

# Opinion

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## We have potential for movie makers

"YOU OUGHTA be in pictures — you're marvelous to see."

Well, some say that's the song Gov. Jim Blanchard has been singing lately. As a matter of fact, the guy brought his roadshow to Farmington Hills the other day to sing us his showbiz tune. In the spirit of his "jobs, jobs, jobs" vow, he wants to attract more of the entertainment industry here.

He picked Farmington Hills to tell his entertainment tale because it's the home, at least temporarily, of CBS/Fox Video.

NOW WAIT. All you cynics stop that guffawing. For shame.

This movie-making concept for Michigan really is a good idea. Already this area is an important producer of industrial, management training and technical films. It produces many TV commercials. And one of the reasons suburban "amateur" theatrical groups are so great is that they are beefed up by former actors who have gone to work for industrial firms training salespeople.

Motown wasn't an aberration, you know. Really talented people live around here. Movie-making definitely has possibilities in the town that originated "The Lone Ranger" and "The Green Hornet" radio programs.

And we're certainly glad the governor came to town to tell us about it. It's not like we're talking about a remake of "High Noon" at the intersection of Farmington and Grand River. Nope.

But there is room in suburbs like ours for more audio/video studios like Fox and tons more room for the recording industry.

As far as actually making entertainment-type movies in Michigan, well, with one giant public relations job, sure.

HOPEFULLY, the governor is committed enough to realize what big job he has ahead. He needs to make it work, certainly by doing more than forming an advisory commission.

If successful, the job-producing prospects could go far beyond the movie industry. But first things first.

The movie industry could be a successful job-promotion effort in this state. Could it?

A big "if" is if people outside of Michigan know what really is here. An even bigger "if" is if people inside Michigan knew and had the savvy to tell the outsiders.

## Partisanship bad for our top court

Committees are to be distrusted. An old joke explains how some people feel about them: "The camel is a horse that was designed by a committee."

Nevertheless, the Committee for Constitutional Reform has come up with a good plan for reforming the method by which state Supreme Court justices are elected and re-elected to their jobs.

The committee, headed by former Supreme Court Chief Justice Thomas Brennan, wants to end the present method of nominating candidates at partisan political conventions, then electing them by non-partisan ballot.

The present method means only that the ballot doesn't indicate which party the candidate is nominated by or which party the candidate is a member of. Prior to the election, however, party literature, advertising and political contributions make it abundantly clear which party backs a judicial candidate.

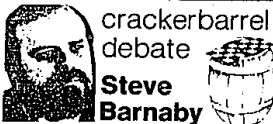
Brennan's committee is circulating petitions proposing that voters amend the state constitution to provide that justices be nominated as well as elected by non-partisan voting.

While not quite the horse we would like to see, this is a big improvement on the camel that a previous committee designed in the constitutional convention.

A BIGGER improvement would be to have Supreme Court justices and appeals court judges appointed by the governor.

This method was advocated several years ago by then-Lt. Gov. James Brackley, how's Supreme Court justice by virtue of an appointment from Gov. William Milliken.

The camel method of nominating justices at partisan political conventions is a good way to inject partisan politics into a judicial system that should be as free from partisanship as possible.



Up to now, places like New York and California have kept the entertainment industry in their little worlds. Oh yeah, you've got to throw in Nevada and Utah for the Westerns. And if movie makers want to get gritty, they go to Chicago when Harlem is booked for the week. And after that, it's off to Mexico or Italy.

BUT MICHIGAN really is a pleasant, beautiful peninsula — two, as a matter of fact. It possesses a variety of landscapes and locales, sufficient to tell dozens of different stories.

Unfortunately, the glamorous people needed to attract the big entertainment bucks don't know it. Neither do a lot of folks around here.

It's like everything else in Michigan. We've got a lot of bad PR and have little luck in improving our lot.

We don't know ourselves.

We're bush league when it comes to storytelling on the Wolverine State. Now, c'mon. New York State/City really aren't any big shakes when compared to Michigan — at least when it comes to making movies — or housing technical facilities.

Heaven knows, our weather is as good or better. And, well, California isn't all it's built up to be, either.

And despite what some people think, Michigan is a whole heck of a lot different than Ohio or Indiana or Wisconsin. But few people know that.

Recently I read an article telling that the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore is the least visited national park facility in the country. Just a few days before that, I found myself standing in a wine store in Florida telling a Greek immigrant about Greektown.

Greektown? She was having trouble comprehending what Michigan was.

Most people think about automobile plants when it comes to Detroit and Michigan. We've got to tell them different or you can kiss off anything like copping a bunk of the movie action.



Bob Wisler

At times the party loyalties and maneuvering tends to taint the public perception of the entire judicial system.

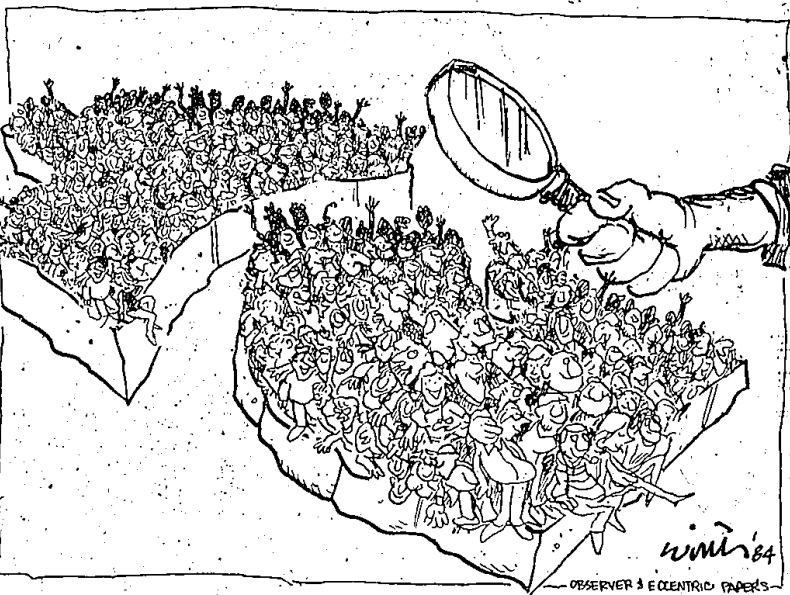
We have had in recent years the Democratic Party's denying Justice Thomas Giles Kavanaugh the Democratic nomination simply because he voted against the legislative reapportionment plan favored by Democrats.

Last year we were subjected to the unsightly political wrangling between Democrats and Republicans over the appointment of Dennis J. Connelley by Gov. Milliken. After first accepting her as a replacement for the late Justice Blair Moody, the Supreme Court's majority flipped. Voting along partisan lines, the high court agreed to bounce her from its ranks.

RILEY is now about to embark on a candidacy for the high court as a Republican. She told a Republican conclave earlier this year "I intend to win back 'our seat' on the court."

This kind of reasoning can lead to judicial decisions being made along partisan lines. Granted that partisanship plays no role in the vast majority of cases reviewed and decided by the Supreme Court, there are enough cases which involve political loyalties to warrant reform.

It may be impossible to purge a 66-year-old justice of political partisanship, but every effort should be made to eliminate the pressure that can be applied because of party nomination.



## 'The richness of the findings'

IF LEO Busecaglia ever reads this column, he will shrink at me. The Apostle of Love preaches that we should tell people how we feel about them while they're alive, not pour out unheard tributes after they are gone.

Too late. Bill Stockwell, author of our Discover Michigan items, died two weeks ago. He was 77. We corresponded and talked occasionally on the phone, but I never met him face-to-face.

In February he wrote me a note from Fort Wayne, Ind. "I moved here because of the illness of my wife and the great care she can get here and the fact that our daughter, son-in-law and five of our 10 grandchildren are only a few minutes away," he said.

"I continue to be really surprised at the amount of Michigan material which keeps showing up and also how one subject or item very frequently leads to another. It seems to be inexhaustible in content, and we truly have a great state, full of treasures to be explored."

THAT'S MY kind of guy. In his eighth decade, he was still learning, still continuing to collect, peruse and condense bulletins from universities, libraries, state bureaus and other sources for fascinating and revealing items.

A native of Pontiac and a licensed attorney who never practiced law, Bill Stockwell spent 40 years in the advertising business, retiring in 1972 as chairman of Stockwell-Marcuse Advertising Agency.



Tim Richard

His avocation was Michigan. "A few years ago, after writing some 1,500 radio scripts for Bud Guest on WJR, I realized that I had compiled a treasure house of information about Michigan," he wrote to us in 1979. Enclosed were 50 sample paragraphs.

In it we met some of the fascinating characters — the famed and the obscure — who made this state: Charles Brady King, who drove the first horseshoe carriage out of a St. Antoine Street machine shop in 1898. George Booth, who ran a dairy on what is now the Cranbrook property. Mary Ann Chapple, an early tavern keeper and dispenser of medicines.

Etienne Brule, the first "foreign exchange" student in history — he lived at the Soo with Indians while the chief's son spent a year in Paris. Ruth Thompson, the first Michigan woman to become an attorney, judge and U.S. representative.



Nick Sharkey

## Michigan Week: one of a kind

THIS IS Michigan Week.

Michigan Week is a designated time to honor the grand state in which we all live. Of the celebrations I know, this one is unique.

The week is marked in widely different ways by different communities. In some — such as West Bloomfield, Birmingham, Southfield and Garden City — there are numerous activities. In others, the week is barely recognized.

In communities which sponsor activities, typical events include guided tours of historic houses, an exchange of government officials with another city, a student reception at city hall and a dinner to recognize civic volunteers.

In the spirit of the week, I have done a little research of the rich history of the state. My source was the files of this newspaper and the Discover Michigan column which appears regularly on this page. It was written by the late William Stockwell (because he supplied us with so much material, in advance, the column can continue for several months).

HERE ARE SOME interesting facts about Michigan.

Michigan lives up to its slogan, "The Great Lakes State." You are never more

than minutes away from water in any part of the state. This state has more than 40,000 square miles of lakes plus another 30,000 square miles of stream waters.

Garden City's founder, Arnold Folker, believed so strongly in gardening that he had all the property divided into one-acre parcels so residents could cultivate individual gardens. Some houses in the city today still occupy their original one-acre plots.

A simple announcement in Detroit in 1914 changed the lives of workers everywhere. Henry Ford promised he would double his wages and pay a minimum of five dollars per day. A minimum daily wage had never been paid.

From Livonia, New York, three Livonians, New York, families came from a principality of East Germany called Livonia. The original name goes back to Russia.

It took 10,000 men four years to

"King" James Strang, prophet and cult leader.

WE LEARNED about Michigan's land, too: the Big Garlic, Yellow Dog, Khabik and Rocky Forty waterfalls. The copper, iron, oil, gas, cement, gypsum, clays, lime and salt in our ground. The first concrete road in the nation (Woodward between Six and Seven Mile roads).

You never looked at the common cattail the same way again once you read this Bill Stockwell item: "From roots up to the tip of its stalk, it is good food for humans. Also milkweed is delicious when served with butter and salt."

Inventors, merchants, cranks, entrepreneurs, publishers — all showed up in his discoveries.

"My three self-imposed rules in compiling this material are that it must pertain to Michigan, must be something many people do not know and must be interesting," he said.

"In all of my hundreds of published items, I have had only one fact disputed and was proven right in that case — University of Michigan was founded in 1817, not in 1837."

His last letter to me, with a batch of paragraphs to last for several more months, closed: "Thanks again for your kind words, and if you, too, continue to dig into Michigan lore, you will be surprised, as I have been, by the richness of the findings."

complete the bridge linking the two peninsulas of Michigan. A four-lane highway stretching five miles from Mackinaw City to St. Ignace was completed in 1957 after a century of discussion and debate.

Most of the early settlers of Plymouth were descendants of the Pilgrims who landed in Plymouth, Mass. Like many of the early settlers they gave the name of their former residence to their new home.

Sault Ste. Marie is the oldest city in Michigan and the third oldest in the United States. The bridge at Sault Ste. Marie is at the end of the longest freeway in America — I-75.

Birmingham in the 1840s was largely an industrial town with factories and foundries. It was named after the busy industrial center, Birmingham, England. A series of fires burned down the factories, and they were never rebuilt.

Finally the Tigers may be hot this year, but they haven't come close to matching the records of the 1929 and 1930 tigers. Tiger teams those years won 14 consecutive games as compared to this year's longest streak, nine.

Have a good week. Say something nice about Michigan.