

Favors 'better' tax mix

School chief: We need diversification

PHILIP RUNKEL, state superintendent of public instruction, has been a highly visible state official since being appointed in 1980. He has assisted in school crises in Taylor and Westwood in the metropolitan area.

Runkel believes that because of problems with the state economy, measures should be taken to make school financing more diversified. He also says there are fewer school strikes this year than in the past.

A former school superintendent in Utica and Grand Rapids, Runkel was interviewed last week by Observer & Economist writer Tim Richard, Jim Harrington of WXYZ-TV, and Mike Wolk of the Detroit News, for the television program "Spotlight on News." Following are excerpts:

Q. Across the state, how are voters reacting to millage renewals?

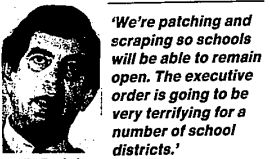
A. This year, we feel there's strong support for education in Michigan.

Our reading on millage renewals is 92 percent (favorable). It's up from last year, and on additional millage it's up from 17 percent to 27 percent (favorable).

Q. Given the economic problems... why are there teachers strikes?

A. We have 570 districts in Michigan. About 250 districts are up for negotiations (this year), and only about 50 have had successful negotiations. We have had five strikes so far, and two of those are settled.

Q. You look at the history of teachers strikes, three years ago we had 70, the year after that



Philip Runkel

we had 30, and last year we had 13. We projected some place around 12 or 13 (this year).

Obviously, collective bargaining is a local issue. Many times we've asked people to go back, and encouraged people to go back, without a contract and consider continuing negotiations. We do not want to see school interrupted.

Q. Some 200,000 auto workers are still laid off, many others are still unemployed, teachers are laid off, and yet we have five teachers strikes.

A. Not all of those strikes are about money. There are many concessions in Michigan school districts this year. Some school districts do have resources. You have to look at the individual school district.

The other issue is that it's very difficult to finalize your contract because there isn't a state-aid bill yet. They (boards) don't know what the appropriation is. We have to face an executive order cut.

Q. What will the governor's executive order (calling for a \$72 million cut to aid to K-12 schools) — do to schools?

A. I would think there would be less than the \$72 million proposed by (Milliken) cut out. What we did when we heard of this executive order, we surveyed through the intermediate school districts, and we have about 60 school districts with payroll problems almost immediately. If the executive order had taken place, they would have lost about half of their state aid payment. Remember, they've adopted a budget. We had 30 school districts on a critical list, 30 on a serious list and 70 on a watch. Sixty are already in deficit. It would put close to 100 districts into some kind of deficit.

We're patching and scraping so schools will be able to remain open. The executive order is going to be very terrifying for a number of school districts. Some might have difficulty making the 180 days (schools are required to be open).

Q. So far we've been talking a very bleak picture... What's going to happen five, 10 years down the road?

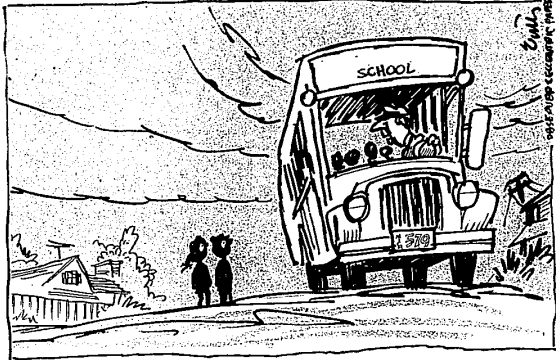
A. Obviously, the secret is to have an active, vital, diversified economy. We in education ought to learn we are closely linked to the economy. There's no easy way to solve the problem. Some say shift away from the property tax and have a better mix of income and sales tax. I subscribe to that.

But I have to bring this out: If we had relied primarily on sales and income taxes, we'd have much more serious problems now, because property taxes have been very stable and revenue has actually gone up, while revenue from income and sales taxes have gone down dramatically.

There seem to be a couple things we ought to consider. We ought to consider a charter millage: Once a city has voted X amount of millage, they wouldn't have to vote that renewal millage. We do that in cities now.

We have to narrow the gap between in and out of formula districts (districts "in formula" receive state aid; those "out of formula" rely mostly on local property taxes). It's going to be a real struggle to reform school finance.

Q. One candidate for the Wayne State University board of governors says she'll campaign for for extending that 1 percent income



'Will the school be there when we get there?'

tax surcharge (due to expire Oct. 1) for a year or two.

A. I think that's admirable. I appreciate the effort.

I don't think the votes (in the Legislature) are there at this time. I don't think a Legislature facing reelection is inclined to face a new tax. But I do believe that issue is going to become a major one for the new governor.

Q. Some districts with financial problems — like Westwood — are rather small districts. Any possibility there will be some consolidation of small districts, at least in the metropolitan area?

A. In the last decade, (enrollments in Michigan have dropped) from 2.1 million to 1.8 million — about 400,000 less students (rounded off).

How do we deliver services effectively... now that the enrollment decline is hitting the high schools? Small high schools are going to have a difficult time. I don't see the problem outstate. I see it in urban and sub-

urban (districts) which have lost 50 percent of their enrollments.

There is a renewed interest by citizens. The law in our state gives citizens a great deal of power to petition to move that (consolidation of school districts). We have several (consolidation) petitions we are considering now.

Q. Aren't you generally of a mind that a series of small districts — like Dearborn Heights, Cresswood, Westwood, clustered down there — unless they can prove otherwise, aren't you of a mind that they can't function in this day and age?

A. Some issues: Can they cost-effectively provide the program? Are there duplications of services? I'm not necessarily of a mind they must get together. There are other ways it could happen. We have to be creative. The answer (in the past) has always been to make it bigger, and I'm not against that either.

I'm saying we ought to study all the alternatives. Can we cooperatively provide programs? Can we share transportation?

Q. Some districts with financial problems — like Westwood — are rather small districts. Any possibility there will be some consolidation of small districts, at least in the metropolitan area?

A. In the last decade, (enrollments in Michigan have dropped) from 2.1 million to 1.8 million — about 400,000 less students (rounded off).

How do we deliver services effectively... now that the enrollment decline is hitting the high schools? Small high schools are going to have a difficult time. I don't see the problem outstate. I see it in urban and sub-

Check our new HOT LINE for all your carpet needs.

New low pricing on all brands. Ask for Mr. Carsen - 476-8437

7 Mile & Middlebelt Livonia Mon.-Fri. 10-5; Sat. 10-6

DEEP STEAM Shampoo-Steam & Shine Carpet Cleaning

Living Room \$26.95  
All Additional Rooms \$9.95 ea.

One Hour Free Free Scotchgard - One Room

Includes: Pre-Spotting • Color Brightener • Deodorizer • Furniture Pad • Hand Scrubbed Corners

Expert Furniture Cleaning & Scotchgard Shampoo and Steam

Gom Carpet 532-8080 & Furniture Cleaners • Redford

STOP Car Theft Detroit's fastest growing crime.

System 7 AUTO ALARM

The Computerized Car Alarm

- It's keyless - no switches to fail
- It paralyzes your car - can't be started
- It protects your car & everything in it
- Lifetime Guarantee

Installation available at your home, office or at our centers.

from \$59.95

477-0700

FOR THOSE WHO DEMAND THE VERY BEST!

HEAD SKI WEAR

PERFORMANCE SKIWEAR • NEW LOOKS • NEW COLORS • NEW '83 STYLES FOR FALL AND WINTER

Bavarian Village

WE'RE THE PLACE FOR SKIERS

15-75% DISCOUNTS ARE ROUTINE AT OUR TWO NEWEST STORES

THE PAPERBACK OUTLET

We have thousands of:

- NEW BOOKS - 15% Discount
- USED BOOKS - up to 75% OFF RETAIL
- NEW COMICS - 15% Discount
- Rentals, Trades - 10% Discount
- Used Comics - 10% Discount

FREE BOOK with first \$1.00 purchase!

LIVONIA 18780 Middlebelt S. of Livonia Mall 471-4742

SOUTHFIELD 29289 Southfield in Farwell's Plaza 559-3780

YOU SAVE 2 WAYS

James H. Will

When you Pre-Plan your funeral with WILL Funeral Homes

- Your funeral is guaranteed at today's prices. You pay a fixed fee with inflation.
- You guard against over-spending. You specify the kind of funeral service and casket you wish.

Call us — your Pre-Need Specialists 937-3670

4 DAYS ONLY! Builders Model Home Furniture Save 30% to 80%

Just Chased Two Model Homes

- 1 Twin Size \$48.00 ea. 2 pc. set
- Soft Linenette, Great Artistic Nylon Veneers, 100% New, 100% Higher Quality, 100% Better Value
- 1 Queen Size \$58.00 ea. 2 pc. set
- 1 King Size \$68.00 ea. 2 pc. set

1 pc. Bedroom with Bedding & Frame Full or Queen 3 pc. Regular \$400 Chased 4 only NOW \$267

Lumber Jack Bed & Bath - North Henry 100% New, 100% Higher Quality, 100% Better Value

1 pc. Bathing & Bed Room Set \$78

1 pc. Bathing & Bed Room Set \$78

1 pc. Bathing & Bed Room Set \$78

1 pc. Bathing & Bed Room Set \$78

TRANSMISSION REBUILDERS INC. OFFERS

TRANSMISSION TUNE-UP

- Road Test
- Renew Pan Gasket
- Adjust Bands
- Check for Leaks
- Change Fluid

SPECIAL \$5.95 PLUS FLUID

At all 4 locations

FREE TOWING - ONE DAY SERVICE

NATIONWIDE WARRANTY

RELIABLE SERVICE SINCE 1957

NOW 4 LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU

LIVONIA TRANSMISSION 27950 W. 5 Mile 522-2240

FARMINGTON TRANSMISSION 30400 Grand River 474-1400

NORTHVILLE TRANSMISSION 5 Mile at Northville Road 420-0444

T.R.I. TRANSMISSION SERVICE N. of 15 Mile, Corner of Pontiac Trail & Hogarty 669-2900

A trip back to the old may inspire the young

People daydream about the old neighborhood. But how many really take the bull by the horns and go back?

One suburban podiatrist got an irresistible urge to do just that recently. What's more, he took his kids along.

Born in Detroit and one of three boys, the doctor's earliest memories are of the neighborhood between Linwood and Dexter and Davison and Burlingame.

It was here he tagged along with his big brothers, helped out in his parent's store, started school and laid the groundwork for his future professional education and a better life.

Now, with several children of his own, the eldest about to become a bar mitzvah, he found himself thinking about the old places and the old times.



Shirlee Iden

One day, he took his children aside and delivered a somber lecture about his neighborhood roots and how different life was in a Detroit two-flat than in their own suburban home with all amenities.

HE TOLD the youngsters he'd decided to show them what their father's life had been like at their age and scooted them into the car.

Even for dear old dad, it was quite a trip. Landmarks like the Dexter-Davison Market, the old Davison Jewish Center, and Brother's Deli are just history now. The people who live in the neighborhood don't even remember them.

Like those who occupied them years ago, today's residents live where the sidewalks are cracked, driveways narrow, and two and four flats are crowded onto narrow lots.

Mature trees line the streets,

but the kids' bikes and trikes are plastic now, 1982-style, or old and rusty from another day.

When the visiting family came to the door of the father's former home, he rang the bell and waited. Soon an elderly black man came to the door.

"I used to live here and I want to show my children the house," the podiatrist said, smiling. But the resident, a feeble elderly man didn't understand at all and was immediately frightened.

At first he thought his visitor was the landlord come to look things over. Or that perhaps he'd forgotten to pay the rent.

REASSURINGLY the suburbanite repeated that he just wanted to let his kids see where he once had lived.

Reluctantly at first the resident allowed them in, and they toured the small rooms, grown even smaller in the visitor's eyes.

Then the resident began to get nervous again. Was the house going to be sold from under him? And he listed a number of deficiencies he thought his visitor might be able to get corrected from the landlord, the new buyer or whomever.

When the family went back home, they weren't really sure the man understood their mission to try to grab a glimpse of the past.

What the kids remember is seeing a way of life very different from theirs, an old man first afraid, then hesitant, then finally accepting them, though cautiously.

They had come to peer backward, the father to recapture memories, the children to get insights about the past that might convey some deeper knowledge about their father.

Adding it all up, each participant gained something from the visit — a new point of view, a bit of nostalgia, a chance to trust a stranger, and for the old man, a gentle but thorough examination and treatment of his feet.

BACK TO SCHOOL BAND INSTRUMENT Sale!

SELECT FROM OUR ENTIRE INVENTORY OF NEW BAND INSTRUMENTS - ALL MAJOR BRAND NAMES - CALL, CHECK, VIEW, MASTERCARD & VISA

FLUTES	OBOES	TRUMPETS	SAXOPHONES
Reg. \$445.00 Now \$190.00	Reg. \$500.00 Now \$205.00	Reg. \$550.00 Now \$205.00	Reg. \$350.00 Now \$395.00

CORNETS	PICCOLOS	CLARINETS	TROMBONE
Reg. \$445.00 Now \$205.00	Reg. \$350.00 Now \$195.00	Reg. \$325.00 Now \$185.00	Reg. \$445.00 Now \$205.00

Restless Repairs Lessons

HAMMILL MUSIC INC.  
19630 Middlebelt  
Livonia, MI 427-0040

RICHARD J. BAYLES, D.O.  
and  
LAWRENCE H. LaFOND, D.O.

take pleasure in announcing the formation of a partnership under the firm name

BAYLES CLINIC, P.C.

26611 West Seven Mile Road  
Redford, Michigan 48240

313-535-0252

Specializing in General and Family Medicine and Surgery

24-Hour and Weekend Emergency Coverage

TRANSMISSION REBUILDERS INC. OFFERS

TRANSMISSION TUNE-UP

- Road Test
- Renew Pan Gasket
- Adjust Bands
- Check for Leaks
- Change Fluid

SPECIAL \$5.95 PLUS FLUID

At all 4 locations

FREE TOWING - ONE DAY SERVICE

NATIONWIDE WARRANTY

RELIABLE SERVICE SINCE 1957

NOW 4 LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU

LIVONIA TRANSMISSION 27950 W. 5 Mile 522-2240

FARMINGTON TRANSMISSION 30400 Grand River 474-1400

NORTHVILLE TRANSMISSION 5 Mile at Northville Road 420-0444

T.R.I. TRANSMISSION SERVICE N. of 15 Mile, Corner of Pontiac Trail & Hogarty 669-2900