

Potty parity

Measure could affect Tiger Stadium

BY TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

Rep. Jan Dolan's "potty parity" bill moved with ease through the Senate Commerce Committee Tuesday and will be before the full Senate this week.

"It won't affect the Silverdome or the Michigan Stadium, but it would affect the next Tiger Stadium and future construction," said Dolan, R-Farmington Hills.

Dolan's bill has the effect of requiring seven women's water closets for every five toilets for men in places of public assembly. It would cover theaters, exhibition halls, libraries, sports arenas, restaurants, passenger terminals, grandstands, amusement parks and carnival structures.

Her House Bill 4120 doesn't set the number. That's set by the state construction code, set by an administrative board and approved by a joint legislative committee.

Rather, Dolan's bill requires that local units enforce the state code on toilets rather than giving them the choice of several nationally recognized codes.

"The bill makes sense, unquestionably," said Sen. Gil DiNello, R-Macomb County. "I'm not sure the Legislature should force them. It would seem to me a community would do it (adopt a liberal code) on their own."

"They could. They don't," Dolan replied in a committee hearing.

Lynn Briggs of the Construction Association of Michigan said Dolan's bill is like the law requiring barrier-free design — a local unit can't opt out.

Committee chairman Paul Wartner, R-Portage, asked if the seven to five ratio would be adequate.

"I don't know," replied Briggs. Wartner said there were predictions women would ask the con-

struction code panel for higher ratios for women.

Dolan's bill was passed by the House last year, but died in the Senate. Last month, the House passed it with just two dissenting votes.

The Senate committee approved the bill on a 3 to 0 vote. Sen. William Faust, D-Westland, was absent.

How the two chambers viewed the issue can be told by the committees the bill went through. In the House, it went through the Civil Rights and Women's Issues Committee; in the Senate, through the Commerce Committee.

A Senate Fiscal Agency impact statement said the bill would have no effect on the state budget, but might increase construction costs for private and governmental public buildings.

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BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

Teaching conflict resolution to Serbians and Muslims in Bosnia may seem like a lost cause.

But that's one of the ventures the former chancellor of Oakland Community College is involved in since returning to the United States from the Middle East.

R. Stephen Nicholson, who left OCC in the spring of 1990 to become vice chancellor of technological schools in the United Arab Emirates, returned from the Persian Gulf in September.

The former Farmington Hills resident is currently operating officer for the Institute of Christian Leadership and a member of the board of directors of Mercy Corps International. Both are philanthropic organizations based in Gresham, Ore.

Nicholson and his wife, Carol, live in Gresham, a suburb of Portland.

"We thoroughly enjoyed our stay in the Middle East," Nicholson said in a telephone interview Thursday. "Those were exciting times."

Within months of his arrival in

the Persian Gulf, Iraq invaded Kuwait, kicking off what became the Gulf War. Living a mere 350 miles south of Kuwait, Nicholson was in a good locale to learn about the causes leading to the conflict.

The war accelerated things, Nicholson said. "Because of it, we got to the roots of Arab life very quickly."

As hectic as those days were, Nicholson and his wife said they thoroughly enjoyed them.

"People ask if we're glad to be back in the United States," said Carol Nicholson. "And I say yes. But we loved the Arab world. It's different from the U.S. But different in very good ways."

Nicholson had a three-year contract, which he said was renewable. "But I wanted to do other things," he said. Namely, he wanted to be involved in Mercy Corps and the Christian Leadership Institute.

Mercy Corps is a worldwide organization with a \$30-million budget in 1993, he said. Some of the projects in which he is involved are improving medical facilities in Kazakhstan, part of the former Soviet Union, and intro-

ducing apples as a cash crop for farmers in Honduras.

One of Nicholson's current projects is promoting conflict resolution in Bosnia, where Serbians and Muslims have been involved in a cruel and barbarous civil war for more than a year.

Nicholson dismissed the notion that teaching peaceful conflict resolution between those warring factions might be a lost cause. Someday the shooting will stop, he said.

That's when people of good will can make a difference, he said, particularly if they have a background in negotiating and believe problems can be resolved without bloodshed.

Nicholson and his wife expect to renew acquaintances with some of their old colleagues and friends from OCC later this week at the annual convention of the American Association of Community Colleges in Portland.

The convention begins Wednesday, and OCC will send a contingent including Chancellor Patsy J. Fulton and board members Ann Scott and Richard Bloude.

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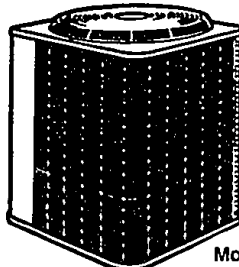
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