

# Opinion

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## School security is worthwhile investment

**P**URE AND SIMPLE, it was calculated theft at Harrison High School, perpetrated over a two-day period, designed to enrich a few at the expense of many.

Already we're getting used to like-crimes in our subdivisions. The thieves come, truck or van in tow, pull in the driveway and off they drive with belongings garnered through the sweat of a family's labor.

Sometimes they are bold enough to come in the daylight. In a culture without sidewalks, where homeowners move often, neighbors tend to be strangers. They come and go before we even know their names. A moving van in a driveway is a familiar sight.

Although it angers us, we excuse school vandalism as the misguided pranks of troubled youths. But theft of a school building is different.

It is an assault on and insult to the community. It is a sign that, indeed, the Farmington School District is as vulnerable as any district to the criminal mind.

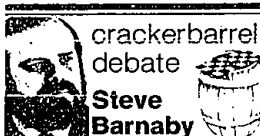
While those who are committing the crime may only be thinking of how it will profit them, in reality their act does much more.

WHAT THEY have taken — the computers, microscopes, computerized typewriters and other teaching devices — are the symbols of the community's dreams for its children.

The price tag on those values are incalculable.

Whatever the tone of the debate over education in recent years, one theme rings clear from all philosophical stands — education is a paramount resource for our future.

Despite how we have prospered since this country's Great Depression, one generation after the next still holds on to the dream — a better future for our children.



In recent times that improved future has come to mean computerization — becoming less expensive everyday, but still a costly investment for a school district.

We in the Detroit area are especially sensitive to the importance of new educational opportunities for our children. As our dependence on industrialism fades, we must spend our resources on new methods of training the next generation.

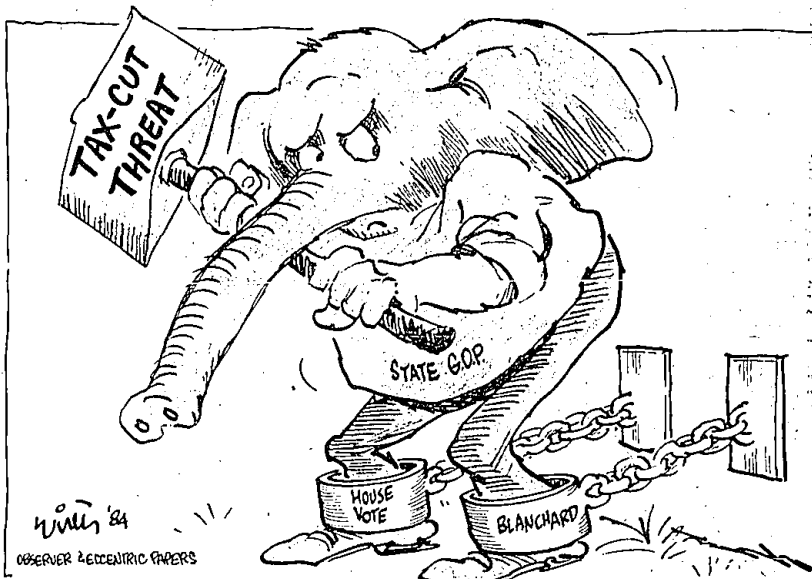
WE RESENT that intrusion in the night from thieves who show that while we are struggling to keep up with an ever-changing society, we have yet to solve the problems which have haunted us for centuries past.

The burglary at Harrison also reminds us, however uncomfortably, that we must re-examine our thinking on security.

With the advent of computers, our schools no longer are weekend warehouses for pencils, paper and glue pots. While for many students the yearning may be to escape the school building on Friday afternoon, for other persons, that empty building is a treasure trove.

If we wish to protect those investments and avoid the school-day interruptions, residents should urge the school district to take the appropriate security precautions and be willing to follow up with the needed funds to implement them.

That money will be a worthwhile investment in our children's futures.



## Political posturing is taxing

FOR MORE than a year now the battle has been raging in Lansing and in other parts of the state over the temporary personal income tax increase hurriedly passed by the Legislature in early days of the Blanchard administration.

The uproar, the recalls, the political machinations and the posturing have all but obscured the real workings of government.

Yet, the state government is going on and doing well. Gov. Blanchard and his administration have managed to attack a number of problems and have gotten a start on a number of other problems.

Blanchard took off \$225 million from last year's state budget and reduced the size of the state work force. Savings in some areas have allowed a budget calling for increased aid to higher education.

The public seems to feel somewhat more confidence in the governor after a shaky start and controversy over his appointments, his staff and his helicopter rides and unabated antipathy toward his tax raise.

YET the larger controversy over the size of the personal income tax rate goes on making all other governmental problems pale in comparison.

As substantive as the issue may be, its merits, pro and con, are also being obscured by the machinations involved in trying to turn public dissatisfaction into political advantage.

There is no doubt that Blanchard inherited a financial mess and a \$2 billion deficit when he took over from ex-governor



Milliken in January. Milliken had manged for years to continue to carry state government forward utilizing a method of keeping books that put off the inevitable pay day, which the Legislature all but refused to finance.

The Republicans who backed Milliken's penchant for solving problems with artistic bookkeeping voted dead against the temporary tax increase asked for by Blanchard and have continued to attempt to make political hay with the issue.

BY TAKING advantage of public dissatisfaction with the tax hike, the GOP has managed to overturn control of the state Senate. Exultant with their new committee assignments and control and their capture of the plush state office space, the GOP senators feel they are on a roll.

Spurred on by the successful elections of Kirby Holmes and Rudy Nichols, the GOP-dominated Senate now proposes a tax cut from the present 6.1 percent to 5.35 on July 1 and 4.6 percent in July 1985.

Such a cut, it seems from all evidence,

would be too generous and would deal devastating blows to existing state services and bring on the financial calamity that we have been trying to avoid.

There is a clear suspicion that many of the state senators realize that such a cut is not desirable but are intent on trying to perpetuate the image of the GOP being the savior tax cutters that voters love and adore.

By continuing to play this game the senators give the impression that they are merely charade players, barkers on the Midway intent on moving the pea around under so many shells that it becomes impossible to tell what is really happening.

THERE IS no doubt that the state House will not approve the kind of tax cut that Senate majority leader John Engler, R-Mt. Pleasant, continues to talk about. There is no doubt that the governor would veto such a proposal in the unlikely event that it would pass both houses.

So why continue to bark on the Midway touting a shell game that is getting to be more and more obviously transparent?

The House of Representatives has agreed on a tax decrease which makes much more sense — to 5.35 on Oct. 1, three months ahead of schedule — even though this too is a political maneuver. The Democratic leadership came up with the package in the hope of placating the public.

Nevertheless, it is something to work with, if the senate leaders will stop bloatling to the high heavens and will begin to seriously negotiate.

## Press resists being government agency

AT FIRST they look like purely local cases.

A federal grand jury subpoenas two Detroit reporters to testify whether they got their information on a multimillion-dollar heroin ring story. The grand jury wants to find the source of news "leaks." The newspaper resists.

A northern Michigan woman is charged with murdering her husband. After sitting in jail two weeks without a visit from anyone, even her attorney, she "spills her guts," as they say, to the first human being she talked to — a newspaper reporter.

The prosecutor, who hasn't begun his homework on the slaying, reads the story, thinks the reporter's notes might contain an admission of guilt and subpoenas the notes. A court orders the newspaper to surrender the notes.

According to the Ohio State University Journalism professors who did a study for Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, the Magazine Oil case prosecutor "stated quite clearly that he allowed the media to do the investigation. Witnesses were called based on media coverage."

WHY DO news reporters and photographers resist turning over their raw materials to a prosecutor?

There is a disturbing tendency of prosecutors to "use" news people as police investigators after the fact. In America, however, press and broadcasting are free enterprises, not arms of the government.

Suppose I as an editor assign a reporter and photographer to cover a political group. They introduce themselves as a reporter and photographer for Observer & Eccentric Newspapers; they interview and photograph the participants on that basis.

After their story appears, the group does something which the prosecutor deems illegal. If the prosecutor then decides to use their notes and negatives, and if our sources find they have been



dealing with police officials rather than an O&E news team — well, they are likely to think of our team as two-faced liars in the future, aren't they?

And we would turn out to be an arm of government after the fact.

THIS DISTURBING tendency is a worldwide phenomenon. Consider these cases in the 1983 report of the International Press Institute:

- In Ghana, the press is run by "civil servant journalists."

- In pre-liberation Grenada, the state controlled all the communications media.

- Cuba's media are state-owned. Any citizen caught with a foreign publication faces four years in prison.

- Since 1948 the Iraqi press has been wholly owned by the ruling Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party and government.

- The Mexican government exercises a monopoly on newsprint. It owns and operates a news agency. It owns a number of newspapers, radio and television stations.

- The Portuguese government owns five daily newspapers.

- Sudan's press is nationalized. Broadcasters are government controlled.

- And, here we have the Iron Curtain countries.

When you talk to a reporter in those countries, you know you're talking to a government agent. In America, we're not supposed to be government agents.

## Time for giving, not giving up

It is now half-way through the six-week period of preparation for Easter called Lent. For Christians this is a special time of the year.

Non-Christians are probably not aware this is the Lenten season. With the exception of seeing "Lenten specials" advertised at their favorite restaurant, it has not affected their lives.

Even for some Christians the season does not have the significance it once did. I can remember the dramatic effect Lent had on my life when I was a youngster.

The emphasis then was on the negative. Lent was a period of penance. Everyone "gave something up" — that could be movies, television or candy. No dances or parties could be held. No lively couples were used in church. It was a time for introspection and thinking about death.

TODAY the FOCUS of Lent has changed. It is now a time to reach out to others.

"Today the emphasis in Lent is not so much on what you give up, but on what you can do extra," said the Rev. Jim Schelek of St. Edith Church, Livonia. If you look at the church notices published in this newspaper, you will notice the change. Where in years past they would include information on private prayer services, now they are notices of social gatherings and educational programs.



For example, Faith Lutheran Church in Livonia recently sponsored a parish Lenten supper. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Redford is conducting an adult education program every week during Lent. Christ the King Lutheran Church in Livonia is holding soup and bread dinners every Wednesday evening in Lent.

Schelek's St. Edith Church has many varied Lenten programs. "More people participate in church activities during Lent than at any other time of the year," Schelek said. "Lent seems to bring them out."

ST. EDITH is sponsoring "Ashes to Easter," a series of small-group discussions focusing on current church topics.

In addition, parishioners are taking part in the Rice Bowl program. Families put a paper cup in the shape of a rice bowl on their dinner tables. They are to eat less during their meals and put the money saved in the paper bowl. That money is collected by the church and donated to the

poor in foreign countries.

Plans are now being made at St. Edith to collect signatures on a petition opposing nuclear arms.

Another parish involved in social work during Lent is Our Lady of Refuge in Orchard Lake.

Parishioners James and Delores Weakland and their son, Jeffrey, had their home destroyed by a fire on March 2. Unfortunately, in an effort to cut corners on a limited family budget, the family had cancelled its homeowners insurance.

FELLOW parishioners have provided the family with food and clothing during the past few weeks. Now they are searching for building supplies — lumber, drywall, insulation, fixtures and doors — to repair the Weaklands' home. Donations of money and any kind of building materials can be made by calling Our Lady of Refuge at 682-0920.

It's refreshing to see the new focus in the observance of Lent. These changes point out a fundamental shift for many Christian denominations. Before, only the clergy was involved in the social ministry of helping the aged, the sick and the poor. Now all Christians are responsible for those duties — especially during Lent.

To me, this is more in keeping with the true meaning of religion.