**POINTS OF VIEW** 

## Newscaster wrongly indicts all journalists

Arten Pierce did the wrong thing. Then he tried to make it lock right by indicting all journalists. Pierce, a Weat Bloomfield resident, was fixed by Channel 2 last week after it was revealed he had borrowed nearly 100 cars over two years from auto com-phnies, generally driving each for about aweek. phnies, genorally driving each for about aweek. According to Pierce, "What makes a car different from free concert tickets

or a free trip to a major theme park opening or free copies of every book someone wants to promote or movie previews or free sweatshirts? I'm not

"This is the way the system works," "This is the way the system works," he said. "Everybody knows it, and vir-tually every 'personality' and station in

he case against "charter schools" gets stronger and

The heaviest blow yet comes from the Muskegon Chronicle, which pub-lished a two-day expose of Trivalley Academy, a 160-pupi school funded with our tax dollars, and its connection to Holy Trinity Church of God in Christ.

Christ-Mike Walsh wrote the series, dip-ping into federal tax records and Mich-igan Department of Commerce records. I know Walsh personally, having appeared with him at a Freedom of In-formation Act seminar and given him a modest hand on a scholarly paper he what writing. Ho's thorough and thorearch he.

Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers,

vanced the lofty notion of charter schools in a 1988 speech to the Nation-al Press Club. Charter schools, in his

schools operating within the public schools operating within the public school system — even in the same

building. Their purpose was to intro-duce innovation into a hidebound sys-

rs. ad-

trustworthy.

this town has participated in this prac-tice at one time or another." What system is that? Someone who makes a living review-ing new cars would have to drive them to do so, perhaps even for a week at a time. Someone who is reviewing a film would have to see it at a proview screening. Reviewing a book requires acading it — usually bofore it has hit the bookstores. Indeed reputable newspapers, televi-sion and radio stations have guidelines covering how journalists handle the mechanics of covering these kinds of "bents." They also have rules against accept

They also have rules against accept-ing valuable gifts. But Pierce, so far as I know, didn't regularly review new cars as host of

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...... the station's policies, m the inquiry it conducted rmath. ludging fee

council, school board, chamber of com-merce, sports and special events. So you know, the Observer & Eccen-tric has guidelines for its employees re-garding the acceptance of gifts.

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Pierce says he expects to work again and maybe he will as a little sadder but hopefully wiser journalist. I can forgive him a transgression that hurt himself, but not his injury to

the ethical, hard-working journalists I

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## Channel 2's Eyewitness Morning, And, in fact, his use of loances was appar-ently not within the station's policies.

and its aftermath. At worst, Pierce says, he was guilty of bad judgment. Maybe, but he com-



Money going to charter schools benefits church

Now you know why they want to put a screeching halt to public school an-: nual improvement plans and reports. Now you know why Senate Educa-tion Chairman Leon Stille and Stato. Board of Education President Clark" Durant stonewall people who suggest more research is needed on the educa-tional results of charter schools before we public for create more of a hed e rush off to create more of a bad

choose, competitor, new ideas and "stimulate motivation." The lust for money is behind it. Non-public schools have lost pupils faster than the public schools in the last decade. Non-public schools peaked at 11.4 percent of the market share in 1983-85 and were at 10.4 per-cent in 1991-2. They want a state teaching and curriculum standards, so they want to lower the standards. Thanks to Mike Walsh and the *Muskegon Chronicle* for helping uncov-rt the mess. Yet, I suspect Gov. John-er the mess. Yet, J suspect Gov. John-end, despite his eath office office, ap-proves.

Tim Richard reports on the local im-plications of state and regional events.

of the so-called "public school acade-mics" — all, in Oakland County — turned out to be private schools just seeking public funds.

That's a no-no under the Michigan Constitution, which prohibits public funds aid "any private, denominational or other nonpublic" school. No pay-ments. No vouchers. No subsidies. No grants. No loans. No use of public removerly. The update acid of public property. The voters said so.

Walsh unearthed "financial, con-tractual, personal as well as bricks-and-mortar links" between Trivalley and Holy Trinity. Among them:

"The church is the school's landlord, through an intermediate corporation used by the church for its 'secular ministry." This intermediate, COGIC Center, shares the building and even some facilities within it, such as kitchen, gym and multi-purpose room

The church, COGIC Center and Tri-valley academy are physically at-tached under a common roof. Church groups routinely use school facilities, not just after-hours and on weekends, but during the school day when stu-denta are present. dents are present.

COGIC Center shares membership, governing bodies and officers with Holy



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Trinity. The church pastor is founder and board president of Trivalley. His son serves the school as "public rela-

tions director." The son works for a housing corporation operated by Tri-valley's vice president. At least one of Trivalley's teachers At least one of Trivalley's teachers has been paid directly by the church.
Trivalley's far machine is registered to the religious body.
COGIC charges Trivalley \$7.29 a square foot for rent. "The Muskegon Area Intermediate School District, which developed a formula for school rentals, determined an appropriate.
square-footage rate to be \$3.14," said Walah.

There it is: state aid to a church-re-lated school, nepotism, an interlocking directorate, price-gouging.

Now you know why the state Senate and State Board of Education are in such a tizzy to take the cap (now 35) off the number of public school academies.

Now you know why they are in such a mad rush to make curriculum stand-ards voluntary instead of mandatory.

Now you know why they want to low-er teacher certification standards for charter schools. It's not so they can hire Lee Jacocca to teach business. It's so they can employ their pals and rela-tives from the church.



he best avidence of just how far the pollt ical debate has shifted to the right over the past few years can be found in the welfare reform bill that is zipping through the

Michigan Senate this week. Trumpeted by supporters as "the most com-prohensive welfare reform system in the nation," the plan will require all recipients to work — community service or employment-re-lated activity — at least 20 hours a week within 60 days of going on welfare or lose their assist-

ance. Gov. John Engler's rhetoric offers a near-per-fect aummary of the philosophy now dominat-ing most political discussion: "Wolfare reform lifts people out of poverty instead of trapping them in it. We've demonstrated that the best welfare program is a private-sector job. By lim-If ing government, cutting taxes and roducing the burden of regulation, we can create a cli-nate of opportunity that will allow aid recipi-chia to leave the welfare rolls for the payrolls.

Ten years ago, such a proposal would have provoked a firestorm of criticism. No longer. "There is no argument that reform of the wel fare system is needed if we want to accomplish

the goal of a self-sufficient, productive society, me-tooed House Democratic leader Curtis Hor-Even Ann Marston, president of the Michi-

gan League for Human Services (the main ad-vocacy group for welfare and other social pro-grams), could call only for an open public plangrams), co ning process and "a deliberative approach" to changes in entitlement programs that used to be immunized from change, let alone criticism. How come?

First, the facts are fairly clear. Despite many years' expenditure of countiess millions of tax galars on welfare and other support programs, the numbers of the poor, the jobless, the home-less and the teen-aged single parents keep going

ip and up. [It's not a big jump to conclude that there is symething intrinsic (training for dependency?) symething intrinsic (training for dependency?)

spbedded in programs like welfare that piproracly prevents them from achieving their stated purpose. Therefore, say fclks like Engler, state purpose, interiore, say that has mind how drastic or untested these reform might be. And the Democrate, having advocated and Anded such programs for years and years, are be going to cut much ico by arguing that things nd how



would be because i we just spent took more mon-eye (a 1980 spoint of view) or that all the reform that is needed is to tinker around the edges a bit (an entity '908 bromide). . The entire spectrum of debate has moved. And because I believe that there is no one polit-ical orthodoxy that holds true for decade upon decade, regardless of the ways the society and its accommic base have avoided. I believe the ic base have evolved. I believe the its ecor Republic is better for it.

Certainly this does not excuse the Engler ad-ministration of unseemly hasts in driving a very far-reaching welfare reform package through the Legislature with minimum deliberation just to be first to deliver the goods to Washington. A ter all, ambition is what it is, and many vicepresidential nominations have been compound ed out of far flimsier fabric.

In fact, the best evidence of what comes from In ract, the set evidence of what cohes nom softous welfare reform comes from Michigan in 1991, when the Engler administration abruptly tossed some 80,000 edults of general assistance on the theory that this would motivate them to find work: "Two years later, according to a study by the University of Michigan, only 20 percent a state of the bar ed

by the University of Michigan, only 20 percent had steady jobs, and another 37 percent had found informal work like raking leaves. The underlying political reality is certainly that it's good public policy to require those on welfare to work, while the stubborn fact remains wellate to work, while the studeout act commi-that the only way to get a job good enough to support a family is to get some serious skille. Doing this is neither cheap nor quick nor easy Nor will you find much about skills in the pack-age now making its way to Washington. But that's why, after some years, today's orthodoxy will itself be outmoded and ready for

its own dose of reform.



## thing. Now you know what's behind this.

