

Opinion

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Zoo Society on edge of new life

THE AGING DETROIT ZOO may be on the edge of new life.

That's because the Detroit Zoological Society has taken a major step toward rejuvenating itself — in hiring its first full-time executive director.

The society lured 31-year-old Charles (Chuck) Hammond away from the United Foundation, where he had coordinated volunteer fund-raising activities since 1980.

His job: increasing membership in the Detroit Zoological Society and lining up business and corporate contributions to the zoo itself.

FOLLOWING A study of the Detroit Zoo last spring, we were convinced that the best hope for a revitalized zoo lay in a new governance system — something other than operation and subsidy by the shrinking city of Detroit.

We were further convinced that broader based funding and fund raising were necessary.

The hiring of an executive director for the zoological society could be a first step toward achieving both aims.

A strong, broadly based membership, coupled with grants from companies in the tri-county metropolitan area, might give the zoological society the power it needs to relieve the city of the too-heavy burden of zoo management. It certainly has been a trend around the country.

HAMMOND HAD no comment on a change in zoo governance.

But after five weeks on the job, he said: "The Detroit Zoological Society has to come up with a mission statement in the near future — what we are and what we should be doing."

Short-range plans are to increase membership and increase annual corporate foundation gifts.

He's not talking long-range yet, although a Detroit Zoo Strategic Plan has identified \$55-65-million worth of zoo renovations, including the design and construction of modern exhibits.



Judith Doner Berne

"We have to broaden the base before we can embark on a capital campaign," he said.

Hammond is no stranger to the Detroit Zoo. Now a Millford resident, he grew up in Birmingham, graduated from Seaholm High School and Albion College. He has worked in state politics and public relations.

"Campaigning for funds is very similar to political campaigning," he says.

A LOT OF his time has been spent contacting zoological societies in other cities. One conclusion: "We are in much the same position other zoological societies were six-seven years ago."

The fact that they regrouped and made many of their zoos come alive is a positive sign, Hammond believes.

Another reason for optimism is based on his own experience in fund-raising activities for United Foundation. "Detroit is as generous a community as there is in the country," he said. "That bodes well for us."

Meantime, Hammond is working to launch a spring drive for new Detroit Zoological Society members and to promote the refurbished penguinarium, to which the society gave \$600,000. It opens May 1.

AS WE SAID last May, until a new governance system is in place, we urge zoo lovers to contribute directly to the feeding and care of animals through memberships in the Detroit Zoological Society, PO Box 8327, Royal Oak 48068.

And now that the society is taking a leadership role in the zoo's rebirth, your contribution may prove even more valuable.



New guv will look best in TV clips

THE STATE Republican convention ended Saturday without a clear consensus of who will be the GOP standard bearer in the 1986 campaign to wrest control of state government from the dreaded Democrats.

Oh, there was a lot of talk about whether Wayne County Exec Bill Lucas would be a strong GOP candidate to run against Gov. James Blanchard.

Oakland County Prosecutor Brooks Patterson waltzed around the convention floor, flanked by aides and talking as a would-be candidate talks.

Oakland County Executive Dan Murphy was heard to mumble something about deciding by this summer whether he would try for the brass ring and Muskegon-area Congressman Guy Vander Jaet was seen pressing the flesh and taking the podium.

DELEGATES MERELY expressed their opinions about who might or might not run, and who might or might not beat Blanchard.

But invariably they talked about the wrong things. They talked about what the issues might be in '86, how the national economy might affect Michigan and who had positive name identification.

They missed the boat. They should be talking about who looks good on TV.

It's all right to campaign on issues, record in office and unimportant things like in the lower races that TV isn't interested in. (They are also the races where the candidates can't afford TV commercials.) But when it comes to electing a governor or U.S. senator, the most important question to ask a candidate is, "How do you look on the tube?"

Now, political experts almost always want to over-analyze voter returns for why X beat Y. But watch for yourself, and you'll see that whoever looks good on the tube wins the race.

BY LOOKING good, I don't mean you have to be the handsomest or prettiest, or have the best smile or nose. But I do mean that whoever comes across in the nightly



Bob Wisler

newcast film clips, or in the TV ads, as looking like a take-charge person who is energetic, knowledgeable, articulate and possessed of some attractive features will win the race.

A political writer tells me that Dan Murphy would be the best GOP candidate for governor. I say, "No way — he can't win on TV where it really counts, so he can't win at the polls."

Nothing against Dan Murphy, who has done an excellent job as Oakland County executive — but he's dour. He doesn't smile. He's big, and he'll look bigger on TV. Because of his bulk and his deliberate way of moving and talking, he'll look stiff on the tube. He's 61, and he'll look much older than his opponent. Not good in politics. Uh-uh. I'm afraid that if the GOP really wants to beat Blanchard, they'll have to find somebody who looks better on the nightly follies.

BLANCHARD KNOCKED off a pretty good TV performer, Dick Headee, to get the job. After four years of mastering the medium, the incumbent will be even better. Blanchard looked good before because of his aspiring executive hairstyle — no greys yet — his youthful face and his enthusiasm.

On TV nobody knew he's 5-6 or 5-7, so voters thought he looked forceful and tall. They still don't know how tall he is, and he has become more adept at public speaking. Plus, he had his teeth fixed so there's no gap between the two front teeth.

A lot of people say that if the economy stays strong, Blanchard will be too tough to beat. I say even more important is to keep his teeth fixed and his hair coiffured:

Lent: spreading 'good news'

LENT, THE most solemn time of the year for Christians, began Wednesday. Lent is a period of 40 days of preparation for Easter.

In many churches on Wednesday, ashes were put on the foreheads of parishioners and the words were pronounced, "Repent and believe the good news."

Although Lent has been observed for centuries, practices surrounding it have changed dramatically in the past few years. When I was growing up, the emphasis was on the "repent" portion of Lent. Kids competed to see who could "give up" the most — television, candy, gum, movies.

Adults could only eat one large meal a day. They could not eat between meals. Meat could not be eaten on Friday. No dances or parties could be held.

Lent was a time for penance and self-denial. Today that has changed. Now spreading "the good news" is the important part of Lent. Christians may eat less at a meal, but they will use the money saved to help feed the starving in Ethiopia. Repentance is not enough because Christians must reach out and help others.

LENT IS ONLY part of Christian religious practices which have changed in recent years. Vatican Council II, which met



Nick Sharkey

1962-65, has been responsible for many. Representatives of area Catholic, Protestant and Jewish denominations met on Monday in Livonia for "Twenty Years After . . ." a conference marking the 20th anniversary of the Vatican Council. It was sponsored by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) at St. Aidan Catholic Church.

Although Vatican Council II was held by the Catholic Church, it opened avenues of cooperation among all faiths.

"Vatican II provided the catalyst," said Rabbi A. James Rudin of AJC. "We must continue to build upon it."

The Vatican Council issued a series of documents, including Nostra Aetate ("In Our Age") which rejected the idea of collective Jewish guilt for the crucifixion of Christ and called for mutual respect between Christians and Jews.

"The council reversed a tradition of negative Christian attitudes toward Judaism and paved the way for recent affir-

mations of the enduring spiritual value of Judaism, not just as the background for Christianity, but in its own right," said Judith Banki of AJC.

Participants at Monday's conference in Livonia explored ways that interfaith cooperation among Catholics, Protestants and Jews could be enhanced.

THAT'S A PLEASANT change from when I was a young. I remember when it was believed that if a member of another faith did something, it had to be wrong.

If Protestants read the Bible, Catholics avoided it. If Catholics believed salvation came from "good works," then for Protestants it came through "faith." I remember discussions of what religious denominations would be excluded from heaven.

I will never forget how difficult it was to get permission to attend a friend's wedding because she was getting married, in the church of a different faith.

Thankfully, that nonsense is over. Religions have finally learned that there's more that brings them together than keeps them apart. Feeding the poor of the world is not a Catholic problem, a Lutheran problem or a Jewish problem. It's a problem for all humanity.

It's time to forget petty religious differences as we think about the meaning of the Lenten season.

Detroit has history of shocks

THERE CAN be no denying it was quite a shock when Detroit lost Vermons, Stroth's and the Uniroyal Rubber Co. building on the riverfront within a few weeks. But it was not too surprising. These shocks have been coming to the Detroit area for more than a half-century, and one wonders if they will ever stop.

The first big shock came little more than 50 years ago when Henry Ford, who had started the mass production of his famous Model T car in Highland Park, suddenly moved the entire plant to Dearborn. Highland Park never has been the same.

The first big rush with this mass production of the machine that was going to put the world on wheels came around 1914 when Ford needed workers to build the cars. To get them, he advertised around the country that he would pay \$5 a day for assembly-line workers. It was a pay unheard of, and there was a great rush to the Detroit area.

The rush built the area into a big city, and many of the relatives of these old-timers are still living in the area.

GOING BACK through the yellow pages of history, you will find that the area lost another automobile plant when the Packard plant gave up ship and closed its facility on East Grand Boulevard.



the stroller
W.W.
Edgar

It was a double loss. At the time, the Packard was a rival of the Cadillac. More than that, it was there that the Gold Cup boat motors were built. These were the motors Car Wood used in his Miss America speedboats to win the Harmsworth Trophy.

When these no longer were available and racing rules were changed, Wood gave up. Detroit was denied another thrill each year.

Scattered around the city are other memories of the many economic shocks. One of the great examples is the famed Fisher Building. When the Fisher boys planned the area on West Grand Boulevard, they had hoped to erect a building on each corner.

But the Great Depression of the '30s struck, and three corners were left vacant.

OVER THIS stretch of time, Detroit lost its streetcar system. The Cadillac, the Statler and the Fort Shelby hotels were closed, and they possibly never will be replaced as hotels.

The old City Hall was razed, and the five theaters in the downtown area were lost, along with the Wayne Club. Even the street on which it was built had its name changed.

The railroads were curtailed, and the Michigan Central is only a ghost of the station that used to be; the same with the station at Third and Fort streets.

Woodward Avenue, once a thriving shopping center, is only a ghost of what used to be. Hudson's, Kern's, Crowley's and the other big stores are gone.

SURE, THESE things are shocks when they happen. But they happen. They have been happening for a half-century.

The Detroit Lions made a survey when they were looking for new space and decided to build anew in Pontiac.

Much to their credit, the Detroit Tigers didn't leave the area at Michigan and Trumbull, where the club started in the last century.

But the way things are going, one must ask: What will happen next?