#### points of view

# Out of balance

#### Proposed budget cuts no joke

"IS HE SERIOUS?"

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That question circulated among news people both in Wayne County and Lansing about Ed McNamara's draconian budget cuts.
The executive said that unless he got more revenue — most likely from a cigarette tax — he would have to close a floor of the jall, cut mental health programs, reduce the parks system to a grasscutting operation and so on.

YES, HE'S serious, said Dan Murphy, the Oakland County executive. Murphy knows budgets, and although he's of the opposite political party, Murphy is an objective thinker who tells it like it is.

"Ed's got 2217 million in his general fund, and I have 1270 million, wayne County has 2.3 million people, and Oakland has 1.1 million,"

ple, and Oakland has 1.1 million," Murphy said. My calculator says that gives Wayne \$94 per resident and Oakland \$245.

\$245.

That's not an apples-and-apples comparison, to be sure. Wayne County doesn't pay for courts, but Oscalland does, Wayne has an indigent health care burden that Oakland doesn't. Wayne's budget figure includes parks, while Oakland parks have a separate budget financed by a separate millage and park entry fees.

But those \$94 and \$245 figures give you an idea of the magnitude of Wayne's problems.

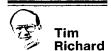
HE'S SERIOUS If you judge by the way McNamara was collaring legislators in the State Capitol. The state Capitol in the lobby the way of the him him has been did not consider the state of the state of

them off.

No stump orator, McNamara is best in one-on-ones and small groups — the exact opposite of his predecessor, Bill Lucas, who loved staged events but skedaddled as soon as anyone asked a question.

Day after day McNamara did this. Susan Heinix, the lonesome Republi-

Susan Heintz, the lonesome Republi-can on the 14-1 Democratic county commission, carried the ball in the



Senate Republican caucus. Heintz never blinked in discussing the seriousness of the budget situation. "Personally I found most of the legislators were very warre of that mental health critic." It's difficult for nutstate legislators to look at Wayne county and say 'this is a problem we really need to solve'. ..." In other words, the facts and logic were coming across. That didn't surprise me. Although he has been in some rough campaigns, McNamara never has indulged in bluffing or bullstinging as no filiceholder — not in the 20 years I've watched him.

A FAIR QUESTION might be:

Why shouldn't the state tell Wayne County to bag it, to go to the voters for a property tax increase Instead of a big hunk of a eigarette tax hike?

Lucas thought about it. The first year or so he was in office, he faced a renewal for another millage and seriously considered asking voters for new money.

Then he dropped the idea like a hot potato. That was about the same time two Democratic state senators were being recalled for voting for a state tax hike.

There have been ideas tossed around about special millages for parks. Or youth programs. Or health care. Or — well, you get the picture. Everyone had a pet project, and no one had a solid idea that had a chance of winning 50 percent plus one of the votes.

And even if Wayne magically developed a county image like Oakland's, a local tax hike couldn't be collected for another year.

Serious? Darn right Ed McNamara is serious.

# Oakland Food Bank eases hunger in midst of plenty

OAKLAND COUNTY — the mecca of Michigan's prosperity.
But all lan't what it seems to be in
this county that dazzles with its
wealth. Didecreated the wealth is
wealth. Didecreated the wealth is
stand up and pay attention during
this holiday season.
Lots of folks in Gakland County
need your help. While those traffic
jams indicate plenty of folks are
going to work each morning, at least
\$5,000 county residents are staying
home—unemployed.
That's a pretty lonesome feeling

That's a pretty lonesome feeling when you know on Christmas morn-ing your kids will go without gifts.

Ing your kids will go without gifts.

This year, 41,000 people in one of the country's wealthiest counties received some form of public assistance. That assistance provides the basics for three weeks out of the month. Folks on assistance are on their own the fourth week. Symbolically, Christmas fails in the fourth week.

THE HIGH cost of housing that you and I might stick our noses up at in middle class defiance, forces many families to spend 50 to 70 percent of their inadequate income on housing instead of the recommended 30 percent.



A house becomes a bleak haven of refuge when living in it takes food out of your children's mouth.

Last year, 38,000 people in Oak-land County received food stamps. Those stamps allowed them to spend \$1.50 a day on food. Think about that. Turkey for Christmas. We're not even talking a fast food hamburger.

But what we are talking is mainutrition.

Sounds bleak. It is bleak — especially when it happens in Michigan's wealthlest county.

cially when it happens in Michigan's wealthlest county.

Sure we know folks are in need in Wayne County. And true the numbers are much more massive. But that's just the problem. Those in more affluent Oakland County tend to be overlooked.

YOU CAN help in a lot of different ways. And if you've got some extra cash you should help. It's easy enough. Plenty of groups exist. Many

cash you should help. It's easy enough.
Plenty of groups exist. Many you've heard about. One you may not.
It's called the Food Bank of Oakland County — an organization inition-made to help the poor who live in Michigan's horn of pienty.
Nationally, the food bank solleits and receives millions of pounds of dumped or destroyed. You know, the kind of stuff that is perfectly edible but falls the test of modern-day marketability. If we don't like the way it books, we won't buy it. So food producers and processors give II away.
The food bank also seeks and secures private and public grants as well as community contributions to aid the effort. Finally, it links up with those who are in need.
Buy yourself a Christmas present. Send a contribution to Food Bank this od Coakland County, P.O. Box 656, 150 Osmun, Fontiac, Mich. 1805.

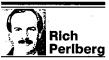
## Any driver who drinks is a potential killer

IF YOU NEED a sobering thought this bollday season, you should have stopped at the MADD vigit in Farmington Hills Monday night. There by the glow of candlelight you could hear recited the names of Oakland County residents who have been killed in accidents caused by drinking drivers.

ing drivers.

These vigils are moving if not al-ways pleasant events. Relatives of those killed usually attend. It is im-possible not to feet their grief. The wound is deep and the scar tissue easily dissolves in the simple emo-tion of hearing name after name of often young beople whose lives end-ed too early and so senselessly.

It was at one of these vigils that what should have been an obvious fact dawned on me. For years as a



weekly newspaper editor I frequent-ly railed against the evil of drunk driving, calling for tough laws and tougher enforcement. It's the type of stuff that makes you feel like a crusading journalist, even though the stand is one that few people can take serious issue with. serious issue with.

FOR ME IT was simply an issue.

The wound is deep and the scar tissue easily dissolves in the simple emotion of hearing name after name of often young people whose lives ended too early and so

that I, too, had been touched by drinking drivers. Probably everyone has.

has.

A good friend of my father, a man who helped him in his early career, was killed in a car accident. The

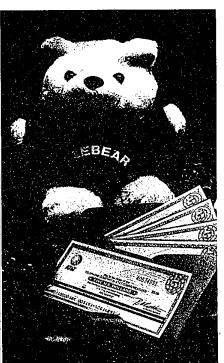
other driver had been drinking. A woman who cared for my grand-parents when they were recuperating from heart alliments was seriously injured in a car accident. The man she was to marry was killed. The driving the other car had been with the seriously injured in a car accident. The man "druk" drivers. It is important that the carrage of the highway not be trivialized by some obscure argument as to how much alcohol must be consumed if the driver it so be considered druk. Tougher laws might make the roads safer, but nothing will help as much as the public realization that any time a driver has been drinking he is a potential killer.

If YOU drink, don't drive. It's a simple as that but most of us miss

the message because, frankly, most of us value the privilege of drinking more than the chance that we will be responsible for a traffic death. The form of the control of t

And then think about ways to put the MADD vigils out of business. That, in fact, would be a joyous occa-sion.

# Give the warmest gift. Get the cuddliest bear.



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When you give someone a gift pack of ATAT Long Distance Gift Certificates, it's like giving them a gift of warm hellos. \$25 worth of long distance calls that let them say hello to the people they love this holiday season.

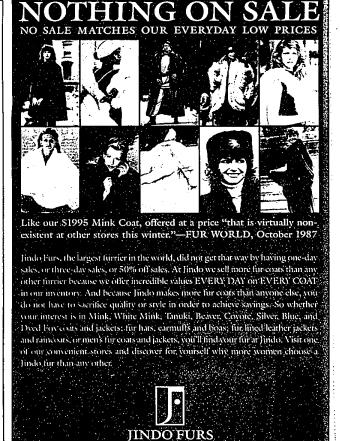
And when you buy two gift packs, you get a cute cuddly bear free.

Each gift pack contains five \$5 certificates, which can be used when paying for all ATAT Long Distance calls.

A gift of warm hellos for the people you love and a cuddly bear for you. What gift could be merrier? Hurry to one of our conveniently located branches. Offer good only

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