

# Opinion

Steve Barnaby editor/477-5450

23352 Farmington Road/Farmington, MI 48024

Philip Power chairman of the board  
Richard Agnina president  
Dick Isam general manager  
Dan Chovanec advertising director  
Nick Sharkey managing editor  
Fred Wright circulation director

12A(F)

O&E Thursday, October 6, 1983

## Lethargy haunts the Hills' political life

Well, you really should have been at last week's candidates' night, which featured council hopefuls for the upcoming Farmington Hills election.

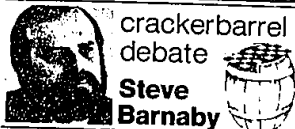
Now this really could be some election. The significant issues are there to be debated. Unfortunately, some of the candidates and a community full of residents show little interest in the future of this city.

The evening of Sept. 29 was a typical example of the lethargy haunting this community.

Only four of the seven candidates chose to show up. Since the candidates' night was sponsored by the Democratic Club, it was obvious that the more politically right-minded of the hopefuls took a bye in hopes of a more sympathetic forum.

Too bad for the electorate. The very real possibility exists that last week's function will be the only one this election. Many voters may never get a chance to see the city's legislative hopefuls in action.

Of course, if last week's resident turnout is any indication, little interest exists among voters. The



proverbial cannonade could have been shot through the room with little injury to anyone.

All the finer attributes of the residency certainly are diminished considerably when compared to this "don't give a damn" attitude. Hard to understand why anyone is willing to spend \$100,000 to \$150,000 on a house and then throw the investment down the tube by neglecting to have a say in the future of his or her own community. Conversely, it is just as difficult to comprehend why anyone who lives in a less-affluent neighborhood wouldn't battle to make

their community better.

AND SOME VERY significant issues exist in this campaign which will determine the road this community will take in its second decade.

- Acquisition of the Spicer property for the development of a park.
- Development of a capital improvement program acceptable to the public.
- The ability of the present council to make decisions that are prudent economically and in the long-range best interest of the community.
- Implementation of a sidewalk building program.

Certainly, you could think of some more yourself. How these issues are handled will determine how this city functions when it grows to maturity and — getting right down to the nitty-gritty — how much your house will be worth when you're ready to sell and get out.

In short, if your politics dictates that you shouldn't make judgments on the basis of helping

out your neighbor, at least pay attention because, if you don't, it will cost you bucks in the long run.

For the last four years or so this city council has been hindered by a lack of initiative and leadership. Its ineptness transcends political considerations. Yet because this community refuses to pay attention, the status quo threatens to continue.

And while the gang up at the corner of Eleven Mile and Orchard Lake Road innocuously is going about its business, the day will come when it's simply too late to reverse the harm done.

Sure, some good apples do exist on council and at city hall. But an inept bunch controls the council, leaving other council persons and an above-average administration with their hands tied.

The balance is slight. With just one or two additions (and deletions) from the present membership, the city certainly would have a much brighter future.

But it's up to you, the voter, to pay attention, become familiar with the issues and cast your ballot on election day.

## Competition drives down local food prices — now

Food: the national picture



Nick Sharkey

the price was artificially low the first week."

IF YOU ASSUME the usual laws of economics will be in effect, Detroit area shoppers will see food prices rise in the coming months.

Here is a list of foods that will be going up and the reasons, according to MSU's Shinabarger:

Red meats: "Animals which produce red meat eat soy beans and corn. The drought has forced the price for beans and corn to rise. Thus, red meat charges will increase."

Eggs: "Demand is up. People aren't eating more for breakfast. But products which use eggs — like cakes — are made more often in a better economy."

French fries and doughnuts: "Any food product which uses cooking oils will go up in price. Oils are in great demand."

Potatoes: "Last year's prices were depressed. This year prices will return to normal levels."

On the other hand, some foods should stay at about the same price.

Broccoli: "Michigan now produces its own. It should be very cheap for the next week or two."

Apples: "The Michigan crop was not good. But we get ours from throughout the country, and the national market was excellent."

WHILE CONSUMERS can take satisfaction in knowing they will not feel the full effects of food price increases, consider the grocery store owner. He must cut prices while costs are increasing.

"In the best of times, grocers make less than a 1 per cent margin on sales," said Tom Albus. "It's miserable now."

In the long run some will have to close their businesses.

But at least for now, enjoy. While that food bill may seem high, it could be a lot worse.



## Detroit can't support its art institute

YOU CAN'T understand the current flap over the Detroit Institute of Arts without putting it in an historical context.

Detroit's history since the end of the 1920s has been one of constant retrenchment of services, particularly cultural.

For years Detroit was the only local government in Michigan paying for and operating its own crime lab; everyone else relied on the State Police crime lab.

For years, Detroit operated its own prison — DeHoCo; everyone else sent offenders to state prisons.

For years, Detroit operated its own TB hospital (now Maybury State Park) and its own city health department; other places used county health departments.

Every other jurisdiction in Michigan sends criminal cases to the circuit court in the county seat; Detroit has its own Recorder's Court.

No longer does Detroit contribute any significant amount to the Detroit Symphony Orchestra; the state supplies tax money.

No longer does Detroit contribute as much as 1 percent to the Detroit Institute of Arts budget; the state picks up two-thirds and the private Founders Society one-third.

IN SHORT, Detroit's response has been either 1.) to discontinue the service or 2.) to persuade Gov. William G. Milliken's administration in Lansing that the state should pay for it.

Thus, the state's contribution to DIA has swollen from \$388,000 in the early 1970s to a current \$16 million. The Founders Society chips in \$1.5 million and has a heavy role in operation of the DI. Detroit



Tim Richard

pays less than \$100,000.

An expert witness last week shed light on the operation when he testified before a state Senate committee looking into the political flap. Gilbert Edelson, a New York attorney who represents arts and museums and teaches a course on ethics, law and art, said:

• The combination of state, Founders Society and city money is "unique" and "uncommon" among major art museums — a marvelous bit of understatement.

• DIA itself is among the three best and DIA Director Fred Cummings is among the 10 best in the United States.

NOW, MIXING government money and semi-private operation can be a can of worms, as those who recall LBJ's "war on poverty" can attest. And rumors are circulating about irregularities, high living and cronyism on the part of Cummings.

So the city in August held up state aid to the DIA for an audit. But the audit isn't being conducted by the city auditor general, who reports to the council. Rather, it's being conducted by the finance department, which reports to Mayor Young.

There's more. Cummings' salary is augmented by the Founders Society so that this city department head earns more than Young. If Founders Society people (mainly suburbanites) can be pushed out of the DIA, there will be more jobs for Detroit residents.

What we wind up with is an art museum that is largely state funded and one of the best in the nation, and a city government that has abandoned the museum financially but wants to tighten its political grip.

Control of money. Control of jobs. That's what the DIA flap is about.

## Depoliticize Supreme Court nominations



Bob Wisler

THE POLITICAL wrangling at the beginning of the year over the appointment and dumping of Justice Dorothy Comstock Riley was enough to make even the most loyal partisan shudder.

Riley, a respected Appeals Court judge, was appointed to the Supreme Court by lame-duck Gov. William Milliken to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Blair Moody Jr. Incoming Gov. James Blanchard protested that he, not Milliken, should be able to fill a vacancy which starts on the day that Blanchard takes over as governor.

Blanchard filed a lawsuit demanding the right of appointment. The high court first ruled that it did not have the authority to overturn Riley's appointment. Then after political wranglings and secret meetings, one jurist, Charles Levin, changed his vote to side with the Democratic majority.

IPSO FACTO, Riley was out on her ear, and Blanchard began making blandishments to find a qualified woman jurist. He finally enticed long-time Democrat and highly respected federal judge Patricia Boyle to give up her lifetime appointment and take him and the party off the hot seat by accepting a state Supreme Court appointment.

There are two seats to be filled in the state election next fall, and a quietly furious and determined Riley is after one of those seats.

She even claimed, speaking to a Republican leadership meeting on Mackinac Island recently, that the seat she was after is "our seat," meaning the Republican Party's.

Enough is enough. Even though politics plays no part in the vast majority of state Supreme Court cases and decisions, it should play no part at all.

We deserve to have a judicial system that at least appears free of partisan considerations.

FORMER STATE Supreme Court Justice and Cooley Law School founder Thomas Brennan is a man of words and ideas, many of them good.

The other day he came up with an idea which, while not original, is one of his better ones.

He proposed that partisan political considerations should be eliminated from the process of electing state Supreme Court justices.

Brennan maintains that candidates for the state Supreme Court should run right from the start as non-partisan candidates.

UNDER THE present system, candidates for the high court are elected in November general elections as non-partisan candidates but almost always nominated by their respective political party conventions during the summer.

Brennan said the result is that the partisan politics plays too strong a role in the determination of who will be a Supreme Court jurist.

The ex-jurist, it should be noted, is a partisan Republican who was his party's 1982 nominee for lieutenant governor and who, at one time, intended to be a Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate.

Brennan said GOP big-wigs told him that his intention to become a Republican candidate was ill-conceived in that he had displeased loyal Republican voters by voting for a legislative reapportionment plan disfavored by the GOP.

Examples of partisan politics playing a part in high court decisions are admittedly few — most concern reapportionment battles. But they are disconcerting enough to make one wish to discard the present system of political parties choosing the candidates.