

In Our Opinion . . .

Freedom Of Information Cases: A Newsman's Exasperation -- and Joy

Whether a newsman works in Farmington or Washington or Timbuctoo one kind of story he reads in the other fellow's paper is the "freedom of information" case.

We were intrigued, for example, by the clam-up of the Space Agency after the deaths of the three Apollo astronauts and the aggressiveness of the New York Times in interviewing engineers on-the-scene, who gave accounts of the deaths that were radically different from their superiors.

The Defense Department's information policies have received so much attention that even a substantial group of non-journalists take an interest in them. They are, indeed, a political issue.

Sometimes news blackouts become a legal issue. A case in point is the Chicago Tribune's fight against the judge handling the trial of Richard F. Speck, accused slayer of eight student nurses. The Tribune Co. is seeking an Illinois Supreme Court writ setting aside as unconstitutional Judge Herbert C. Paschen's guidelines.

Tax Obstructionists Try A Flimsy Tactic

The "agin'ers" — those people in Michigan politics who are opposed to practically everything — are getting a little sharper. Not much. Just a little.

Last weekend at the Republican State Convention, they came up with a proposed substitute resolution on fiscal reform. After a few pious words about Gov. Romney's proposal, they insisted that any tax reform program go on the ballot.

The "agin'ers" want to look as if they're champions of democracy. The truth of the matter is that they're dead set against fiscal reform. Their tactic will be to try to get the matter on the ballot and try to beat it with a storm of fear propaganda. It's easy to beat something with a negative campaign, a lot harder than achieving logical tax reform.

Well, if the opposition crowd is opposed to Romney's tax reform plans, that's their privilege; we disagree, but we can't cuss them for it. We can, however, cuss them for trying to wrap their negativity in a pious cloak of seeking a referendum. These people are obstructionists. Let's not forget it.

One of the guidelines, the Tribune points out, is a ban on sketches or drawings within the courtroom premises of anyone participating in the trial. Newspeople agree that it's bad to have cameras clicking and flashbulbs popping during a trial, but only a pettifogging legalist could see harm in sketches. "The Tribune's politics aside, we're rooting for them this time."

USUALLY, however, freedom of information cases aren't quite so dramatic, at least on the local level. They tend rather to be exasperating.

For example, you ask a village clerk for the names of candidates who have filed nominating petitions. The clerk declines and doesn't want to "release" the names until after a certain date. You could raise Cain and go to court, because the petitions are a matter of public record. Instead you try gentle persuasion. It takes time, but it works.

For example, you go to a township board meeting, where a complicated matter involving statistics is discussed. Enough copies of the report are made for the township board members only. After the meeting, even those copies disappear quickly. If you want a copy to put in the paper, you have to make a special trip back next day or go see Joe Blow somewhere. You wonder if it's worth the bother, if the readers will appreciate it when they get done reading the Cub Scout news.

You go to a member of a governing board and ask him his views on an upcoming policy matter. He tells you innocent things freely, but when he starts letting his hair down and telling how he really feels, he says "off the record."

THAT'S WHAT the most common freedom of information case is like. You generally win or get a favorable compromise, but you go home at night a little tired and get grey a little faster. The public never knows the bother you had to go through to get even a simple story, and you don't bother writing an expose about such a small matter.

As our publisher, Phil Power, put it a few weeks ago, it's "tiring, lonely, sad . . . a little disillusioning. Always it's hard."

And so if you're in the newspaper business, you get your kicks reading about freedom of information cases that are big enough to warrant national attention. And if the newspaper wins, you, too, taste victory.

Educators Urge Fiscal Reform

Petitions were circulated in Farmington area by the various PTA organizations to indicate grass roots support for fiscal reform legislation. They were to be submitted on March 1 to the Michigan legislators in Lansing.

On their Monday evening meeting, the Board of Education also went on record as endorsing fiscal reform efforts, and President Richard Peters suggested that personal letters from the Board members would also be helpful.

Gene Syverson, president of the Farmington Education Association, announced that they too had sent a resolution to

Youth Symphony To Have Soloist

Douglas Marsh, former cellist with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, will be guest soloist at the concert presented by the Livonia Youth Symphony Society at 4 p.m. on Sunday, March 12, in Bentley High School.

Marsh's program will include "Prelude in C Major" by Bach and "Five Pieces in Folk Style" by Schumann. Marsh's son, George, 12, who had studied violin since the second grade, will play a viola and a Beethoven trio with his father and pianist Steve Doane.

Township of Farmington Board Proceedings

The Farmington Township Board held a Regular Meeting on February 13, 1967. Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mr. C. C. Hall, Clerk. Mr. Hall, supported by Skillman, to return Reorganizing No. 2923 to the Planning Commission for reconsideration. The Board requests that a recommendation be made back to the Township Board. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion by Nolan, supported by Skillman, to contract Taubert Sanitation Service for the job of the monthly Township rubbish pickup and also for a Semi-annual pickup at a starting salary of \$1,800 per month. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion by Nolan, supported by Skillman, that the Township Board has declared its intention to proceed with Preliminary Engineering for Water facilities for Supervisor's Plat No. 12, and hereby directs Plat, Iliini and Bond Streets, to be named. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion by Skillman, supported by Nolan, to approve rearrangement of Site Plan of Echo Valley Apartments. Motion approved unanimously.

Consideration of dates for Budget Meeting: February 27, 1967, 7:30 p.m. March 1, 1967 at 9:00 a.m.

Motion by Skillman, supported by Nolan, that the Township Board accept the recommendation of the Planning Commission and reject the rezoning of ten (10) acres of land in NE 1/4, Section 9, T1N, R9E, Farmington Twp., Oakland County, Michigan, centerline of said easement described as beginning at a point on the east line of Oak Point Drive 17 ft. north of the N.W. Corner of Lot 64 of Colony Park No. 2 subdivision as recorded in Oakland Co. records thence N. 30° 02' 26" E 30 ft. more or less to the point of intersection of the centerline of Minnow Pond Drain.

Motion by Nolan, supported by Skillman, that notice of intent be given to amend the rates with the fire department, as submitted by the Oakland Fire Department. These rates include Service Installation and Sewer connection permits. Motion approved unanimously. Mr. Brennan brought up the fact that in order to do this, two ordinances are going to be amended. The ordinance is amended to present Amended Ordinances at the next meeting.

Motion by Cairns, supported by Avery, to approve the names of Frank Karsen and William B. Kelly, members of the General Citizens Youth Guidance Committee of Greater Farmington. Motion approved unanimously.

Mr. Hall mentioned the fact

that a young man will be hired to work in the Assessors Office for full time work and starting March 1, 1967. Motion by Nolan, supported by Skillman, to return Reorganizing No. 2923 to the Planning Commission for reconsideration. The Board requests that a recommendation be made back to the Township Board. Motion approved unanimously.

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In Old Farmington: Grand River Avenue

This is how Grand River one block east of Farmington Rd. looked in 1870 before the big fire of 1872 which destroyed most of the buildings. The large stone structure is Oliver B. Smith's building store, the Farmington Masonic Lodge met on the second floor. Other business places are Mrs. Pierman's Millinery Store, Warren Selsby's Jewelry

Shop, Dr. Woodman's Drug Store, the Dohany building and Jackson's Blacksmith Shop. Some may recognize John Hiler, Ack Northrup, Thomas Hanafon, James I. Wilbur, Ben Arnold, William Kennedy, Uncle Fields and Walker Brown in front of J. N. Power's General Store, which was located next to the foundry on the corner. The picture is from the file of the Ralph Everts.

Legal notice

No. 77,285

STATE OF MICHIGAN
THE PROBATE COURT FOR
THE COUNTY OF OAKLAND
Estate of ADOLPH E. NACKER also known as Adolf Nacker, Deceased.

It is Ordered that on March 28, 1967, at 9 a.m., in the Probate Courtroom Pontiac, Michigan, a hearing be held on the petition of Russell Nacker, Executor, praying for the examination and allowance of his Fourth Account, allowance of fees, and extension of time in which to close the estate.

Publication and service shall be made as provided by Statute and Court Rule.

Dated: February 21, 1967
DONALD E. ADAMS,
Judge of Probate.

Albert P. Herzog, Atty.
2329 Farmington Road
Farmington, Michigan

3-3, 3-12, 3-19

No. 86,493

STATE OF MICHIGAN
THE PROBATE COURT FOR
THE COUNTY OF OAKLAND
Estate of MARY B. KRUEG ER, Deceased.

It is Ordered that on April 11, 1967, at 10 a.m., in the Probate Courtroom Pontiac, Michigan, a hearing be held on the petition of June Lucille Andridge for the admission to probate of an instrument purporting to be the Last Will and Testament of said deceased, and for the granting of administration of the estate, and for the appointment of an Executor.

Motion by Nolan, supported by Skillman, to accept the following easements from Weller Engineering Corp.:

An eighteen ft. easement for storm drainage over and across "Outlet A" of Colony Park, a subdivision of part of the NE 1/4 of Section 9, T1N, R9E, Farmington Twp., Oakland County, Michigan, centerline of said easement described as beginning at a point on the east line of Oak Point Drive 17 ft. north of the N.W. Corner of Lot 64 of Colony Park No. 2 subdivision as recorded in Oakland Co. records thence N. 30° 02' 26" E 30 ft. more or less to the point of intersection of the centerline of Minnow Pond Drain.

An eighteen ft. easement for storm drainage over and across "Outlet 1" of Colony Park, a subdivision of part of the NE 1/4 of Section 9, T1N, R9E, Farmington Twp., Oakland County, Michigan, centerline of said easement described as beginning at a point on the east line of Oak Point Drive 17 ft. north of the N.W. Corner of Lot 64 of Colony Park No. 2 subdivision as recorded in Oakland Co. records thence N. 30° 02' 26" E 30 ft. more or less to the point of intersection of the centerline of Minnow Pond Drain.

Motion by Cairns, supported by Nolan, that notice of intent be given to amend the rates with the fire department, as submitted by the Oakland Fire Department. These rates include Service Installation and Sewer connection permits. Motion approved unanimously. Mr. Brennan brought up the fact that in order to do this, two ordinances are going to be amended. The ordinance is amended to present Amended Ordinances at the next meeting.

Motion by Cairns, supported by Avery, to approve the names of Frank Karsen and William B. Kelly, members of the General Citizens Youth Guidance Committee of Greater Farmington. Motion approved unanimously.

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No. 81,790

STATE OF MICHIGAN
THE PROBATE COURT FOR
THE COUNTY OF OAKLAND
Estate of JOSEPH HAROLD BRODEL also known as JOSEPH H. BRODEL and JOSEPH BRODEL, Deceased.

It is Ordered that on May 15, 1967, at 9 a.m., in the Probate Courtroom Pontiac, Michigan, a hearing be held at which all creditors of said estate are required to prove their claims and to file such a writing and under oath, with this Court, and serve a copy upon Margaret B. Kelly, also known as Margaret Kelly, Executrix, 19446 Pierson, Detroit, Michigan.

Publication and service shall be made as provided by Statute and Court Rule.

Dated: February 21, 1967
DONALD E. ADAMS,
Judge of Probate.

Albert P. Herzog, Atty.
2329 Farmington Road
Farmington, Michigan

3-3, 3-12, 3-19

Looking Back in the Files

5 YEARS AGO

10 YEARS AGO

15 YEARS AGO

MARCH 8, 1962
New at Plaza

MARCH 7, 1967
Permanent Lease

MARCH 6, 1952

The Farmington Savings and Loan Association has announced plans for a new \$300,000 building to be constructed in the Farmington Plaza and will be ready for occupancy by July.

Pool-Rink Out
The study made by City Manager John Dinson on the costs involved in providing a municipal swimming and athletic skating rink, which was presented and aired by the planning commission recently deemed the undertaking far too costly.

Airport Criticized
The County Board of Supervisors' recent action in rejecting the \$300,710 in surplus from the general fund for the purchase of land for a proposed airport in the northern portion of the county came in for some sharp criticism at the Farmington City Council meeting Monday night.

Flight Tax
The fight against county-city income tax proposals which have been made and are being pushed by Detroit and Wayne County is now gaining strength. Taking an active part in this fight is City of Farmington Mayor Robert Lindbert.

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