

# Opinion

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## Lend a hand Help out the Goodfellows

**D**ON'T BE fooled by the Farmington area's overall prosperity. It may not rival the pervasive poverty in inner-city ghettos, but lack of food or clothing is more prevalent in Farmington and Farmington Hills than you might imagine.

"Twenty percent of the homes within our 36 square miles are older homes — and that's where the majority of low-income families live," says Dick Tupper, one of the Farmington Area Goodfellows' sparkplugs.

For 40 years, the Goodfellows have helped make the holiday season brighter for needy families. Last year, the big-hearted group of volunteers delivered holiday baskets to 187 needy families and 117 low-income seniors.

So it's easy to justify support for the Goodfellows — hometown spirit boosters around the holiday season. The Goodfellows offer limited emergency assistance throughout the year to victims of fires, illnesses, accidents or layoffs.

**MAKE NO** mistake: There's a genuine need for the kind of old-fashioned help provided by the Goodfellows, who have no trouble dispensing their holiday baskets.

Each "basket of joy" typically contains canned foods and knitwear. Each includes gift certificates redeemable at A&P for perishable foods and at K mart for winter clothing. Toys, games, dolls and children's clothing are included when appropriate.

Family makeup dictates the size and content of each basket. Call names of potential recipients to the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, 474-3440. Potential recipients must document need. Special dietary requests are honored when practical.

How many baskets are made up hinges on how successful the Goodfellows are at rallying support among schools, churches, businesses and individuals.

Cash is welcome, but you may get a warmer feeling by donating something that goes directly to the less fortunate — a canned or dried foods, a winter coat, a homemade toy, a knit scarf, a doll.

**VIRTUALLY ALL** cash contributions are redirected to the community. About

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the only things the Goodfellows have to buy are stamps to mail solicitation letters and boxes to make into baskets.

One of only 30 active members, each Goodfellow must look to an inner motivational spark.

For Tupper, that spark is a heartfelt desire "to keep the community in as good a shape as possible. I just enjoy feeling as if I've helped out the community. It's as simple as that."

Tupper wastes no time in illustrating how strongly the Goodfellows can tug at a person's heartstrings.

As he recounted, "At least three of our members tell of how, while youngsters growing up in Detroit, the Goodfellows really uplifted them at Christmas. So when these people moved to the Farmington area, they just really wanted to be part of that effort."

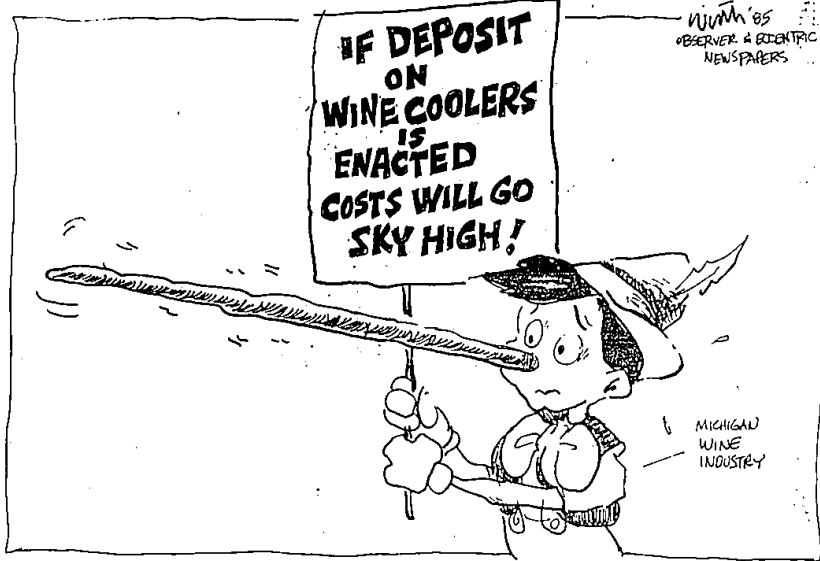
A SURE sign of success is when your effort is copied. And the Goodfellows' cause has proven worth emulating.

Many of the Goodfellows' major corporate contributors have been so deeply touched by the cause that they now deliver their own food baskets, toys or clothing at this time of the year.

Clearly, those of us more fortunate should make it our business to strive to assure no one goes hungry or without winter clothing during the holiday season.

By helping the Farmington Area Goodfellows, you'll undoubtedly be rewarded by knowing their good will helps ease the pangs among the downtrodden.

People helping people — plainly put, that's what the Goodfellows are all about. — **BOB SKLAR**



## If it's public, let 'em in

WHEN YOU go public. It's hard to draw lines.

That's something that cities and towns in the Observer & Eccentric area — and all over the country — have discovered over time. Be it Birmingham or Southfield, Redford or Canton.

It's also something the Society of Professional Journalists, also known as Sigma Delta Chi (SDX), rediscovered at its recent national convention in Phoenix, Ariz.

A splash developed over allowing a cable network known as C-Span to do live coverage of the Walter Cronkite roast poking fun at and honoring the retired CBS anchorman.

Society leaders at first barred C-Span cameras, insisting a roast was a private entertainment event, not meant for blow-by-blow viewing, same as the Gridiron Club roasts in Washington, D.C. Some of the roasters reportedly had objected to doing their stuff live on camera.

They said it was a private "entertainment" event, not a "news event."

**THERE WERE** fears that things would be said that could be embarrassing to Cronkite, the roasters or the Society if aired verbatim. There were concerns that the roasters would tone-down their comments and strip the "show" of its "razzmatazz."

Sound familiar? It should. Ask an O&E reporter who has challenged a public official on closing a meeting or courtroom and they'll tell you they heard arguments that sounded like these.



Only this time. It was coming from the press.

The press needs to pay attention to how it's perceived by the public. It can't afford to practice double standards.

Many of our local towns allow cable companies to televise their meetings. Birmingham, Southfield, Canton and Redford are just a few.

In one case, opening the meetings to the TV cameras came after a heated election-year battle.

**THE IMPORTANT** thing is public access, whether it's a perception or an actual case. The public puts its trust in both the press and its public officials, and both must show it's justified.

Thank goodness SDX came to its senses and opened the roast to the cable cameras.

Ironically, the Cronkite roast was intended to raise funds for the SDX legal defense fund, much of which goes for freedom-of-information cases. It raised \$25,000.

In the end, SDX did the right thing, and hopefully learned something in the process.

If it's public, let 'em in, regardless of whether it's Redford Township, Birmingham, or SDX.

**SPEAKING** of freedom of information and protecting confidential sources, our newspapers have taken a strong position that neither the prosecution nor the defense should be allowed to tie up materials collected in the news gathering process — reporters' notes, broadcast videotapes, outtakes, scripts and film.

This same issue popped up in Circuit Judge Thomas J. Brennan's court in Wayne County when the judge wisely refused to force a Detroit television station to preserve newscasts about a Northville State Hospital psychiatrist accused of having sexual relationships with multiple patients. One of his former patients was Ronald Bailey of Livonia, accused in the kidnap slaying of 13-year-old Shawn Moore.

The doctor's lawyer said the tapes might be needed for the doctor's defense if he's criminally charged.

The television station's lawyer said the doctor's lawyer wants to use the news media as his "own private investigator." He said knowing that every contact with a source might become public could stifle news gathering.

The judge agreed that tying up all that future material could "have a chilling effect on news gathering."  
So do we.

## Wine coolers They prompt lots of litter

**IT'S** THE same, tired, old, wrong argument we're getting from the beverage industry.

This time, it's saying the cost of wine coolers will soar out of sight if the state Liquor Control Commission prohibits throwaway bottles and requires a 10-cent deposit.

Michigan voters wisely ignored the litany in 1976 when they gave 65 percent approval to a ballot proposal to require deposits on pop and beer bottles and cans.

Notice the slippery way Edward Deeb, representing the Associated Food Dealers of Michigan, phoned in last week's testimony to the LCC. "Prices of beer and soft drinks skyrocketed in Michigan after the law took effect."

He gives the impression that the deposit law caused the price increase but doesn't really say so — because it's untrue.

**YES, PRICES** rose here — but they also rose in states that still allow throwaways. Because of internal cost factors, pop and beer prices were bound to rise anyway.

As Michigan United Conservation Clubs, a big promoter of the deposit law in 1976 and now, noted: "Michigan beer prices have since returned to a level that equates with regional and national averages. . . . That initial price boost was little more than an overreaction, particularly by wholesalers, to anticipated costs that never developed."

The industry emitted a two-hour moan to the LCC that handling millions of returnable wine cooler bottles would cost it tens of thousands of dollars.

Well, someone has to pay, and the question is who.

**SHOULD IT** be the suburban homeowner, who picks the useless trash off his lawn every weekend morning?

Should it be the Michigan Department of Transportation, county road commis-

sions and all the parks departments, which have to dissipate their programs to pick up trash? In the last year or two, such agencies have been reporting dramatic increases in litter — most of it due to throwaway wine cooler bottles.

Should it be the farmers, who have to stop their equipment to pick wine cooler bottles out of their fields? Should their cattle suffer by getting glass splinters in their hay?

The wine cooler wholesalers and distributors say, "Hey — not us." And we say: Why not? Who better than the businesses that manufacture and sell it?

Someone must pack and move those returnable bottles. Better that it be done in stores and warehouses — generating another 4,500 jobs the way the 1976 deposit law did — than that trash have to be picked off lawns, roadsides, parks, streams and lakes.

**NO ONE** needs a "scientific" study, as one industry spokesman demanded, to demonstrate with columns of statistics that wine coolers are indeed a source of litter.

But if you like numbers, consider these from the Michigan Department of Transportation: Prior to the deposit law taking effect, beverage litter amounted to 220 bottles and cans per mile of state highway. Afterwards, it dropped to 34 bottles and cans — an 85 percent drop. And two-thirds of the remaining litter were throwaways from other states.

A big caveat from the industry — as if it were important — is that a deposit rule would be so burdensome that the beverage would be taken off the market.

Big deal. Wine coolers have been around only three of the last 10,000 years. We have survived this long without them.

If they're taken off the market, well, mix your own. The formula is wine, citrus juice and carbonated water. — **OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC**

## Bowl games hardly important

**NOW THAT** the college football season is over as far as championships go, one can see how much times have changed.

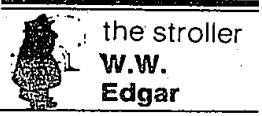
There was an era when there was a single bowl game on New Year's Day. That was the Rose Bowl on the Pacific Coast, and Michigan had a hand in inaugurating it by beating Stanford 49-0.

Now there are at least eight bowl games, and every section of the country is planning an extravaganza for the holidays.

That's fine for those sections. It is a way of calling attention to that area. But it really means nothing to the winner except that schools that have been invited wind up with a bucketful of money.

**FOR INSTANCE**, what is so important about the Cherry Bowl game to be played in the Silverdome?

Neither of the schools invited to send their teams to Pontiac for holidays is high class. They didn't build up a local following during the season. And unless there is a hard sell from here on, there may be plenty of empty seats when the game gets under way.



This is a far cry from the days when the Rose Bowl was alone, and the winner was looked upon as national champion.

Of course, Michigan's victory in the first Rose Bowl meant a great deal. But now the bowls are being overdone. The winner gets little prestige but a lot of money.

Here again Michigan plays an unusual role. The Wolverines must share their "take" with other schools in the Big Ten. True, the money goes to the conference, but all teams share in it. And Michigan State will have to do the same thing.

Of course, there is the angle that boosts the players' part in the games. It is fine for the players who will be able to say that they competed in a bowl game.

**THEN THERE** is a chap like Rich Hewlett of Plymouth. By a quirk of the

rules, he played in five bowl games. And as he looks back now, he says that playing in the Rose Bowl — and winning — was the biggest thrill of his football career.

There is no denying there is some prestige connected with a bowl, but very little beyond the players' feelings.

And it is strange that most players feel that appearing in a bowl is paying a debt to the school. After all, some of them say, the school is helping me with my education and preparing me for the future.

Otherwise, few remember the games.

**WHAT THE** games do, though, is ball attention to the sport and bring tilt-top teams together.

And that would mean a lot more if they were brought together in a tournament to decide a national champion.

Hugh (Duffy) Daugherty, the former Michigan State coach, has been preaching about linking the bowl teams in a little race. Nothing ever came of it.

That's too bad. A little tournament would bring more prestige to the bowl games.

Perhaps some day it will happen.