

POINTS OF VIEW

2nd Boston Tea Party brewing over taxes

In 1773 our forefathers in bitter frustration dumped tea off British ships in the Boston Harbor. "Taxation without representation" was their cry.

We may soon see the equivalent of the second Boston Tea Party as citizens are upset over their inability to get Congress to change.

In 1773 they protested the fact that the British crown could levy taxes on them while they had no representation or participation in that decision or how the taxes would be spent.

Today there is growing frustration and anger again over how taxes are levied and spent. Theoretically we elect our senators and congressmen and they represent us by voting on tax and spending bills in Congress.

As a practical matter Congress is run by about 25 powerful people who control the majority party and key committees. Since Congress has been dominated by one party for more than 32 years that party has perfected the art of

controlling Congress.

The speaker of the House, for example, controls which committees a Congressman may sit on. Each one would like to sit on a committee which is important to his district or state. However, if Congressmen anger the speaker by voting against bills which he supports they may not receive the committee assignments they want.

Similarly the House Rules Committee sets the rules by which the House may vote on new bills. They can, and often do on important bills, restrict amendments, thus each Congressman must take the whole bill as the committee chairman presented it, or nothing.

The committee chairmen wield immense power. If a congressman will not vote for the bills they are sponsoring, they can chairmen veto legislation important to the congressman's district or not let it out of committee and on to the House floor.

GUEST COLUMNIST



JAMES COLLINS

Thus it boils down to these few powerful people who control Congress. But if they do not act responsibly then the people of their district will not re-elect them, right?

Wrong! In the first place these "career congressmen" usually come from safe districts controlled by their own party.

Take the case of Dan Rostenkowski for example. He has been accused of

padding his own payroll and appropriating government property for his own use.

If he had to stand for re-election nationwide to his House Ways and Means Committee Chairmanship, there is no doubt he would be defeated.

However, Rostenkowski just won the Democratic primary to represent his district again. The mayor of Chicago poured thousands of volunteers into the district to help him in the hotly contested election.

The president made personal appearances on his behalf. Even the Republican governor of Illinois was afraid to oppose him. Why? Because his immense power as chairman of a key committee enables him to bring a lot of money and favors to Chicago and Illinois and deliver big tax bills for the president.

In other words, he brings home the pork.

Thus a relatively few people in one district force on the rest of us a chair-

man of a powerful House taxation committee whom we would defeat in a minute if we had the chance. The same goes for other key committee chairmen and congressional leaders.

Thus this again amounts to "taxation without representation." There is a rising anger that despite what we do the Congress will not change. It keeps raising taxes and appropriating money for pork barrel projects which we would never approve.

What can we do? A balanced budget amendment, term limits and a line item veto would go a long way to remedy some of these problems. We should vote for candidates this fall who support at least that agenda. But if it doesn't change soon then maybe it's time for a second Boston Tea Party.

James E. Collins, who has lived in Farmington Hills for 24 years, is a retired manager for General Motors. He is a former Southfield councilman and planning commissioner.

Help your local schools: Teach respect at home

Question: Several of my teacher friends and I have been in education for more than 25 years. We believe too many students have a total lack of respect for authority today; that it is totally different than it was in the past. Some children's attitudes are terrible. Do you agree? How do they get that way?

Answer: When a child enters a school building in the morning, he/she projects a clear picture of what goes on in the home. Fred Gosman, in his book, "Spoiled Rotten: American Children & How to Change Them," says, "Children used to swear by their parents; now they swear at them." Indeed young children belong on bike pedals, not pedestals.

Yes, I saw the "in your face" student attitudes near the end of my career in education. I now see behavior in supermarkets and in the mall where the child is in total control. It's pitiful! A parent "requesting," over and over again, that a 7-year-old behave in a restaurant. That's disgusting! Who's run-

ning the show, a 7-year-old? Even worse is the parent who continually negotiates what is the appropriate behavior with an 8-year-old. Sad!

This is the start of disrespect for teachers, principals and later on, the police. Teachers and police live with this breakdown of home authority daily. It is the beginning of truancy, drugs and delinquency. You ask, "How do they get that way?"

Having once taught child psychology, I recall some factors that lead to arrogant and unacceptable behavior in school and on to delinquency:

- Start at infancy and give them everything they want. This way the child will grow up believing the world owes him/her a living.
- Make sure the silverware and drinking glasses are clean and sterile but let them read, listen to or watch all the fifth order entertainment moguls are putting out. It will help them bypass the simple joys of childhood.
- Take the child's part against teachers and neighbors. The teacher is probably incompetent and the neighbor



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probably has something in for your little child.

- Have frequent quarrels in front of your children. It adds instability to the home.

- Strike your wife. That's a great role model for future fathers.

- Never give the child any spiritual training. This is old-fashioned. Wait until the children are 21 so they can decide for themselves if there is a God.

- Pick up everything they leave lying around . . . clothes, books, shoes. Do everything for the child so that you don't lose their "love." Be a home slave.

- Give them all their spending money. You don't want them to work as hard as you did to get ahead. This would mean a personal sacrifice of time and energy on their part.

- Rationalize your own behavior when your child gets into real trouble, i.e., "I never could do anything with that child."

Follow the above suggestions and prepare yourself for a life of grief.

From my view, a home is not a total democracy — at least not in the early years. A few simple rules need to be set and then followed through. Any competent classroom teacher, some who deal with 150 bodies a day, understands this basic concept.

Conversely, I've seen teachers who "are afraid of hurting the students' feelings" lose control and are literally chased out of the classroom into another profession.

Yet the home shouldn't be a brutal totalitarian setting. Here we're talking of child abuse, an unconscionable act of a coward.

Other thoughts competent teachers understand and parents should infuse

into their thinking include:

- Popularity is for teens, not parents. Be a responsible father or mother first and always. Respect far exceeds popularity.

- Don't reward mediocrity, cutting the grass should mean cutting all the grass, weed-whipping and edging.

- Don't be compulsively preoccupied with your child's happiness. The world can be cruel and he or she will soon be part of that real world.

Historians point out that the great cultures of the past, i.e. Greece and Rome, experienced a breakdown of the family, then the drugs, the orgies, then crime before dissolving into a couple chapters in our world history books. Great countries peak for about 300 years. We're closing in on that number.

The family will be the determining factor.

James "Doc" Doyle of Northville is a school consultant and a retired school administrator. His Touch-Tone voice mail number is (313) 953-2047, mailbox 1856.

Open our lakes — but keep those boats from speeding

By now, state Sens. Mat Dunaskis, David Honigman and Chris Dingell know what should be done.

The question is whether they'll admit it and do it.

Those three worthies make up a Senate subcommittee investigating (beating up on) the Department of Natural Resources' plans to acquire public boat launch sites on inland lakes. Republicans Dunaskis and Honigman are under special pressure: They hail from Oakland County, where lots of politically sophisticated and well-to-do lakefront property owners pressure them to exclude the great unwashed public.

The theory is that the lakes are "crowded."

The notion is childish. "Crowded" is a function of two things: the number of units and the speed at which they are traveling.

Consider your favorite Main Street or shopping mall at 11 a.m. on Saturday. Count the number of people.

They are traveling at walking speed, rarely more than 3 mph. No one bumps into anyone else.

Now in your mind's eye, put the same number of people into cars traveling 50 mph in the same space. Chaos. A massive smashup with many casualties.

Dozens or hundreds of boats will fit onto a lake when the boats are propelled by oars and paddles.

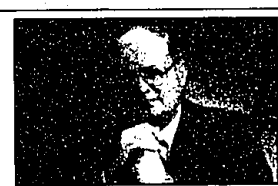
But let a few guys roar around in 100-hp craft, throw in a few jet-skis busing the swimming areas and mucking up the fish spawning grounds, and you have a "crowd."

The lakefront owners' solution is to exclude all boats except theirs — and of course their brothers' and cousins' and bosses' which are docked at their lots.

Well, Dunaskis, Honigman and Dingell now know better. Replying to Honigman's question, a DNR official said townships can:

- Impose speed limits.
- Set shared-time rules — e.g., allow water skiing from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Establish "no wake" zones — to control erosion, allow anglers to fish and let kids swim in peace.

The harsh truth is that most townships lack the gumption to use those tools. Even where there aren't DNR access sites for the grubby



TIM RICHARD

public, townships won't use those tools.

We are witnessing a massive, statewide failure of local government — mainly at the township level.

Instead, they attempt the ridiculous: pass zoning ordinances prohibiting public launches in "residential" areas, then declare the DNR is violating their ordinance.

In reality, a township is a creature of the state. It can't exclude its parent, any more than a bratty 6-year-old can evict mom and dad.

And when greedy riparian (lakefront and riverfront) owners next to road ends use wood piles to illegally block these entrances from their back-lot neighbors, where are the township supervisors?

Honigman once wrote a scholarly essay about such local governmental actions that he should re-read.

In actuality, the DNR is far from converting every inland lake into a Dodge-Em ride. In five years, the DNR has purchased just 15 sites — three a year.

Instead of halting acquisitions, the DNR should spread the load by acquiring access to every lake over a certain size.

As I said at the outset, Dunaskis and Honigman know the only workable solution to "crowding": a state law limiting inland lake boat speeds to what is necessary for water skiing, and limiting water skiing to certain hours of the day.

Will they have the courage to advocate it?

Tim Richard reports on the local implications of state and regional events. His Touch-Tone voice mailbox number is (313) 953-2047, Ext. 1880.

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