

Libraries see mixed blessing with own millage

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planning is easier to do if you have some control over your priorities and your funding. If you can control your financing, you can set your priorities within a realistic framework. "If someone else does it... sometimes they don't understand libraries... sometimes they don't see things the same way you do." If being autonomous has a drawback, it's that "sometimes you wish you had a

larger unit to lean on where they may be have a specialist," Kulberg said. Back in 1977, voters in outside Jackson County passed a proposal to merge the city and county libraries -- and to give autonomy to that new system. The result was a 16-library setup with 50 full-time employees and a present circulation of 780,000 items per year and a budget of \$4.2 million. "It's the only way the library sys-

tems could have survived," said David Leason, director of the Jackson District Library. "Governments, whether they're city, township, village or county, use the ephemeral services -- at least they consider them ephemeral -- as the places where they cut when they need money to put into other services. "So, traditionally, they cut library services in Jackson County. That had been done so much that we were down to a bare-bones budget."

BUT BEING financially autonomous didn't prevent the county from attempting to roll back the library's millage about two years ago. Claiming that the millage was not the county's to cut, the library brought suit. On June 8, a verdict upholding the county's right to roll back the library millage was rendered by Jackson County Circuit Court Judge James G. Fleming. "They've said that the county could collect our millage, give us what por-

tion they want to give us and use the rest themselves," said Leason, who added that he hoped the library would appeal the decision. In the Farmington area, the financial independence for the library is an idea which seems to be gaining support. "I guess good government would dictate that the library stay with the cities -- but only if the cities treat it right," said Aldo Vagstad, who sits on the board of the Friends of the Farmington Library, which attempts to raise funds.

"Generally, I've felt that the library should stay as part of the city," he added. "For one thing, it cuts down on the loads of taxing authority. Given the mood of the voters now, I think we should not generate another unit of government. "But, as I told the council at a recent budget hearing, I'm beginning to change my mind on this if they completely underfund the library. If that goes on, I'm going to be supporting a separate effort."

Pharmacists fight plan to regulate drug outlets

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House several weeks ago only to be changed in the Senate. Because the House would not accept the Senate's version, the package is headed for conference committee, Carlson said. The greatest advantage of the pro-

ceed system, Carlson said, is that it could contain insurance and prescription costs. Currently, she said, there is no incentive to control prices. "With a contract, at least you would know how much costs are," she said, adding that Blue Cross could negotiate

prices with drug stores. "The insurer then has a better handle on prices." But Ron Lewinski, a pharmacist at Maple Village Discount Drugs, says drug stores will be hiding below the "normal" prices of prescriptions. That means pharmacists will bid for a con-

tract that allows a customer to buy a prescription at a price similar to the one paid for the drug from the wholesaler. "WHAT WILL happen then, Lewinski said, is that the cash customers (those without insurance or that aren't group

insurance members) will pay the difference. "Someone is going to pay," Lewinski said. But Rudo Difazio, director of media relations for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, said that the legislation would force insurance companies and their major customers (like GM) to shop around for the best insurance deal in much the same way industry seeks the best deal on steel. "It should be cheaper," Difazio said.

"Only the suppliers that are most cost effective will bid." "First, however, is only one of the issues at hand," Difazio said. "If it were only on the basis of price," that Blue Cross would award a contract, then independent drug stores perhaps would lose, he said. "Quality and accessibility" will also be considered. "Our group members live all over the state. We need suppliers near the homes of all our members," Difazio said.

Patterson campaigns for capital punishment

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chief aim is his petition drive to again put capital punishment on the ballot in November. The newest of Patterson's petition drives got its start on May 1, otherwise known as Law Day in Michigan.

matize serious crimes, Patterson said. Whether capital punishment would act as a deterrent for murder is not so much the issue, Patterson said. "It is an argument for justice. It's a punishment that fits the crime."

of allowing criminals to fall through the cracks, the state Corrections Department and its parole system have only served to add to the problem, Patterson said. "FOR EXAMPLE, in 1962 a law went into effect that allowed the sentences of prisoners to be reduced when the prison population hopped over the 18,000 mark.

To top it off, Patterson said, legislators are continually talking about building new prisons, which cost about \$76,000 a cell, rather than refurbishing old, unused buildings. "There are sites around the state that could be used," he said.

Patterson's favorite old building to refurbish into a prison, he said, is the former Eloise mental institution on the corner of Michigan and Aftonian.

"Let's put in the tennis courts and pools so they look like all the other prisons," Patterson said.

"I have not always been a proponent of capital punishment," said Patterson, who with the help of influential and publicly known friends has raised about \$44,000 for the petition drive.

Nonetheless, even if capital punishment ever becomes a penalty for first-degree murder, such a sentence would not be automatic. Execution would simply be another option for a jury, he said. Under Patterson's proposal, however, the person sentenced to be executed would be required to appeal the sentence.

Very quietly we have knocked (a total) of two years off everyone's term," Patterson said about the eight times the legal commutation of sentences has occurred.

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Hobbyists take care to prevent injuries

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Warning to hobbyists and do-it-yourselfers: Threats to eyesight have been found in home workshops throughout the nation.

Often, the home hobbyist does better in making repairs than in protecting his sight. Eye protection, through the use of impact-resistant safety goggles, is essential of all eye-hazardous tasks, according to experts at the National Society to Prevent Blindness. An estimated 1.3-million Americans suffer eye injuries each year. Forty-five percent of these acci-

idents occur in the home. Most could be prevented. Here are some activities where eye protection is especially important:

metal droplets to fly in all directions. If any chemicals should ever get into your eyes, flush them with water immediately and continue for 15 minutes, holding eyelids open. Contact your doctor immediately.

You'll find that more and more hardware stores are selling safety goggles, and home hobbyists like these days. For a free booklet about protecting your eyes when making repairs, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the National Society to Prevent Blindness, 79 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016.

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What's needed, he said, is to stigmatize a crime, such as first-degree murder, by the penalty attached to the crime. The sentences of probation for the two men charged in the death of Detroit Vincent Chin is an example of how the justice system fails to stigmatize serious crimes, Patterson said. "I have not always been a proponent of capital punishment," said Patterson, who with the help of influential and publicly known friends has raised about \$44,000 for the petition drive. "I have not always been a proponent of capital punishment," said Patterson, who with the help of influential and publicly known friends has raised about \$44,000 for the petition drive.

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