# Cast jaundiced eye at vague legalisms

TO LEARN what some Michigan legislators have in mind for public schools, you have to know about Kentucky. Michigan's Constitution requires a "free" system of education, that our Senate Education and House Education committees have reported out different versions of the same idea ... "equal apportunity" for education.

tion.

To hear outstate Senate Republicans and some House Democrats with poor school districts in their ballwicks tell it, this will help Michan avoid Kentucky's fate. It will give our legislators an incentive to fix up inequilable school funding hefore the state is bashed with a lawsit saying our school system stanks because some districts have \$25,00 per child while others have \$8,000.

To hear the Michigan State Cham-

ber of Commerce tell it, such lan-guage invites a lawsult. It would give poor districts a legal tool to ask the court to raid the treasury on their behalf.

I'm with the Chamber of Com-

merce.

ONE YEAR ago this month, the Kentucky Supreme Coart ruled the state's entire public school system unconstitutional. The suit was brought by the Council for Better Education. Inc., a propaganda name for 65 school districts, sewer county boards of education and 22 students. Kentuckiaus realized they had a problem — high dropout rates, low

college attendance, high unemploy-

ment, and so on.

The high court decreed free education, available to all, "adequate" to cover basic skills. So far, so good.

It also decreed uniform education-



al opportunities - substantially equal education.

WHOA! IF Michigan wants to raise the poor districts up from \$2,500 a student to (say) \$3,200, fine. But if some of our suburban communities recruit industry, hold down city services and choose to indulge schools, shouldn't we have that

in fall of 1991. But according to a pamphlet called A Guide to the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990: "The local school board may increase its funds up to an additional 30 percent, subject to the vote of the people."

people."
In other words, while raising the floor for the poor, Kentucky lowers the ceiling for the rest. A lot of us suburbanites say "nuts."

Such rigid, legalistic equality would be a catastrophe in Michigan.

WE HAVE two or three separate conomics in this state. In metro Detroit, we pay an average of 22 percent more for many items than do outstate folks — 55 percent more for nome insurance, 34 percent more for auto repairs, 32 percent more for auto repairs, 32 percent more for auto insurance, and so on.

We also pay 22 percent more for

education. We can't ask our teachers and principals to accept equality with Engadine and Mancelona. But that's what happens when lawyers — frequently economic ignoramuses — tinker with the system at the court level.

KENTUCKIANS ARE paying a dreadful tax price for their reforms. The total bill comes to \$1.15 hillion, which, adjusted for population, which, adjusted for population in Michigan. In other words, a similar outcome in Michigan. In the spending without reducing other state expenses and white knocking down the higher-spending suburban districts. Kenticky legislators levied a cent more on the sales tax, broadened its income base definition and raised business taxes.

Kentucklans are paying a 30-mill school property tax, which is a shade below Michigan's 33 mill average. But it taxes cars as well as homes. And it levies the tax on 100 percent of market value, not Michigan's 50

of market value, ...
percent.

The voices in the wilderness who warned about Kentucky's competitive position in a world economy were shouted down.

The Chamber has the right attitude in custing a jaundleed eye at attempts to install vague legalisms like "equal opportunity" into the Michigan Constitution.

Tim Richard directs the Subur-ban Communications News Ser-vice. SCC is the parent company of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

# Phys ed majors face rough going

BC)

Doyle

are having fewer children. Fewer children mean few teachers are needed.

needed.
Also where students are required to take English, math, science and social studies for three our four years, phs ed may be required for only one year. Therefore a school district needs fewer phys ed teachers for their middle schools and high schools.

ers for their minute schools and nigs schools.

And, unfortunately, if cutbacks in staff occur, clementary art, music and plys ed have traditionally been the first areas cut.

And with the proliferation of athelic events, which now include womens' sports, many schools are hiring part-time coaches who have either jobs.

Many of these part-time coaches played the sport but are not necessarily plys ed majors. Many have degrees in other areas and they are coaches field the first part first part for the coaches field the first part for the coaches field the staff part of the coaches field the but no tringle benefits.

coaching time but no fringe benefits.
Part-time coaches are not neces-

Q: I read where Bo Schembeehler, former University of Michigan fout-ball coach, gave a special graduation speech to the 75 physical education majors who were graduated from U. Misst month, My son wants to be a physical education teacher and a coach, I am concerned about his opportunity for getting a job four-years from new. Are my concerns legitimate?

A. Unfortunately yea.

A simple calculation tells me about 48-50 phys ed majors are graduating this year. My estimate does not take into consideration the juniors who will be seniors next fall, and the sophomores and freshmen presently in the physical education regerans.

orograms.
Petentially, there could be close to .500 of the present phys ed majors tow in colleges graduated and looking for a teaching job by your son's sentor year in college. We don't have enough gymnasiums in the state to accommodate those numbers.

It is not unexpected the college.

accommodate those numbers.

It is not my purpose to bring dom
and gloom to those who wish to
couch and teach physical education.
But somehow, young adults need to
know the fact before committing to
a four-year physical education degree only to find very few physical
education jobs available when they
graduate.
One fact is that today's couples

sarily the best route for an athletic sports program but athletic direc-tors have no choice when there are now twice as many events that need = = Doc  $\langle \cdot , \cdot \rangle$ 

iors have no choice when there are now twice as many events that need coaches.

I taught chemistry, a couple plays de classes and coached varsity basketball early on in my career. I learned than and still belteve in the value of a sound body as part of a sound mind.

Health and physical education programs in sebool districts too often have been after-thoughts and do not receive the recognition they deserve. Our present cultural trend, however, is beginning to appreciate the value of a sound body, Just book at the health spa pienomenon that hansever-taken the country. But they are the country and the support of the country of the country.

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## Recycling mania a bit misguided

THE RECENT round of recycling mania is well-intentioned, but mis-guided.
That's because the emphasis on asving the environment has been placed on us common folk. Many, without question, accept recycling as our burden.

Hut while all this talk continues on

But while all this talk continues on how homeomers must recycle, a question comes to mind:

Who is pushing big companies to change their packaging? Shouldn't our legislators be pushing McDonald's and others who turn out excess packaging to clean up their act?

act?
And if they did, wouldn't that really make the difference that's needed to reduce trash going into garbage dumps?

THIS THOUGHT occurred recent

THIS THOUGHT occurred recent; while spotting the rectangular paper that lined my McDonald's tray. The tray liner showed a beautiful photo of the earth, and information on how McDonald's was doing its part to save the world.

There's probably lots of folks, who upon reading the same message, leave the golden arches with a warm feeling about the place.

But McDonald's puts their burgers in some sort of foam box, which so far nobody has figured out how to recycle.

Kevin Brown

The topper has to be the little recycle logo printed on McDonald's hash brown containers, giving the impression the paper container is made from recycled paper.

WRONG. A printed message near that logo explains that the containes that logo explains that the containes printed on recyclable passes. Targeting the packaging practices of corporate America would seem to for the Plymouth Observer.

Do you feel like a number

e a more far-reaching way to re-uce trash produced here. But the onus is being placed on the

But what about those of us — and

But what about those of us—and there's got to be plenty—who won't take the time to do all this?

You can't make everyone recycle, or expect them to. Thai's sot being negative, it's just recognizing cold, hard reality.

If consumers would get a little more angered with big corporations that over-package their goods, if we'd scream at lawmakers to get on the backs of these corporations, then we would really be doing our part to save the earth.

### know your government

Looking for information about state government? The League of Wumen Voters has a toll-free telephone service (1-800-292-5823) that may be helpful

The league's Critizen Information Center in Lansing offers to help people find out about such things as pending legislation, the state constitution, election laws, voling regulations or fax information.

The telephone is answered from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. week-

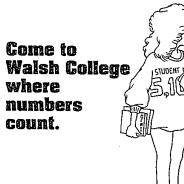


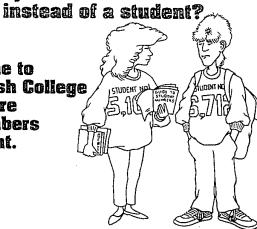
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