

13 The Observer

Gouge On Fuel Prices Now And You Lose Customers

Mark it in your memos of things to remember in the future when you have time to reflect on happenings of the past: The operators of gasoline stations in this area will have more to do with keeping cars off the roads than any other single group.

Why do we say this? Well, if the experience of the past weekend is any indication of the future, then the price of gasoline will be raised to astronomical heights by money-hungry service station owners who appear to be taking advantage of a situation.

When the price of petrol rises to highs never heard of in these United States, then it is our belief that more and more motorists will put their cars in the garage and make only those trips absolutely necessary.

We can't help but rap those owners who raised prices as much as four cents a gallon Saturday with the full realization that thousands of car owners would drive in for fillups knowing that perhaps all stations would be closed from Saturday at 9 p.m. until midnight Sunday.

For instance we drove into a friendly station at the intersection of Beech and Five Mile Roads in Redford Township and dis-

covered prices had gone up three cents and we were paying 50 cents a gallon for the first time since we first started driving back during the depression days of the '30s.

It wasn't so much the price that bothered us as the fact that we passed numerous other pumps on our trip to the east side and discovered that practically all had the same prices as on Friday.

Mind you, we're not accusing the station operator of gouging, but it does seem strange that his prices had gone up while others had not. These things one learns after he has ordered the tank filled and then looked around to discover how much he had to pay.

Drivers are in a rather captive position these days. They have to use gasoline to operate their cars, which are absolutely necessary for their respective occupations, and it follows they have to pay whatever prices the pumps show.

What is especially irritating is to have the attendant point out that he can't afford to buy gasoline at this station. He knows of an independent a few miles away who is offering gasoline at 13 cents less a gallon.

To make things more binding, he pointed

out that the "gas" worked just as well in his small car as the regular at the higher priced stations.

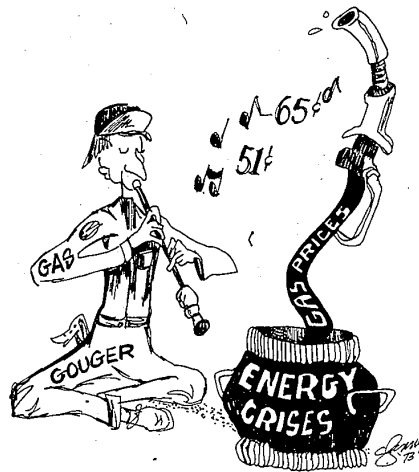
The situation was much the same in other major brand operations in Farmington, Plymouth, Garden City and Southfield where we had an opportunity to check while driving around.

It doesn't make any difference whether it is the station operator who gains most by the price boost or the major brand supplier. The fact remains that price gouging is something that always happens in time of shortages.

Then follow black market operations with the prices even higher and a general feeling the public is being taken and taken good by this kind of action.

If the gasoline stations follow the request of President Nixon, they will close on Sundays, if they follow the thinking of a much harassed buying public, they should close on Saturdays also. Motorists will put up with gouging on one Saturday, but this is a case of where lightning won't strike twice. A customer hit once won't come back for a second crack unless he lacks good sense or has more money than he needs. Very few of us fit either of the categories.

STOP THE MUSIC!



No Woman Is Forced To Have An Abortion

EDITOR:

This is in response to Mrs. R. Jones of Livonia who feels abortion advertising is disgraceful. Hopefully, she and others who may share her views will read this.

First, there is no comparison between the destruction of people in wars and saving a woman the burden of carrying an unwanted pregnancy. We are not advertising murder. We are trying to stress that children should be wanted; children should be planned for and therefore loved.

Life is very rough, especially if a child is raised by parents - or more likely a parent - who does not want him. No hugs... no kisses... no love. Isn't that a bleak future? Perhaps this child would even be seen in the hospital emergency rooms bearing the marks of child abuse.

We advertise in your paper as a concerned, non-profit organization which hopes to educate women in the facts of birth control and offer counseling on the aspects of abortion, the pros and cons. The decision to have an abortion is the woman's to make. No one is forced to have an abortion against her will.

Do you know that we have girls as young as 12, victims of either rape or ignorance? How can a child raise a child correctly? Our hope and desire are to maintain, operate and manage our service with general acceptance. Our basic aim is to offer every woman seeking to terminate her pregnancy safe, compassionate and humane treatment - with empathy.

MARLENE MENDOZA
Head Counselor
Women's Advisory Center
Livonia

Politicians
Fear Reform

EDITOR:

I agree wholeheartedly with Gov. Milliken's Oct. 25 message to the Legislature on the need for "Ethics and Election Reform." But the governor and the Legislature have given only lip service so far in fulfilling those promises. Why?

Twenty-two states have already enacted important reform statutes during the past year, but Michigan is not among them. This indicates that our Lansing political leaders in both parties are not yet willing to push for specific reform.

It will require the combined efforts of concerned citizens, supported by responsible news media and citizen lobbying groups such as Common Cause, to make reform a reality.

The reform proposals need to be free of loopholes and include the following:

1. An open meetings bill applying to all levels of government, with adequate ad-

READERS' FORUM

Please type (or write clearly) and limit letters to 300 words.

• Letters must be signed, with the writer's address. Names will be withheld only at the writer's request and for good cause.
• The editor reserves the right to reject unsuitable letters.

vance public notice. Exemptions should only be allowed to discuss hiring or firing specific personnel or purchase of specific real estate property.

2. A lobby disclosure bill requiring all lobbyists and their employers to register and disclose, on a quarterly basis, ALL expenditures in excess of \$10. It should prohibit a lobbyist from giving any gift to a public official, his staff or family.

3. A campaign finance bill involving multiple pre-election disclosures of contributions and expenditures to a centralized agency as well as post-election disclosures, and place a limit on individual contributions and limit total campaign expenditures for each elected office.

4. A conflict of interest and public disclosures bill providing for public disclosure of any economic interest, gift or benefit received by a public official. It should clearly define what constitutes improper conduct and establish a comprehensive code of ethics.

5. All the above bills should be vigorously enforced by a new, independent commission. Private citizens should be given legal standing to sue to insure full compliance with these reform statutes.

If responsible citizens write to Gov. Milliken and their legislators immediately - if every local civic and political group uses its next meeting to ask its members to contact the governor and their state legislators - if our newspapers, TV and radio become responsibly involved in demanding these reforms, then Michigan can receive a uniquely valuable Christmas gift in 1973: An effective political reform package to ensure honest and ethical standards of governmental conduct in the coming years.

SUSAN RENNELS
Common Cause Coordinator
Farmington Hills

Flat Schools

Guzzle Fuel

EDITOR:

It seems very strange now to hear certain school administrators say that because of oil and fuel shortages, schools will have to be shut for parts of this winter.

Where were these administrators when many of these

schools were being built? Where were words saying it takes a lot more fuel to heat a building, that's flattened over acres of property?

I do remember when those who advocated some schools to be built at least two stories were told they didn't know anything about school construction and they did. Heat loss is greatest through roof areas, and some of our schools are nothing but roofs with very little underneath.

Let's hear it, school boards! Tell us taxpayers how you built fuel guzzlers, long halls between buildings, large glass areas, no plantings of any kind that will help break up the windy gales of winter against bare walls - just plain poor planning and construction. Let's hear it. We are all entitled to your story of why schools will be closed because of a fuel shortage.

W. MARTYNOW
Livonia

Young Woman Meets Bias

EDITOR:

I'd like to express my feelings toward all the rude apartment managers who have expressed their feelings toward me.

I am a 19-year-old, single working girl and have been looking for an apartment for six months. I have called every ad in the newspaper and have gone to every apartment building in Livonia and the surrounding areas. So far, all I've received are people hanging up the phone on me or slamming doors in my face. I feel that I am being discriminated against because of my age and my marital status.

These landlords seem to think that anyone under the age of 25 and not married is a wild troublemaker. I'm sure this is because they have run into problems with singles before, but I'm also quite sure that just as many "adults" have caused problems.

I'd like to suggest that apartment owners advertising in the paper specify "only adults over 25 need apply" if that is their preference.

I hope this letter will encourage the apartment owners to look at each person as an individual and not a stereotype.

JOYCE PERRY
Livonia



By Philip H. Power
Publisher

Trying to figure out what to do for the family during the holiday season? Looking for something not too expensive yet elegant? Hoping that you'll benefit a good cause, and simultaneously give yourself a tax deduction at year-end? Searching for something wholesome, suitable for the entire family, and free of the tinsel of commercialism?

Try taking in the Max Davey Christmas show, "Another Night To Remember," at 8 p.m. this Friday in Ford Auditorium.

Specially put together for the entire family, the concert will feature show tunes on the first half of the program and a selection of Christmas songs on the second half. The concert will feature guest star Calvin Martin, of Metropolitan Opera fame, together with the Max Davey Singers and Orchestra.

The concert is being given as a benefit for the Farmington Community Center. Tickets are \$5 each, and the cost may be treated as a tax-deductible, charitable contribution to the Community Center when you make out your income tax.

Tickets may be ordered by calling or dropping in at the center, 24705 Farmington Road, between 10 and 11 Mile Roads.

So why is this particular fund-raising event so important, what is the stock

OBSERVATION POINT

For Tax-Deductible Fun

market going to pieces and everyone's holiday calendar getting filled up?

The reasons have a lot to do with the development and flowering of the suburbs in these parts.

When many years ago the Goodenough family donated their historic home to the Farmington community, the hope formed that it could be used as a focal point for activities and social events throughout the entire community. Time passed, innumerable hours were spent,

countless volunteers worked, and - amazingly, in the eyes of some - the center grew and flourished.

Community groups needing space met there. Brides and grooms held receptions there. Housewives wanting to sharpen up their sewing skills took classes there. Literally thousands of people use the center each month, and the demand keeps growing.

The Farmington Community Center has truly become

community, one that offers a focal point for the everyday lives of people living there and a constant reminder that those who accuse the suburbs of being sterile and rootless are just plain wrong.

Success has had its costs, though. Center Board Chairman Bob Amori points out. The main reason for the benefit is to help meet expenses the center had to assume for new rugs, wiring, expanded parking, because so many people are now using the facility on a regular basis.

Amori and his board hope the benefit concert can become a regular event, partly because it is so appropriate at this time of year and partly because if the center is to keep offering the kind of programs a growing area needs, it will require continued community support.

It's a worthwhile project, and it signifies the kind of development that makes the suburbs a good place to live. Hope you can make it.

What Richard writes

Parks Watchdogs Needed

Five months ago, the political types on the Wayne County Board of Commissioners were making loud noises about how the five-county Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority was spending its park funds.

There was talk of a court suit to change HCMA's board to something resembling a "one-man, one-vote" basis; there was even some chatter about withholding the property taxes HCMA is supposed to get.

After all the blaring noises, Wayne County Board Chairman Robert FitzPatrick and his troops settled for a rather bland watchdog effort over HCMA. It instructed one committee to review HCMA's spending plans and release tax revenues on a quarterly basis.

There's probably little county commissioners can do about it. The people voted HCMA those taxes, and the county commissioners themselves could wind up as defendants in a lawsuit if they really try to withhold those park funds.

Moreover, Wayne County government itself is vulnerable to the same kind of charges. Commissioner Catherine Shavers (D-Detroit), in voting against the budget, noted that all county parks are in the suburbs with none whatsoever in the city of Detroit.

Nevertheless, the Wayne County board still deserves credit for keeping the heat on HCMA. Someone is at least watchdogging an agency which has no direct responsibility to the voters.

The reasons Wayne County is sore at HCMA are even more important today than they were five months ago. HCMA had announced plans for three Kensington-sized metroparks in the hinterlands of the region. The most controversial, Mill Creek, was to be at the western edge of Washtenaw County.

We have since found ourselves in a critical fuel shortage. Prices are bumping 50 cents a gallon. Sunday closings of gasoline stations are imminent. Even if President Nixon gets his way, it will be seven years before the U.S. achieves energy independence. Even then, Americans may never again have fuel to burn the way they did until 1972.

Last week we learned that southeast Michigan now has a static population; all we're doing is shifting around the same group of people - not growing. As SEMCOG Director James Trainor put it: "Can we afford to perpetuate the traditional policy of unchecked growth, or is it less costly to renew the communities in which most of us live?"

Wayne County commissioners, however, shouldn't be watchdogging HCMA alone. The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments has a duty to perform. That duty is more than simply advising for or against federal and state grants for HCMA metroparks.

Rather, SEMCOG's clear role is to make HCMA's leaders give an accounting of their stewardship. HCMA's entire policy needs to be debated, publicly and under controlled conditions.

In the process, we can all give closer attention to SEMCOG's staff plan for an "inner ring" of parks closer to the heavily populated area than Kensington or Stony Creek. We might even see if there's merit to HCMA's attempting to pump money into Detroit's Belle Isle without actually taking it over - a Wayne County proposal.

Most important, a SEMCOG debate would mean that Oakland, Macomb, Washtenaw and Livingston counties would have something to say about HCMA's park policies. Wayne County alone wouldn't be applying all the political muscle to HCMA.

Editorial & Opinion

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