

# People blame government for inflation, poll says

Usually you want to be wary of a politician's surveys of voters' opinions. The officialholder likes to get results that show he's in tune with the folks back home. It's especially true in an election year.

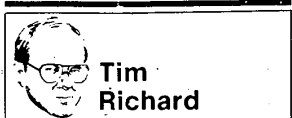
If he's against a program, his question will ask if you're for "compulsory federal" so-and-so. If he's for it, he'll ask, "Do you think all Americans should have an opportunity for such-and-such."

So it was a mild shock to see U.S. Sen. Donald W. Riegle Jr., D-Mich., come up with survey results showing Michiganans are a moderately conservative lot, except on benefits for the elderly. They frowned on a program Riegle had championed — Trade Readjustment Assistance to workers.

**THERE ARE LOTS** of faults with such polls.

For one thing, only 200,000 out of three million households mailed back Riegle's poll — a rate of one in 15, which is about par. For another, such polls are biased in favor of people who actually read and write, leaving out those who are capable of it but prefer to watch TV and talk.

For a third, such polls are answered by people who voted for the officialholder and thus would likely confirm his points of view. Finally,



Tim Richard

Riegle is up for re-election in 1982, campaigning hard against the Moral Majority rather than the Republicans, and it's a dandy publicity gimmick for him.

And so when a Riegle poll shows the public with a jaundiced attitude toward a lot of "social" programs — well, we'd better look at it.

MICHIGANIANS were for President Ronald Reagan's budget cuts, 52-48, "even if the funds greater on Michigan than other states," in the slanted wording of Riegle's question.

But they're not 100 percent sold on Reaganomics because they wanted the budget cut before taxes are cut. 74-26.

"The greatest cause of inflation" they saw to be the federal government, 59 percent. It was followed by unions, 9 percent; energy costs, 8; greed, 5; and "other" 19.

The most fascinating part was where folks were asked their priorities on federal spending — whether Uncle Sam should spend less, the same or more on certain items. And here's where the social programs ran into trouble.

"SPEND SAME," said the public, on Social Security and veterans retirement; education; highways; health services for the elderly, veterans and the poor; and environment clean-up.

"Spend more," they went on, for crime prevention (48), solar energy (46) and alternative energy (53). On assistance to the elderly and the poor for energy bills, 18 percent wanted less, 47 percent the same, and 35 wanted more, which means this idea is relatively popular.

"Spend less," they said emphatically, on aid to El Salvador (84), foreign aid (85), tobacco price supports (93), food stamps (67), unemployment benefits (48), CETA public jobs (57) and Trade Readjustment benefits (62).

Job training was surprisingly unpopular, with 39 saying less, 39 the same and only 22 more. The public has apparently lost its enchantment with the notion of special kinds of education as a cure for unemployment.

That is confirmed by their negative reaction to CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, which pays local government to hire and train workers).

Even school lunches fared poorly, with 44 wanting less, 46 the same and only 10 more spent there.

It doesn't mean they want to repeal those programs — just pour less into them.

Their attitude toward defense was tougher to determine. Riegle gave them no chance to ask for less defense spending. Should more be defense money be put into conventional weapons such as tanks, ships and small arms? They said yes, 53-47. Should more be spent on nuclear arms? The answer from 57 percent was no.

Reagan can take more comfort from the poll than Riegle can, but not much more. Michigan voters are a curiously independent lot. They pick and choose their responses — even when their own senator is asking the questions.

## Well, are we all set for another year?

### Mike Regulski

## What is Livonia really like? Like almost every suburb

A question arose the other night around the lunch table about just what is Livonia. We'll get to that later, hold your breath.

But first you're probably wondering why some people eat lunch at night and not during the afternoon like everyone else.

The answer is rather simple, and if you've already discovered it, go on to the Rubick's Cube. However, if you're still stumped, some people's work calls for their presence after the sun sets. For these creatures of the night, pretending lunch is dinner is foolish. Dinner is usually breakfast, anyway, as everybody knows.

Only those who understand the workings of the late-shift worker's mind can fully appreciate the reason for sitting around one of the area's finer diners contemplating the mystery of a city. There aren't many eateries here that cater to lowlifes and their accompanying budgets and even fewer that are open at the necessary hours.

You can hit them all in the space of a week. None are within walking distance of this plant.

GETTING BACK to the original question posed, I, being the only naturalized Livonian at this gathering of the Lunch Bunch, was called upon to provide some insight. A few minutes of thought were required.

One of the bunch, who comes originally from a place called Lake Orion, said Livonia is merely Warren South. Well, having visited relatives once in Livonia North, as I prefer to think of Warren, the response to that is this: Warren is flat and any tree standing there now was imported from Frank's Nursery within the last 20 years.

Feeling that response unsatisfactory, another Lunch Buncher, from Zanesville, Ohio, pressed on. "What is Livonia?" she asked.

Well, it is for many the suburb that God built, married only by the south side. (South side in this case being anything below the Jeffries between Hix and Inkster roads.) It is for others, the suburb that God built — married only by the north side.

Livonia is life collar and blue collar types coexisting on a 36-square-mile plot with subdivisions, businesses, churches, shopping centers, schools, parkland, swimming pools, tennis courts, empty stretches of field and major metropolitan thoroughfares.

IT IS MARRIED to family life and single-family homes and low-rise construction. It has a city government left to mind its own business for the most part (providing that it delivers spirited entertainment in off-year elections), a progressive school system that at one stage was second to none, city services that meet with residents' approval (unless it's snowing), a northeast and northwest section geared for the upper income brackets, a southeast and southwest section appreciated for its established beauty.

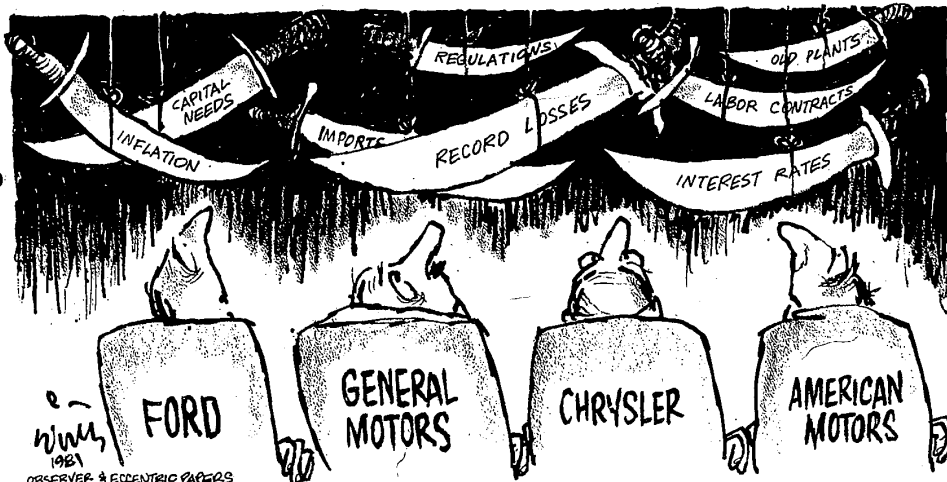
It has kielbasa, lox and bagels, mincemeat pies and war shui gai.

It has the Jeffries freeway driving through its heart, a corridor of industrial passion, a conglomeration of business bric-a-brac that is Plymouth Road, Rosedale Gardens, and a stretch of space called Hines Park that rivals Golden Gate Park in San Francisco or Central Park in New York in everything.

It does not have affordable housing for young adults or newly marrieds, a continuous bikepath or sidewalk linking one end of the city to another, one common attitude shared by all.

It is middle-class America, with values running to the left, to the right, to the apathetic. It is the Rouge River overflowing its banks in the spring. It is rush-hour traffic during the day and iridescent blue picture windows and empty sidewalks at night. It is barking dogs and cyclone fences.

It is like Birmingham, Southfield, Farmington, Plymouth, Redford, Westland, Garden City — a suburb of Detroit.



Observer & Eccentric Papers

## Government mumbo jumbo is infuriating

Last year, "impacting on" and "enhancing the quality of life" were the favorite phrases of government officials and civic leaders.

This year, I'm sure other bureaucratic gibberish will ring out the old and bring in the new.

First of all, nothing impacts on anything else. But something can leave an impact, like an aching wisdom tooth.

When politicians talk about enhancing the quality of your life, you can bet your bottom wisdom tooth you'll be socked in the pocketbook to "upgrade" that quality.

Writers and speechmakers tend to be redundant with terms like "uniquely innovative." They overuse "viable alternative," "viable lifestyle," "within the parameters of," and "major revenue shortfalls."

Viable means "living" or capable of sustaining independent life. A "living lifestyle" is repetitive. And I've never seen a living alternative, so I have no idea what one looks like.

WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY defines parameter as the relative intercept made by a plane on a crystallographic axis, the ratio of the intercepts determining the position of the plane. You dig?

Major revenue shortfalls in any language means the dough isn't rolling in and the budget is squeaky tight. It's like my checkbook balance.

Press releases tend to have a flavorful lingo — usually unintentional. One from a counseling service said the instructor of "Your Aging Parents" workshops is an "aging consultant to area nursing homes." She may be 39 and holding.



Jackie Klein

"Controlling interest in the 65-year-old Hack Shoe Co. has been secured by Morton Hack, long-time president of the firm and his family," said one press release. I wonder if his family knows.

Other press releases are less to the point. For example: "Studies show that the relatively less severe rear-end collision and accidents associated with nearby driveway turns tend to be more frequent."

That's the word from the Oakland County Road Commission. The commission, by the way, is working with the city of Southfield to address this problem.

"INCLUDED IN the exhibit will be a police car with the instrument used for testing drunk drivers and a short movie," says a release from the Traffic Improvement Association of Oakland County. How the instrument tests movies wasn't explained.

And how about the fundraiser that promised "dancing with an open bar." Sounds like fun.

Let me share with you a few of the more obscure reports that have crossed my desk and raised my hackles.

An assertive, dynamic goal-oriented communi-

cations program is imperative. The support of and productive rapport with the electronic and printed media would serve to enhance Southfield's opportunities of consistently projecting a positive image.

A workshop format could include verbal communication skills, non-verbal communication skills, written communication skills, values clarification and conceptualization, assertiveness training, interpersonal organization development, conflict resolution and stress management.

"In these times of major revenue shortfalls for all types of public works projects, setting proper priorities and service levels becomes the key to mitigate the shortfall, since mixed-up priorities and excessive service levels can generally be said to produce a waste of scarce fund resources."

The word means the underlying foundation or basic structure of an organization or system. There must be a better way of saying that than "infrastructure."

It falls in the category of "realistic goal setting within local parameters," "cost-effective strategy," "constraints on local budgets," "design criteria," and "visual evaluation of pavement distress." The latter means "These streets are the pits."

That's the kind of up-front lingo that turns me on, man.

While you're thinking about that one, I'm predicting the word "infrastructure" will win the gobbledygook award for 1982.

## I read the mail today . . . Oh boy!

I hope Mother Jones understands. I wasn't trying to skip out on a bill. Honest. Let me explain.

Mother Jones is a magazine filled with investigative reporting. It is named after a woman named Mother Jones who was a bit of a hell-raising muckraker in her day.

Recently I opened a long-overdue bill for a subscription. They were pleasantly firm. No dough, no magazine.

I didn't realize it was a bill. I thought it was just an attempt by them to get me to renew my subscription.

I hadn't bothered to open it, and I never throw unopened mail away for fear I may be discarding \$250,000 in sweepstakes money.

WHY NOT OPEN IT? I didn't have the time. Opening junk mail at my house is a full-time profes-

### Rich Perlberg

sion. Everybody, it seems, has a good cause or a good magazine, and everybody wants to further his future with my somewhat hard-earned money.

Take a look at the mail that piled on my table during the last two weeks:

• A request for \$20 from the American Civil Liberties Union to fight the Moral Majority.

• A request for \$20 from the National Organization for Women to combat anti-abortion legislation.

• A clever play by Consumer Digest to "give" me some money for filling out a questionnaire. My "gift" is in the form of a lower-priced subscription.

• An offer from U.S. News to buy the first volume

of its "The Human Body" series for \$14.95.

• An offer to subscribe to a new magazine, Reason, for \$12.

• An appeal for a gift to the March of Dimes for \$3 to \$25.

• A subscription sales pitch for Science News, \$20 for 52 issues.

• A request for \$20 from the People for the American Way to fight the "religious new right."

• An invitation from Publisher's Clearing House to win \$250,000 (I knew it was in there somewhere).

• An offer to buy a Norman Rockwell collector's plate for \$20.

• A request for \$15 from the National Abortion Rights League.

• And one of the most intriguing offers, a new magazine designed to tell people how to use their personal home computers. It's \$10 a year.