 80 percent majority.

It's grimly ironic. Tisch would get what he wants with 50 percent plus one, but he would require the other guy to get 60 to 80 percent.

That's terrible constitutional law. It would be tyranny by the minority. It's blatantly unfair.

That provision alone is enough to prompt our editorial board to urge an emphatic "no" vote on Proposal D.

PROPOSAL D is being billed as a tax slash. But when you turn over the rock, creepy things crawl out.

It would require that governmental fees, as well as taxes, be subject to voter referendums. If that sounds pretty, think again.

We'd have to vote on tuition increases at colleges. We'd have to vote on hunting licenses . . . fishing licenses . . . driver's licenses . . . building permits . . . incorporation fees . . . marriage licenses . . . and even dog licenses.

Some communities are pondering cat licenses.

We'd have to vote on that, too.

So besides being unfair, the Tisch amendment deserves ridicule for its pettiness.

PROPOSAL D is aimed at cutting property assessments by about 60 percent. It would require the state government to make up that lost revenue — about \$2 billion — to local units without raising taxes.

The voter could get confused listening to Gov. William G. Milliken say it would rip 55 percent of the state budget and Drain Commissioner Robert Tisch say it would cut only 14 percent.

Who's telling the truth? Here are the plain facts:

The state takes in \$14 billion, and \$2 billion is 14 percent of that. But that's not the whole story.

Some \$2.5 billion of that is "pass-through" money which the federal government grants for sewer construction, law enforcement assistance and welfare. It can't be touched.

Another \$3 billion-plus is guaranteed to local government under the 1978 Headlee tax limitation amendment. Untouchable.

Nearly \$1 billion must go to retire bonds and into retirement funds. Also untouchable.

The highway fund is supposed to be untouchable, but the pressure to raid it would be immense.

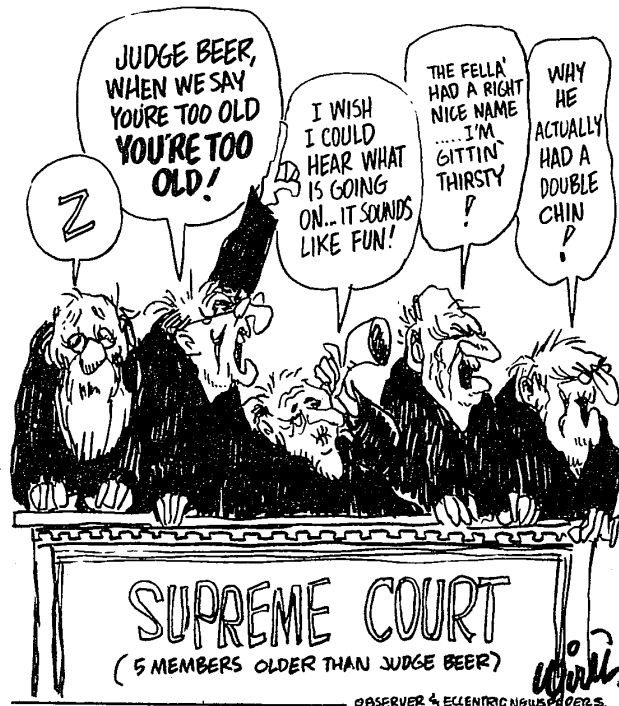
When the earmarked funds are all pared away, the state's general fund is only \$3.7 billion. The Tisch amendment would cut that by \$2 billion, nearly 55 percent.

Who's telling the truth? Milliken, not Tisch.

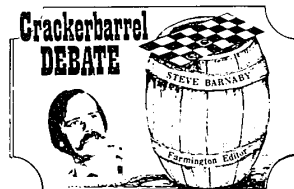
PROPOSAL D really would cripple state government — colleges, mental health facilities, the school for the blind, the school for the deaf, most of our state police, nearly all of our state parks, meat inspection, the national guard, . . . and so on.

In the name of a tax cut, it would destroy state services and reduce our future ballots to the level of pettiness.

But worst of all, it would give us minority rule on taxes.



OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC NEWSPAPERS.



## Our top court puts down the elderly

So you're 70 years old, feel great and wonder where the years have gone.

Don't get too uppity — at least if you're standing around talking with a U.S. Supreme Court justice. Those guys don't take kindly to old folks. Just ask Oakland County Circuit Judge William Beer.

This country's chief magistrates recently refused to hear a plea by Beer to allow him to run for re-election. Beer was protesting a clause in the Michigan Constitution which prohibits anyone 70 years or older from running for election as a judge.

Beer is 71.

THE ENTIRE MATTER is ludicrous, really. Five of the high court justices are 70 or older. But they're protected. The U.S. Constitution mandates that a U.S. Supreme Court justice can serve for eternity if he so chooses.

The logic escapes me.

What is perfectly evident is that once again America's elderly have been told they are something less than full citizens.

No matter how you paint it, the prejudices which this country has fostered, indeed treasured, still exist when it comes to the elderly.

If you doubt it, just listen to the words of Michigan's 55-year-old Attorney General Frank Kelley, who argued the state's case.

"THE PEOPLE of the state of Michigan... have a legitimate state interest in requiring the highest possible standards for members of the judiciary by minimizing, as far as possible, the threat of an obviously disabled judge continuing to preside."

In short, if you're 70 you're a candidate to become "disabled." The sorry aspect is that now the U.S. Supreme Court has given its stamp of approval to such age discrimination.

Forget all the lip service about the rights of the elderly. This youth-fixated society still associates aging with drooling, stroke-ridden senility.

It's a cruel hoax which has caused us to waste a valuable resource in our society — experience.

Beer, for instance, is being forced to shelve 21 years of judicial experience.

PLENTY of examples prove this age prejudice incorrect. Colleague Tim Richard and I sat down for about three minutes the other day and came up with more than a dozen names of those who have served society after age 70 while resisting the urge to spit up on the tablecloth.

Take actor George Burns, for instance. A man in his 80s, he has entertained generations, from my great-grandmother to my 5-year-old daughter. What a shame if he would have been forced to retire at 70.

Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1953 for his six-volume study on World War II. He was 74 when he began the project, 80 when it was completed.

There are plenty more to remember: pianist Arthur Schnitzler, 91, still living; American jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes, 94; Michigan statesman Lewis Cass, 84; Prime Minister Clement Attlee, 84; and operatic composer Giuseppe Verdi, who wrote "Falstaff" at 80 and died at 88.

Last, but not least, is our own Eddie Edgar (The Stroller), who at 83 is still going strong.

## Oakland transit poll rigged

At this writing, I have no idea whether the League of Women Voters will win or lose in Oakland Circuit Court in its effort to have four transportation proposals removed from the Nov. 4 ballot.

The LWV's battle is an uphill one. Any political coward can duck a tough issue by saying, "Let the people vote." It takes guts to say the ballot proposals are misleading and sloppily worded and that they shouldn't be inflicted on the public.

Whatever the legal merits of its case, the LWV is certainly correct in attacking the proposals as a bad job.

POLLSTERS try for neutral wording on any question given to the public.

Any thorn knows you can slant a question to get the results you want. A loaded word here, a biased fact there — it's easy.

The four transportation questions which have been placed on the Nov. 4 ballot were the work of raging enemies of the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority and its carefully drafted plans. Faced with 5,000 petition signatures, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners majority shrugged and put the questions on the ballot.

It was the easy way out. What politician wants to be accused of denying the public even an "advisory" vote in an election year?

THE FIRST question asks:

"Shall a tax be assessed against the residents of Oakland County for the construction, maintenance, or operation of any transportation system, including a subway, as proposed by the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA)?"

It implies such a tax would be assessed only against Oakland County, pandering to provincialism. Such a tax would be levied on some four million persons, not just the one million in Oakland County.

The question singles out "subway." The truth is that SEMTA's plans involve big buses, little buses, three commuter train lines, a downtown people mover and a light rail rapid transit line. But the ballot question refers only to a portion of the rapid transit plan.



Tim Richard

Only part of the light rail plan would be underground. The section from McNichols Road in Detroit to Royal Oak would be at ground level. So would future legs.

Yet only the term "subway" is used. Why? The perpetrators asked a biased question so they would get the result they wanted.

FOR MORE than two years, it has been apparent SEMTA would have to go to the ballot anyway for some kind of tax money. SEMTA General Manager Larry Salci has said that all along.

Nevertheless, in the fourth advisory question, voters are asked:

"Shall any tax be assessed against the residents of Oakland County for the operation and maintenance of any transportation system without the voted approval of said county residents?"

The proposal is propaganda, implying that some sinister force is plotting to bypass the Michigan Constitution and raise taxes without a popular vote. This kind of inflammatory propaganda is precisely what the perpetrators intended.

The League of Women Voters' list of complaints is considerably longer than my own. It all boils down to the same thing:

The four Oakland County ballot proposals on transportation are not honest advisory questions. They are rigged, they are deceiving, and that deceit was intentional.

A ballot is nearly sacred and shouldn't be polluted with such junk.



Did you know that Michigan is famous for its mushrooms and for the scientific studies of its mushrooms by native resident scholars? The mushroom flora of Michigan is estimated to number more than 2,000 known species.