

# Opinion

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WOLF

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## OCC's Roelofs, 66, retires with a bang

I'M GOING to miss Bob Roelofs when he retires June 30 as president of Oakland Community College.

He didn't want to retire. Though 66, he sought an extension of his contract for a year. In a 4-3 vote, the board turned him down.

To a newsman, Roelofs has been a good source. Ask him a straight question and you get a straight answer. He always had a command of the facts. There were never any bureaucratic abstractions or gilding of the lily. Many a time, Roelofs almost wrote his own news stories. All I had to do was sit there and quote him.

Once a steel industry executive, Roelofs took a goal-oriented approach to running a community college with a larger enrollment than most universities. He would establish a goal, such as technical programs, then set up a committee and, in a reasonable spell of time, produce an attractive program.

Roelofs made covering a community college fun. I thought so much of his work that I suggested to the Economic Club of Detroit that they make him a speaker, or at least part of a panel. They should have jumped at the chance. Community colleges have an extremely important role to play in this region's economic redevelopment.

ROELOFS COULD also be a pretty hard-headed Dutchman. He himself would admit it.

He didn't care for boards of trustees. He got unhappy when trustees were quoted too often and too prominently.

They still talk about the Michigan Community College Association convention when Roelofs tangled with Dr. Fred Matthews, board chairman of an out-state college. Matthews thought trustees should run the college and hated the Open Meetings Act with a passion. Roelofs saw a pretty restrictive role for the board of trustees.

Both were wide of the mark. Michigan's traditions, constitution and laws are pre-



Tim Richard

ty emphatic that there shall be a publicly elected board of trustees passing the budget, hiring and evaluating the president, and setting policy.

Roelofs didn't care much for the media generally, although he got along with us. Several times he suggested, through subordinates, that it wasn't really necessary for us to cover all the board of trustees' meetings. Naturally, I didn't follow the suggestion.

AN ANGRY Roelofs, denied an extension of his contract last month, said the board was sending "a message" to the next president that it wanted someone who is "four-sevenths wimp and three-sevenths leader."

I think he made a serious political misjudgment.

The president should have known he lacked the votes to win an extension of his contract. My colleague, Kathy Parrish, had it figured out months ago that a 4-3 board split was unfavorable to Roelofs.

Even if he thought the board was wrong in not giving him one last year to work on the Oakland Technology Park project and groom a couple of possible successors, Roelofs shouldn't have forced the matter to a vote. That should be the real message to any future OCC president — don't fight over a matter where you are sure to lose, particularly with us newspaper hawks watching.

Nobody's perfect and Bob Roelofs has his share of wars. On balance, however, he has given OCC six excellent years in an era when education has been taking it on the chin.



Nick Sharkey

Everyone seemed to have a smile on his or her face. Most had an encouraging word for a struggling novice skier such as myself.

If cross-country skiing sounds attractive, don't delay. Nearby parks offer classes, ski rentals and trails.

Oakland County parks offering skiing include Glen Oaks in Farmington Hills, Springfield Oaks in Davisburg, White Lake Oaks near Pontiac and Independence Oaks near Clarkston. Other parks with skiing are Beech Woods in Southfield and Stony Creek near Rochester.

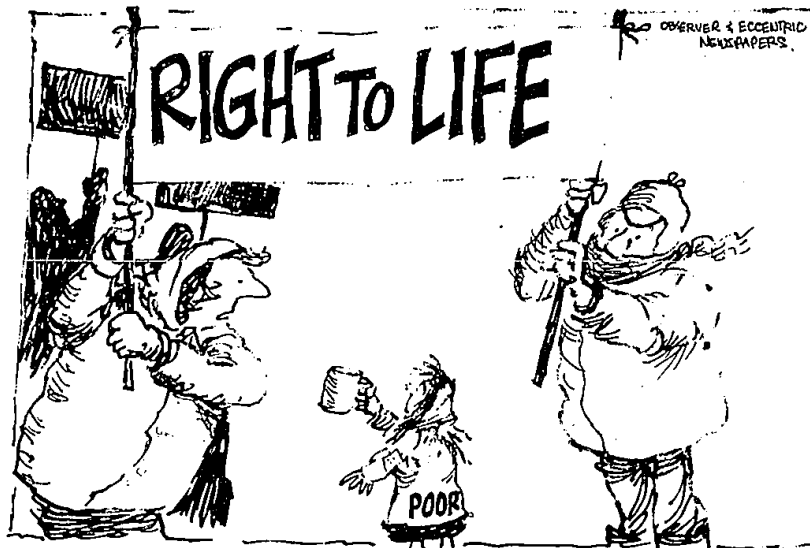
Several sites in Wayne County have cross-country trails including Maybury State Park in Northville Township, Warren Valley Golf Club in Dearborn Heights, Glenhurst Golf Club in Redford and Middle Rouge Parkway (Edward Hines Drive).

Costs vary, but they are reasonable. I paid \$5.50 for two classes and \$5 to rent equipment. Usually, there's no charge to use the cross-country course.

Don't grump about the cold and snow. Get out and enjoy it.



Night ski class on an Eight Mile Road golf course draws all age groups.



'Step aside, you're blocking the demonstration.'

## Pro-Lifers duck problem

SOME THINGS just don't add up in the fight to cut off Medicaid-funded abortions.

Oh, the votes are probably there to block funding, all right. But with all the pious ranting about the sanctity of human life, there has been almost no discussion of how to help those mothers whose babies will be born once state-funded abortion is ended.

The Right-To-Life movement has kept itself busy with craft bazaars at local shopping centers, Christmas card sales and "bowling for babies." That money is being used to cut the cord to what some mothers have found is their only solution to problem pregnancies.

Excising a solution, however flawed it is, doesn't resolve the problem.

THE MOVEMENT claims its political action status exempts it from addressing the problem. So its revenue is spent on 48 billboards in the metropolitan area and television commercials on WJBK TV-2 and WKBD TV-50.

Energy from its volunteers is consumed in the flash and show of an adrenalin-pumping march on Washington, D.C.

Those are all short-term projects. They don't require the time-consuming commitment needed to teach women how to



Sandra Armbruster

deal with sexuality and how to cope once they are pregnant.

One has to go outside the Right-To-Life organization to find people who are making that effort.

Pregnancy Services of Michigan is an umbrella organization for more than 50 centers in the state. In existence since 1973, it operates with a staff of 1,004 volunteers on a meager budget. Private donations, dues and a contract with the state Department of Social Services gave it a 1984 budget of \$48,000 to help the 28,000 women who went through its doors.

THE SITUATION is even more overwhelming in looking at a regional Birthright Center under the Pregnancy Services umbrella. The 24-year-old western Wayne County group numbers 25 women, said president Connie Hutchison. Last year, it helped about 10 women each month — an heroic effort on a \$300 budget.

How is that kind of network going to cope with the 19,430 women who had Medicaid-funded abortions in the state's 1983-84 year?

It costs \$2,000 for a normal delivery, a state DSS spokesman said. Added to that is the cost of \$70 a month in ADC payments for each additional child. DSS also offers an assortment of other services.

ONE SOURCE has placed the cost of raising an urban child for 18 years at \$83,447.

There is no way, however, to estimate the emotional cost of raising children in largely single-parent households. No one from DSS or Birthright is there at 2 a.m. when a kid has a fever. There is no coffee break from the 24-hour-a-day job of a parent.

Those who claim abortion is only a moral, not a financial, issue are dead wrong.

If state funding for abortion is killed, then Right to Life better hit the streets to campaign for more welfare money. Personally helping a single mother wouldn't hurt either.

It's time Pro-Lifers put their money where their morals are.

## First the stove, then Hudson's — now it's goodbye to Vernor's

AS HE SCANNED the front page of the daily prints, a huge lump came up in The Stroller's throat. The headline brought the news that he had lost another friend of long standing. It said:

"Vernor's to Leave Detroit." As he stared at the black type, his mind carried him back to the night more than 60 years ago when he was bidding the neighbors goodbye before heading for Detroit to take a big step along the journalistic highway. In the group was a Mrs. Sandbrook, who had made several trips to Detroit.

She sort of prepared him for the big gamble in his life.

"WHEN YOU get out there, there are several things to see to get acquainted," she said, listing them in order.

"You've got to see the Hudson's store, one of the greatest in the world. Then be sure to take a trip to Belle Isle and see the huge stove at the entrance to the bridge."

"When you have done that, go out Woodward Avenue and see the log cabin that is supposed to mark the city limits."

"Then when evening comes, be sure to take a stroll down Woodward Avenue, al-



the stroller  
W.W. Edgar

most to the river's edge, and stop in at Vernor's for a taste of the ginger ale, the like of which you never have had before."

THE NEXT DAY he landed, and it was anything but a bright day. But before he reported for work at the Detroit Free Press, he had seen Hudson's store and the big stove at the Belle Isle bridge.

That evening at lunch time, he sauntered over to Woodward Avenue to Vernor's for a taste of the famous ginger ale.

Today these landmarks are all gone. Hudson's department store stands like a relic. The wood stove is out at Fort Wayne, crumbling with age. The log cabin has long since passed from the scene at Woodward and Seven Mile. And now Vernor's is leaving. None of the other landmarks of the days when he arrived in De-

troit is left for The Stroller.

Many other landmarks are only memories.

The old City Hall, where many presidential candidates launched their campaigns, is a park. The Majestic Building at Grand Circus Park is gone. The Book Cadillac Hotel is faltering. The Staller is gone. Washington Boulevard, as he saw it on that first day, is a memory.

THE LAST to go — Vernor's — has been in Detroit for 119 years, and it will be missed more than words can tell.

That headline recalled another sight he can't forget.

When he arrived at the Free Press building, which is now the Transportation Building, there were two large holes down the street. He was told one was to be the new Free Press building and the other a new post office. Across the street was a large recreation building, the largest center in the world. Now it's gone.

So is it any wonder that The Stroller gulped a bit the other morning when he read the headline that told him Vernor's was leaving the city where it was born 119 years ago?