

## points of view

## Taking the heat

## Gov. Engler an 'uneasy head' of state

"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

Shakespeare summed it up 300 years ago through the mouth of Henry IV, a king who slept poorly because he was target of a deposition. As pundits noted after the 1990 elections, people blame governors for everything, whether they're to blame or not. Governors are visible. The buck stops there.

Gov. John Engler is getting 100 percent of the blame for "the cuts." So let's just sort out the budgets.

**PLURAL: "BUDGETS."** There are six going on seven:

1. In September, the Legislature

adopted and Blanchard signed the general fund budget.

2. Later Blanchard submitted a "supplemental" budget of nearly \$600 million, 90 percent of it for social services. Republicans said Blanchard had a bad habit of doing that to hide the "bad news." Anyway, it was adopted.

3. After the election, we learned revenues were low by a half-billion. Blanchard, then-Sen. Engler and everyone else agreed to preserve education and cut everything else 9.2 percent.

4 and 5. Engler became governor, discovered spending was a half-billion out of whack and submitted two



Tim Richard

more budget documents: one making transfers, the other an executive order with a quarter-billion in cuts. The transfers actually restored a lot of ADC welfare and mental health spending. Engler preserved programs that got federal aid and would have reduced staff layoffs from 8,000 to 3,000.

Understand this: Engler's budgets never became law because Democrats on the House Appropriations Committee rejected them.

6. Budget No. 3 (supra) goes in effect. Politically, it now becomes the House Democratic budget — with Engler administering it.

7. This revision of No. 6 is to be a compromise and is going through the Legislature now.

**WHO GETS the blame for everything bad?** Engler, of course. He asked for the job, didn't he?

Engler is taking the heat for a lot of ADC cuts he never advocated.

On this page, Engler recently took heat for cutting all 125,000 general assistance grants, including those affecting children. A burn rap. His budget would have cut 90,000 adults off GA but retained grants for households with children. The crown is blamed for what never occurred and what it never advocated.

The arts thing is an awful mess. Engler's plan to "zero out" everything that hadn't been spent (No. 5) was rejected. Meanwhile, the state prudently put a freeze on arts grants until No. 7 is passed.

The biggest single line item in the arts area is the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA). Engler was pilloried by a Detroit paper and his own musical and arts tastes examined via an interview with his ex-wife.

What everyone forgot is that DIA is a department of Detroit city government, its director a mayoral appointment and its budget the responsibility of the mayor and council under the Detroit city charter.

Fault the rest of Engler's arts budget, if you will, but it's patently unfair to pile him over the DIA. The city of Detroit abandoned both the DIA and the Detroit Symphony years ago in favor of having the largest police force per capita in the nation.

In seeking to cut GA and job training, Engler was cutting Democratic programs. In proposing to eliminate the arts pork barrel, however, the governor is alienating his Cranbrook area Republican constituency. He could be a one-term governor.

King Henry IV never was deposed, but he died, worn out, at 47. Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown. **Tim Richard reports on the local implications of state and regional events.**

## from our readers

## About the snow flap

To the editor:

The snow-removal flap is not about safety. It concerns an order to appear in court or be arrested.

The crime a half inch of snow, which had never been considered dangerous before. The court date: Martin Luther King day.

The criminals appeared. The court didn't. The court steps contained a half inch of snow. So did the city-owned side of Grand River.

The protest is about a loose cannon that suddenly goes off like *Frankie's Footlock*, shooting residents while looking for criminals.

Hank Borgman,  
Farmington

## Incineration campaign inappropriate

To the editor:

I have been, and continue to be, greatly disturbed by the actions of our county officials, most particularly our county commissioners. It is no secret that they have decided on a plan to handle our municipal solid waste and that that plan includes an incinerator. It is the feeling of many of us that this incinerator will cost us dearly both in dollars and in health.

Our county in its efforts to bring this plan to fruition, has hired an advertising, communications strategy company (Stone, August, Baker). It is their job to convince us that we really do approve of this plan, including the incinerator. The cost of convincing us will cost us, as taxpayers, \$350,000 plus expenses. Personally, I would much rather have seen our commissioners use that \$350,000 to investigate alternate methods of trash disposal. It could go a long way in providing information on more acceptable solutions.

**I FIND THE county's methods questionable at best.** Do you know that they have advised the municipalities of our county, via the Stone, August, Baker firm, of ways in which they should handle

er/thwart public comment on this issue? I have been victim of this policy and so I speak with first-hand knowledge.

The county commissioners have been adamant in their refusal to listen attentively to the people who will live with the decisions they are making in their behalf.

It has been my experience that the people of Oakland County have been quite capable of controlling the direction of their lives, of making the decisions involved in providing them with the quality of life they desire, and that they continue to possess the qualifications and intellect to continue to do so. The commissioners need not decide for them whether they want to spend approximately \$450,000,000 on an incinerator that in all probability will increase the cost of their monthly trash disposal as well as jeopardize their property values and most certainly their health.

**I ASK THE county now to free the lines of communication — to tell your plan to the cities, townships, and villages of Oakland County and to give us equal time to present what we have learned from the experiences of other cities, townships, and villages in our country as well as in Europe.**

Then let the municipalities vote whether or not they want to become a part of that plan as it stands. Funding, should, of course, be provided by voter approved bonds.

This is a decision that will affect all of the people of Oakland County. All of the people should have access to all of the information available and not only to that provided by the county and the county hired public relations, communications, strategy firm.

And I say hooray to the commissioners who are not blindly following and accepting the county's plan. Hooray to those asking good solid questions and pushing for good, solid answers. Hooray to those who dare to take risks now to benefit their communities in the long term. I applaud you just as I applaud our own Mayor Billie Ireland for seeking a safer path than the one being offered, no pushed, by our county.

Three cheers to you!  
**Iris K. Uhlar**  
Rochester Hills  
Member of HOPE  
Help Oakland Protect the Environment

## War inspires her verse

By Ruthie Rott  
special writer

"A Fine Line in the Sand"  
Take a step, but do not fall,  
— cross it if you shall die,  
Approach it close on hands and knees,  
— watch the children cry,  
Men and women try to help,  
— girls and boys just stay alive,  
A line so fine between the fates,  
— our nation will survive.  
The commencement known the time now past,  
— wait and watch the day,  
An end foreseen, a beginning known,  
— a game that children play,  
The men prepare as soldiers should,  
— while boys sit down and cry,  
The boys go forth as innocent pawns,  
— but only men shall die.  
The scared boys shake and close their eyes,  
— grab on to the soldier's hand,  
For no one knows what lies beyond,  
— the fine line in the sand.

The lights now shine, for night has come,  
— their eyes are open wide,  
The skies full with a brilliant glow,  
— but how many men have died?  
The time has come as we knew it would,  
— our nation has arrived.  
The glowing beams through some waves,  
how many have survived?  
Fixated eyes glare at empty screens,  
— voices deliver the day,  
The truth unknown and misunderstood,  
— a game that people play.  
Morning comes the lights have gone,  
— for now we take a stand,  
The lights have ceased till again we cross,  
— the fine line in the sand.  
The night arrives and once again,  
— lights fall from the sky,  
The target changed, an innocent friend,  
— now the people cry.  
Stand alone, with defense.

— please don't raise your hand,  
The world now torn, by an unseen card,  
— reshuffle the deck in the sand,  
Please don't fight the people cry,  
— continue if you must,  
The bombshell deep, the people shake,  
— places left in dust,  
The some waves and empty screens,  
— transmit throughout the night,  
The shout world, deaf to screams,  
— which nations now will fight?  
And so it goes, the peace has gone,  
— torn apart the land,  
Changed so fast, and blown away,  
just like a grain of sand.

Ruthie Rott, who celebrated her 17th birthday Monday, is a junior at North Farmington High School. "She usually expresses herself in writing when she's moved about something," said her mother, Carol Rott.

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