

## Wayne parks pick a winner

THE FIRST reaction in Pontiac was a shudder of horror. Eric Reickel was leaving as manager of the county parks, and the news couldn't have leaked out at a less opportune time — just as voters were being asked to renew the parks tax.

But on further reflection, there must have been a swelling with pride. Wayne County was luring Reickel away to build up its parks system, barely more than a grass-cutting operation, and sometimes not even that.

Eric Reickel, 49, of West Bloomfield, is hardly a household name unless you are a serious student of parks and recreation. He is not a flamboyant personality, like Leonard Bernstein or Woody Hayes, but there is an unmistakable mark of genius in what he does.

OAKLAND HIRED Reickel a dozen years ago, when its own parks operation was a fledgling affair. It amounted to six parks with 2,200 acres.

Today, it amounts to nine parks with 3,700 acres and some major achievements: the state's first wave-action pool with a second one to follow, the nation's first winter-time domed golf driving range, a water slide, modern campsites, nature programs, organized bus tours, and many other programs.

Reickel marked out new trails as he developed the county park system. On one hand, he couldn't just stake out woodlands and say, "Here it is, folks. Walk through it." The state and federal governments are doing that.

On the other, he couldn't be totally program oriented, as a city park system might be.

Somewhere in between was a unique niche to be filled. It was the kind of niche no county in Michigan ever had filled because most Michigan counties operate a courthouse and jail and let it go at that.

At one point — the 1976 millage renewal, to be precise — some critics thought Oakland's park operation was getting too much like an amusement park, and other critics thought more attention ought to be paid to the populous "south end."

Reickel and the county parks and recreation commission addressed the criticisms forthrightly, and the system prospered for it. Attendance has been increasing at the rate of 100,000 a year and is expected to reach 1.5 million in 1984, putting Oakland County parks in the same league with the Detroit Tigers as a recreation attraction.

WAYNE COUNTY Executive William Lucas served his constituents notice he intends to go first class by hiring Reickel.

Another sign is that Lucas is asking the County Commission to quadruple the parks system's budget — from about \$800,000 to \$3.1 million.

Goodness knows, Wayne County parks can use it. Elizabeth Park on the Detroit River makes some weep. Many residents near Edward Hines Park, paralleling the Middle Rouge River in the western suburbs, see it as a trouble spot and rowdy haven.

Lucas is saying a combination of more money and Eric Reickel can turn the situation around, and we say he is right.

REICKEL'S NEW job won't be easy. Hines Park, for example, is not a compact piece of property where you can control access at a couple of points and charge admissions. It snakes along for 22 miles and is only a couple of hundred yards across, with traffic crossing at many points. So the Wayne County job won't be just more of the same for Reickel.

No doubt the new man will see the problems as opportunities and do something creative about them.



## Jaycees signing up women

Southfield Jaycees are taking applications from women between the ages of 18 and 35.

The Southfield Jaycees may be the first chapter in the nation to accept women applicants. Michigan Jaycee chapters are planning to meet next week in Marquette. They are expected to change their constitution to permit women members.

"We are going out of our way to welcome women," Southfield president Bernice Tranchada said. "Women are getting out into the workforce and deserve to be in groups like the Jaycees."

The Michigan Jaycees action comes a few weeks after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Jaycees must accept women.

LOCAL JAYCEE LEADERS admit there will be awkward moments as women are admitted.

"Some guys object that our meetings will no longer be 'guys night out,'" said Southfield's Tranchada. "But I figure the Jaycees come first and the guys can play poker on another night."

The biggest drawback seems to be the dissolution of the group's women's auxiliary, called Jayettes or Jaycee Women. Jayettes will no longer exist and women must join the Jaycees. Jayettes are usually wives of Jaycees.

"Some women are really ticked off about the Supreme Court decision," said



Nick Sharkey

Thurman Dalrymple Jr. Dalrymple is president of the Birmingham-Bloomfield Jaycees. "They don't feel it's fair that they will lose their positions as board members of the Jaycee Women organization."

Despite the misgivings of some women, Dalrymple said he views the change as "positive and wonderful."

"We're going to work to make the transition as painless as possible," he said.

SO NOW THAT local Jaycees are moving to admit women members, what about other local service clubs? How about the Rotary, Optimists, Kiwanis and Lions?

Consider that for the first time in the history of this nation white males are no longer the majority of the work force. According to a study by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, white males now make up 49.3 percent of the work force. In 1970 white males made up 53.6 percent of the workforce.

"The numbers are very dramatic and

demonstrate a 'different world,'" said Samuel Ehrenhalt, a commissioner for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The world may be different, but it's business as usual for your local service club. Service club members who want to admit women are the butt of good-natured jokes. But to some it's no laughing matter.

They believe, as I do, that it's outmoded and unfair to exclude women from all-male service clubs. Service clubs function as a means for a town's leaders to get together informally. When they were started early in this century nearly all women worked at home.

THAT HAS changed as the statistics above indicate. But the rules for admission to local service clubs have not changed. And they probably won't until the Supreme Court makes another decision specifically including the Rotary, Optimists, Kiwanis and Lions in the Jaycee decision.

In Rochester vice president Tom Muir said the Jaycees and Jaycee Women have already started joint meetings. "We want to be the first chapter to let women in on the decision-making process," Muir said. Meanwhile Southfield boasts that it is the first chapter to sign up women.

What a difference a Supreme Court decision makes.

## Dads should warn kids about nude pix

FATHERS SHOULD tell their daughters — sons, too — never to pose nude for a photographer. More bad things will happen than they can imagine.

In all that has been spoken and written about the Vanessa Williams case, no one, to my knowledge, has spelled out that elementary lesson.

The dethroned Miss America blamed Penthouse magazine for not telling her in advance what it was publishing. She blamed photographer Tom Chappel. She blamed the pageant. She blamed the media. But never did she indicate her father had advised her against her actions or criticized her for them afterwards.

HERS ISN'T an isolated case. Bad things like this are happening all the time.

A friend from Westland tells of a young man who posed in an Adam-like costume, and sent the roll of film to a commercial photo finisher, apparently assuming there are no female photo lab employees and that no one else would see the shots. Doubly wrong. The shop is in a suburban mall, and you can stand at the window and watch pictures roll off the assembly line. My friend noticed two female shop employees giggling furiously. Any shopper who stopped could see the prints.

A young woman decided she wanted some nude shots of herself. She engaged two trusted friends, and the session was conducted in a suburban photo studio on a non-working day. She thought she had all the slides in her possession, but the photographers made a batch of duplicates and invited their pals in for a screening during coffee break.

In a feature story on a local custom photographer, our newspaper quoted one employee as exclaiming how stupid people are to send films of nude scenes out to be processed. "You never know if it goes wrong, how many people see those nude photos."

In Kalamazoo, according to the wire service, a woman wanted to send nude



Tim Richard

pictures of herself to a boyfriend. A friend shot a roll of film, which was sent to the local K mart for processing. A photo lab employee recognized her from high school. Soon there were prints of her torso all over town. The last I heard, she was suing K mart. Actually, K mart should have sued her for enticing its employees to waste time and company printing paper.

A married woman in another state posed nude for her husband. A year later, they split. The man, feeling the bitterness many divorced persons feel, forged his ex-wife's signature on a model release form and sold the prints to a skin magazine. At least, that's what the woman's lawsuit alleged. I don't know if she ever collected. The moral of the story is that you can't trust your own spouse.

PHOTOGRAPHER Tom Chappel did not treat Williams unfairly. He may have paid her, and he may have got her signature on a model release form.

Chappel was free to do what he wished with the photos. He sold them to one of the sleazebag skin magazines and probably made enough to retire on and to send his daughter, if he has one, to an exclusive convent school.

The ex-Miss America may get one bit part in a TV series, but no longer will the President of the United States, George Bush, and David Letterman care to be seen with her. If she has children, one wonders how they will feel when they learn what she did, as they inevitably will.

Fathers have to tell their children, particularly attractive daughters, things like that.

## Smaller turnout, smarter voting

NOW IS THE time for editorial writers, political scientists, and city clerks to lament the fact that so few voters participate in the electoral process.

The August primary is a traditional yawner and even more so this year. The turnout statewide was about 20 percent. In some communities it was lower.

Wayne County Clerk James Killeen complained that this election continues a trend in the U.S. of low participation in elections — the "loudest voting record in the free world" is how he put it.

I find it disconcerting to disagree with my elders and my betters, but I am not saddened by low voter turnouts. In fact, I think it may be that the fewer voters there are, the better.

HIGH VOTER turnouts only encourage more voting by people who know nothing about the candidates.

The more voters, the more we elect on the basis of some fuzzy perception of the candidate's character or possible effectiveness based on how he or she looks or what political jobs have been performed in the past. Sometimes we know something about the candidates for governor, the U.S. Senate and the state legislature, but how much attention is given to the candidates of those seeking election to circuit court, the county board of commissioners or the community colleges?

Campaigns for most offices on the Wayne and Oakland ballots are based on one premise — if a voter hears a certain



Bob Wisler

name often enough, he might vote for that candidate.

Any public discussion of the issues — if indeed, there are any issues — is ignored by the majority of the voting public. Some informed voters may know how certain candidates stand on some issues, such as tax increases or pro- or anti-abortion. But even informed voters seldom know how opponents for various offices differ in the viewpoints and opinions.

THE CANDIDATES tend to reduce all their beliefs to mumbo-jumbo, saying little in the hopes they won't alienate anyone.

Their statements blur together, and the candidates sound the same. If it weren't for the property tax issues on the ballot, I might have had a hard time getting myself to vote, and I probably knew more about the candidates on my ballot than most of the voters. Even so, I knew practically nothing about the candidates for Wayne Community College and very little about the candidates for Circuit Court. If it weren't for the flyer for Robert Costello I found in a grocery

store parking lot, I wouldn't know anything about him and therefore wouldn't know how inexperienced he was.

THIS BEING a primary election, I had to classify myself a Democrat or a Republican even though I claim to be independent, as do most voters.

I was tempted to vote Republican this time around because I could have a say in more elections. (Voting against Richard Nixon three times and Ronald Reagan once does not make me a registered Democrat.) For example, I could help decide whether loud-mouthed Jim Dunn or Louie Star State Jack Louma would become the Republican challenger to Democratic senator Carl Levin, who didn't need my vote this time around.

There were a host of county officers on the ballot, all Democrats and all unopposed. The only county-wide contest was for drain commissioner and I will bet my next vacation that you can't find one voter in 10,000 who can tell you any difference between how Youngblood conducts the office and how any of the other candidates would, and yet many thousands of voters cast ballots in that particular election and let familiar names of Youngblood won again.

As far as I am concerned it is one more example of why low voter turnouts are better — the chances are greater that a voter might know something about the candidates he chooses to lead his government.