

editorial opinion

Blow for credibility

Members of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners have raised an interesting issue, and it deserves more than passing thought from county taxpayers who wonder exactly where all the money goes each year. Briefly, the commissioners have suggested the county tax allocation board be abolished and the county tax-rates be frozen this year at their 1973 levels.

The eight-man county tax allocation board meets each spring to split the 15 mills each taxpayer is assessed. Typically, about eight or nine mills end up going to local school districts, with the remainder going to the county's intermediate school district, county government itself and townships. Inevitably, none is satisfied with the share, and, due to the character of the budgeting system and the hidden nature of the tax, each sees it as a relatively painless way for the particular agency to boost revenue through inflated budgets.

Now, however, the county commission wants to end what one school official calls a "40-year-old...tribunal dance" by

having the allocation board vote itself out of existence through a public ballot. Tax rates would be frozen, and the people would vote on new rates each year, according to the plan.

THIS ALTERNATIVE to the yearly allocation battle, makes excellent sense. For the first time, local units of government would have to make a realistic assessment of their financial needs for the year and prepare a budget accordingly. They would no longer be tempted to inflate what are called "preliminary budgets."

Secondly, the proposal to freeze present allocations would not prevent the tax rates from increasing, remaining the same or decreasing should the taxpayers vote for a change in rates. This would put county government in the position of having to justify beforehand any change in its millage needs, a position every city council, township board and board of education knows only too well.

Government would gain credibility and accountability through the abolition of the tax allocation board.

Jackie Klein writes

She isn't Brenda Starr

Do you remember Brenda Starr of the flaming red hair, the London Fog trench coat and the hot leads that ended in blazing headlines and broke up a ring of cat burglars?

Ah, Brenda, star reporter, I remember you well. You were a comic strip fantasy, the dream of every aspiring girl journalist. You were a figment of a science fiction writer's imagination. You were never meant to be real.

Brenda, let me tell it to you like it is. Some P.R. guy calls to take you to lunch at a Chinese restaurant and he bends your ear like a fortune cookie.

You sit there taking notes while glumpling chicken chow mein that is turning to cold Chinese Elmer's glue. Your notebook is stained with Oolong tea. Your fortune cookie says you will soon be making a large expenditure.

The P.R. guy takes off and you're stuck with the bill and egg drop soup all over your face. I kid you not, Brenda. It happened to me.

Don't go away, Brenda, there's more. Just imagine you're covering a ground breaking of a multi-million dollar corporation.

STATE LEGISLATORS, county commissioners, the mayor, the city

council, bankers and the corporation big wheels are all spiffed up ready to pose for pictures complete with genuine gold shovels.

The photographer doesn't show. It starts pouring like crazy. Your best wash and wear dress is shrinking into a mini-skirt. Your living bra is dying and your \$9 hair-do is drooping like the witch of the north's.

The crowd dashes to their Cadillacs and all float away just as the photographer shows up. What do you get? You get a picture of a big hole in the ground and pneumonia.

Are you ready for this one? You interview a colorful character for two hours. He tells you, "Don't quote me on the controversial stuff. It's a.k. to write about the deer I caught and mounted and my antique spoon collection. But you better let me read it first before you put it in the paper."

You're working on deadline and a big court case is breaking. You call the law firm of Cold, Callous and Calculating.

The secretary interrogates you for 15 minutes and then informs you "Cold" is in conference, "Calculating" broke his leg skiing, and "Cal-

lous" just this minute stepped out of the office.

So you call the court in Pontiac. The judge is in chambers and his clerk hasn't the foggiest notion about the case. Your big scoop makes front pages - in the competing newspaper.

BRENDA, my dear, things just aren't the way they used to be when you were dashing off stories while enemy shells exploded all around you.

Did you know that a report prepared by the American Society of News Editors committee said the public in 1973 condemned the press as "the messenger of ill tidings?"

The committee is also urging increased dialog with legal profession. Did the committee members ever try getting a hold of "Cold," "Callous," and "Calculating?"

Legislators are talking about limiting media criticism of public figures and forcing the press to reveal sources. My new lead will be, "Guess what public figure told what news reporter he stuffs deer and collects spoons?"

Brenda, burn your trench coat and thank your lucky stars you were only a cartoon.

Dan McCosh writes

Beards separate men, boys

Stroking one's clean-shaven chin, one wonders these days about the alarming state of hairlessness in Farmington.

The "Brothers of the Brush" are few in number, three weeks or so ahead of any Johnny-grow-lateries.

Growing a beard to celebrate the town sesquicentennial is separating the men from the men.

ON ONE SIDE are people like John Anhalt, square-jawed, and proprietor of the town's oldest inn. A natural, for sure, who would probably look something like Abe Lincoln, particularly when splitting firewood to keep behind the door.

Instead, the chairman of the 150th celebration, who gives his all for the cause, rapidly changes the subject when the beard subject is broached.

On the other side is someone like Farmington Councilman John Richardson, who got furry early, and then took off out of town for a couple of weeks, presumably to get through the "uglies" which plague early beard-growers.

"It itched, so I shaved it off," lamely stated Richard

Tupper, who faces his constituents at the same city council, bare-chinned.

William Flattery, president of the Chamber of Commerce, ought to set an example. He works in a bank, though, and one can probably forgive someone who needs to maintain an image of solidity and reliability.

BUT ON THE OTHER hand, Ed Baldwin, who manages the Downtown Center, bravely disappeared behind a hedge-like growth, and he meets the public as much as anybody.

About 10 years ago, a beard-growing contest attracted a couple of dozen entries, when the town was about a quarter the size.

The excuses are legion. Abbie Hoffman ruined it for everybody.

It itches. I've got to meet the public. My wife...

Anyone who accuses this column of hypocrisy in addressing this issue will be met with all of the above excuses.

But how about everybody else?

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CROWLEY'S

Beautiful things remind me of Mother

Remind your mother of your love and appreciation with a beautiful item from our fine collection of mother's day gifts. Find them at Crowley's Livonia Mall, Farmington, Birmingham and Westborn Center stores.

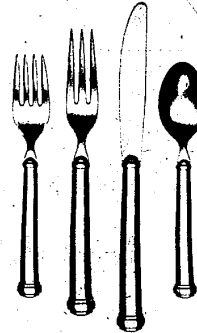


"JUST FLOWERS" BY MIKASA

A delicate floral pattern is done on fine bone china. It's from a complete line of dinnerware and serving accessories also available. China (#5). 3 pc. setting, \$17.50

PEWTER HANDLED "OCTETTE" BY GORHAM

Elegantly casual "Octette" reflects a classic yet contemporary design. Additional place setting pieces \$7.50 each, serving spoons and forks, \$10. 4 pc. setting, \$30



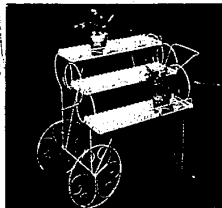
MUSICAL BIRDS BY GORHAM

Bring mother the sound of sweet music with hummingbird, robin, canary, dove or owl accent pieces. Each one plays a different tune. Home Accessories (#35) Single birds, \$12.50 double birds, \$15



3 TIER PLANT AND FLOWER CART

Surprise mom with a place to show off all her plants. It stands 25 1/2" high, 27" long. With three trays of white painted metal. Home Accessories (#35), \$13



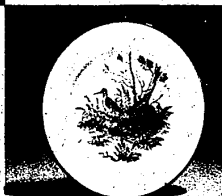
STERLING SILVER RINGS BY WALLACE

Expandable rings are done in five striking patterns to match Wallace flatware patterns. Golden Agean Weave, Grand Baroque, Rose-pointe, Romance of the Sea or Grand Colonial Silverware (#65). Each set is \$10.95



BAVARIAN DESSERT PLATE SETS

An elegant way to surprise mom is with a six plate set of assorted birds with green bonds, assorted fruit with gold bonds or with assorted florals with gold bonds. \$14 to \$16 Set



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Michigan at Quaker Drive 7 Mile & Middlebelt 200 North Woodward 12 Mile & Farmington Rd

