

New award show is needed

This year's academy awards are history and I find myself, once again, at odds with the results.

The voters, as usual, bowed to their instincts to ride with the sentimental and box office favorites on the theory, I suppose, that such popularity must be deserved. It hardly ever is.

The academy missed the boat in all the major categories. The voters did not pick the best movie ("My Dinner with Andre"), best director (Louis Malle for either "My Dinner with Andre" or "Atlantic City"), best actor (Burt Lancaster for "Atlantic City"), best supporting actor (Harrison Williams for Abscam, Part II) or best supporting actress (Nancy Reagan for her role, wearing second-hand clothes, in the Washington Press Corps annual dinner production).



Bob Wisler

Based on past experiences, I know that I will be disappointed in the next glitzy award ceremony, whether it is for local television, national television, country music, or whatever. Accordingly, I have decided to institute my own awards program.

The following will be bestowed at the (first) annual Roberto Awards night which will be held next Thursday evening in the Brown Room of Sneaky Pete's emporium:

The Richard Nixon I Am Not a Crook Award (also known as the I'm OK, I'm OK Award) — to ex-Sen. Harrison Williams of New Jersey, who suggested in Detroit last week that his convictions and the convictions of seven U.S. Representatives involved in Abscam were inspired because they were not supporters of ex-president Carter. "With the exception of the Republican (Kelly of Florida), we are all Kennedy-type Democrats," he said.

The No News Is Good News Award — to John Tarrant, publisher of the News-Herald downriver newspapers, for ordering his editorial director not to put on the front pages any stories about "plant closings, business failures and layoffs." The editor resigned.

The Behind Every Idea I Don't Like, There's a Conspiracy Award — (tied) to Detroit City Councilman John Peoples who

sees the Guardian Angels as a potentially dangerous organization with "qualities similar to those of Jim Jones of Jonestown."

The Henry David Thoreau Make Love Not War Award — to singer David Crosby who was arrested en route to an anti-nuclear demonstration in California and charged with carrying a concealed weapon, a .45-caliber pistol.

The Knowing What's Good for Your Health Award — to the weight lifter who runs a Highland Park body building shop which sells health food. He was convicted of beating up a slightly built health food distributor to keep the competitor from distributing his products.

The Absence of Malice Prosecutorial Award — to Craig Woodhouse, chief of the U.S. Department of Labor's inspector general division in Detroit, credited with masterminding a year-long investigation and prosecution of former Teamster Local 299 president Robert Lins. After a month-long trial, a charge of embezzlement was dismissed by a federal judge. Lins was then tried on an obstructing justice charge. The jury reached a not guilty verdict in 30 seconds but waited 20 minutes before delivering the verdict so as not to embarrass the government, one juror said.

The Plain Talking Politician Award — to Virginia Toomey who resigned two weeks ago as Hamburg Township (in Livingston County) trustee after 16 months on the job. She said she could not find a "tactical way to verbalize how grossly disappointed I am to have gradually discovered that many board members simply cannot be taken at their word and the constant back-biting, game-playing, power disputes, ad infinitum are things which I cannot allow myself to continue to be involved with." She expected, maybe, a political rose garden?

The Good Politicians Feather Good Nests award — to former U.S. Senator Harrison Williams (his second Roberto), reduced from a \$60,660 salary to a mere \$45,000-a-year pension after his bribery and conspiracy convictions and senate resignation, and former state Rep. Cosmer Ogonski, reduced from his \$31,000 salary to a yearly \$16,120 pension following

his extortion conviction and resignation.

The Good Zoning Enforcement Makes Good Neighbors Award — to two Oakland County sheriff deputies who in 1978 forcibly entered the residence under construction of Beauregard Stubblefield and arrested at gunpoint Stubblefield and his son for working on their Avon Township house without a building permit. A federal jury last week ordered the deputies to pay \$430,000 to the Stubblefields who are living in the completely constructed home.

The Mohammed Ali Modesty Prevents Me Award — to Kurt Luedtke, former executive editor of the Detroit Free Press — nominated for an academy award for his script "Absence of Malice" — for conceding that it was OK for him not to win the academy award in his first screenwriting effort.

The Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus Award — to the state legislators, officials and judges who gave up one week's salary to dramatize the state's economic plight. Politicians aren't such bad folk, after all.



The next round?

Federalism plan may spark fight

A major debate is brewing between state administrators and local government officials over how to parcel out federal "block grant" money.

Some state officials say their offices should set spending priorities. They argue that, legally, local governments are creatures of the state.

Local officials call that "paternalistic." They want "joint determination."

"The federal government should insist the states sit down with local officials to determine how the funds will be used," said John Amberger, deputy director of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments. SEMCOG is a voluntary association of local units in seven counties which engages in regional planning.

PRESIDENT Reagan's new federalism

program calls for taking 57 "categorical grant" programs, where money goes to local governments and schools which apply for them, and consolidating them into nine new "blocks."

Total funds would be reduced by about 25 percent. The money would go to the states to administer. Local officials say frankly they are worried not only about the cuts but that Lansing might decide to parcel out the funds differently — if at all.

Michael Gilsac, SEMCOG's outgoing executive director, wants the federal government to mandate that block grant money be passed through the state to local units.

"Here is a program where Congress wrote a law and the communities applied for funds," he said. "Now the issue becomes one of writing regulations for 'pass-through.'"

Adds Amberger: "Now the state wants to snatch it from us."

Gilsac said local units have the informal beginnings of a process to develop their positions. It is an eight-member Michigan Council on Intergovernmental Relations.

Said Gilsac: "MCIR is not the answer, but it is a forum." Many states are organizing state advisory councils, he said.

AMBERGER ADDS: "If there is no process, the states will unilaterally make the decisions." The key, he said, is "joint determination."

"State officials use the vague words 'We shall consult.' Well, 'consult' can mean anything, including the paternalistic announcement, 'Here's what we are going to do,' he said.

Gilsac said, "The state will tell you that local governments are creatures of the state. That was once true, but it's outmoded now." Gilsac credits Lt. Gov. James Brickley as head of the governor's Community Development Cabinet for being sensitive to local problems. But he argues that the cabinet is not adequately staffed to be a state office of local government.

Two governors, George Romney and William Milliken, have proposed a state office of local affairs. Always the proposal has died in the Legislature.

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