

Will Silverdome subsidy survive?

By TIM RICHARD

An \$800,000 state subsidy to the Pontiac Silverdome is down but not dead.

So say two leaders in the Michigan House of Representatives who voted on opposite sides of the question. Democratic floor leader Joe Forbes of Oak Park and Republican James Defebaugh of Bloomfield Township. Forbes favored the cut, Defebaugh didn't.

The house three times last week voted to pluck the stadium subsidy from the "Christmas tree" grants and transfers bill. The bill goes to the senate, where Forbes predicts the subsidy will be reinstated, and Defebaugh adds it will survive a conference committee.

THEY AGREED the vote was not punishment against Oakland County representatives who opposed a regional rapid transit line which would be underground in Detroit.

"Detroit to a man voted not to cut it out," said Forbes, the house's master vote counter. "That bill had their \$30 million subsidy in it."

Among Oakland County lawmakers, the stadium money was supported by Defebaugh.

baugh, W.V. Brotherton (on reconsideration), R-Farmington; Ruth McNamee, R-Birmingham; Richard Fessler, R-Union Lake, and Sal Rocca, D-Sterling Heights, whose district includes part of Troy.

Opposed were Forbes, whose district includes part of Southfield, and Alice Tomboian, D-Oakland Township.

DEFebaugh said there are two widespread misconceptions about the stadium money:

"Many think it's a private grant to William Clay Ford or the Detroit Lions. It goes to the city of Pontiac, which gives it to its stadium authority to pay off the principal and interest on 30-year bonds."

"Many think it's general fund money. Actually, it comes from a percentage of the take at Michigan racetracks. When you bet \$2 at the racetrack and lose, 32 cents goes to a fund that goes back to cities with sports stadiums — Hazel Park with its track, Northville with its track, Livonia with the Detroit Race Course, Jackson and so on. That is because those cities have traffic and police problems serving the facilities."

Without the state subsidy, Defebaugh added, the city of Pontiac will have to go

it alone in paying the \$800,000 in debt service on the Silverdome bonds. That would raise Pontiac's property tax rate by more than three mills.

"BASICALLY and mainly, it's the fiscal atmosphere around here," said Forbes, who in past years supported the subsidy but last week helped lead the fight against it.

"The stadium is just not a priority in an economic recession. We've cut schools, mental health, social services by a percentage. There was not even an attempt to cut a percentage of the Silverdome subsidy," said Forbes.

Both agreed that in the past Pontiac had been under the impression the state recognized a moral responsibility to help pay off the Silverdome bonds.

"But there's not signature on a piece of paper saying the state has a responsibility," said Forbes. "Someone — like (Sen.) Bill Huffman — gave them a guarantee."

Defebaugh said the subsidy should be viewed as an investment that stimulates the economy of southeast Michigan. "Hotels and motels all over southeast Michigan have business because of stadium fans," he said.

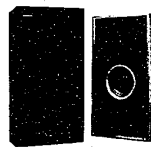
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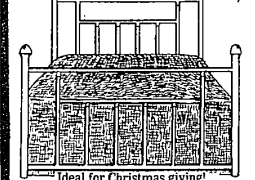
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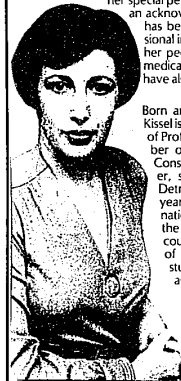
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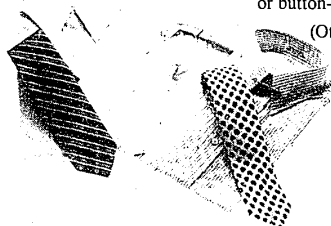
Born and educated in London, England, Elaine Kissel is registered with the American Association of Professional Hypnotists, is an elected member of the American Society of Professional Consultants, parapsychologist, author, lecturer, she has written for the Detroit News, Detroit Free Press Sunday Magazine, for many years and her articles have been published in national magazines. Elaine Kissel is creator of the now famous U-Control Mind Mastery course, a program she developed as a result of her 30 years of empirical knowledge, study and experience, and fourteen years as a practicing hypnotist.

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