

# editorial opinion

## Support mass transit

DASH is packed, while the "senior special" is empty. A car pool is empty and the major bus line says it is hurting for riders.

Ever since the price of gasoline skyrocketed and the availability declined, public officials have been re-studying the whole issue of mass transit.

Local efforts have been mixed.

A car pool was started by the City of Farmington Hills, as an experiment.

Not enough people applied to fill the first car.

At the other end of the success scale, a limited-service bus ride to the Ford Motor complex in Dearborn is filled with regular commuters.

Farmington's "senior special", a 50 cent ride for the elderly, generated the most surprising reaction.

Despite the apparent bargain, and even with the service extended to business hours, five days a week, few riders are taking advantage.

The regular bus service downtown on the DSR is also lacking riders.

THE ISSUE of mass transit is not a new one.

When the old Winery building was still a powerhouse for the interurban cars which used to run to downtown Detroit, a declining interest in mass transit was evident.

When the cars stopped running, officials said the main riders were DUR employees, taking the train to work.

The local officials are to be applauded for their efforts at unraveling the complex issue of public transportation.

The sporadic successes and apparent failures indicate both a need and an interest in public transportation.

But the cost must be competitive, and the need must be greater than the discomfort of waiting outside for a bus or taxi.

If people are really interested in public transportation, greater use of the services being provided would be a "yes" vote for improved service.

Agencies such as the Southeast Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) are looking for priorities for bus routes, and the local agencies are making attempts to provide service.

Now is the time to voice interest if the service is to be improved.

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## Eccentricities

by HANK HOGAN



## A political court

"The supreme court shall consist of seven justices elected at non-partisan elections as provided by law. . . . Nomination for justices of the supreme court shall be in the manner prescribed by law." So says Section 2 of Article VI of the Michigan Constitution.

Anyone reading this would presume that politics have nothing to do with selecting our supreme court justices.

The best man should be able to present himself to the voters and be elected based on his ability, rather than whether he is a Democrat, Republican or Independent.

The itch is the words "as provided by law" and "in the manner prescribed by law."

THE STATE legislature in its wisdom has provided by law that supreme court justices be nominated by partisan political conventions.

This coming August the Republicans and Democrats will each nominate two candidates for this office at their regular convention.

This is slightly ridiculous for a non-partisan election.

It was worse before the Constitution of 1963. Justices use to have to go back to political parties for re-nomination after serving their term. This was like asking a judge to tell them how much he had done for the party while he was on the bench.

NOW AT LEAST the Constitution provides that incumbent justices need only file an affidavit of candidacy to be eligible to appear on the ballot.

Under the present system how does a good lawyer or good lower court judge get nominated to the supreme court if he is politically independent.

Up to two years ago it was virtually impossible until justice Charles Levin figured out how to start his own political party and have it nominate him.

The Constitution is quite specific that politics should have no place in selecting justices. The legislature has thwarted this by legislation.

As long as the people who have elected these legislators allow this to continue, the Michigan Supreme Court will continue to be a political rather than a legal court.

## Observation Point

by PHILIP H. POWER



Economics has been called the dismal science, and certainly it has never been more dismal than it is right now.

We seem to have the worst of both worlds, what with inflation and unemployment both pushing into the double digit figures in this area.

The University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research quarterly survey of consumer attitudes noted this month "the most dramatic decline in consumer attitudes during more than 25 years of quarterly surveys." Inflation and unemployment, coupled with fears of increases in both, were cited by ISR economists as the biggest factors in the deterioration of consumer confidence.

HAVING INFLATION and unemployment at the same time is something that's not supposed to happen, since the classical cure for inflation is a dose of unemployment which cuts consumer demand and thereby reduces upward pressures on prices.

But it is the law of this land ever since the Full Employment Act of 1946 that the policy of the government shall be to do everything possible to promote full employment. So a government contemplating unemployment as a cure for a bad case of inflation would actually be violating the law.

The other cure for inflation is supposed to be a tax increase, which also reduces demand by taking money out of consumers' pockets. But there are two problems with this method of curbing inflation: 1) No politician, in an election year, has

enough guts to vote for a tax increase; 2) the mechanisms of the legislative branch are so clumsy and stagnant that by the time a tax bill finally is enacted into law, the economic situation is different and the tax change (whatever it might be) is exactly wrong for the situation at the time.

Some politicians, of course, are running around now saying that a tax cut is just what is needed. I suggest you ask them exactly how this will stop inflation, and then get ready for a good laugh.

WHAT WE'VE got now, with rising unemployment and inflation, is called "stagflation." It's not a pleasant thing to endure, and no one is certain just how to cure it.

What certainly is not helping is the recent inflation in the Detroit area of radio and TV commercials by those friendly oil companies who brought you the recent price increases (Marathon comes particularly to mind). These ads tell us in the most arrogant way possible that it's a good thing that gas prices are up and that if we were more intelligent we'd have realized that long ago.

I don't mind being insulted, and I guess I've gotten used to paying higher prices for most things. But when somebody puts the two together as an utterance of corporate policy and then tells me I ought to like it, I start to get sore.

But then, like stagflation, it's the blending together of things that ought not to fit, and in these dismal times I suppose it's only appropriate.

## From our readers

### Attacks editorial

To the Editor:

It was very disturbing to read the recent Observer & Eccentric editorial giving unqualified endorsement to the kind of attack on welfare fraud currently being waged by L. Brooks Patterson, prosecuting attorney of Oakland County. Welfare fraud is a subject that troubles everyone; the taxpayers, social workers and others dedicated to helping and serving the poor and certainly the majority of honest welfare recipients who bear the brunt of public criticism and stigma of "Welfare cheaters."

Seeking 100,000 signatures to present to the state legislature in support of improving the welfare system is like signing up in support of motherhood; a meaningless gesture unless the kind of reform proposed is thorough and faces up to the real problems in the system.

If the Observer & Eccentric truly wishes to "speak to the problem or its solution," it will support investigation and prosecution of welfare fraud by the state, not by private contractors, landlords, doctors, etc., who cheat the taxpayers and recipients out of far more dollars than dishonest recipients. But this category of cheats is noted vaguely in only one of Mr. Patterson's 53 "problems" regarding fraud.

The Observer & Eccentric will also support reform for caseworkers given huge unworkable caseloads, and total reform of a welfare system steeped in red tape and complicated regulations that invite and encourage error and fraud.

INVESTIGATION of the kinds of reform Mr. Patterson urges would reveal many of his proposals would add additional layers of procedure at tremendous cost to the taxpayers with little predictable success in solving the problems, while adding hardships and indignities for the recipients.

The Observer & Eccentric and all citizens interested in honesty in the welfare system must ask if we are being honest when welfare recipients young and old are given less than half the amount the U.S.

Bureau of Labor says it is necessary for a family to live on.

And does our concern for honesty force us to look within ourselves to the \$24 billion lost annually through uncollected income tax revenues (many times the welfare budget)?

The piecemeal "reform" urged by Mr. Patterson ignores fundamental flaws in the welfare system that result in the manifestations of cheating on which he capitalizes.

Many procedural changes in the system that he suggests were instituted by the Department of HEW even before his report was published—even though he publicly takes credit for their implementation. But all such patchwork attempts are fooling the public into thinking welfare reform is simple or close-at-hand.

The doubling of the welfare budget in wealthy Oakland County over the past five years does not "indicate a significant increase in fraud or error" as the editorial suggests, but rather increased economic and social pressures on the poor that make them increasingly dependent on the state to survive.

During these five years the cost of living has increased 50 percent, the Department of Agriculture indicates the poor man's food budget increased 23 percent in the past year alone.

THE GAP between rich and poor has not narrowed during these five years nor has the scandalously inadequate housing situation for low income families in Oakland County (or elsewhere) been dealt with.

Jobs are scarcer for the unskilled and even though the median income rises nationally and affluence abounds in Oakland County, the poor get poorer—in Oakland County too.

These are the reasons for increased welfare costs and serious attempts to deal with these costs will have to include facing these other issues in preference to the fragmented approach to welfare recipient cheating encouraged by Mr. Patterson and the Observer & Eccentric editorial.

Marguerite Kowalewski  
Farmington  
April 18, 1974

### A day to remember

To the Editor:

On this day, April 24 in 1915, the Turkish government began to solve the so-called "Armenian Question" by exterminating well over two million Armenian men, women and children, constituting the first genocide of the 20th century.

The details, however ugly, have been well-documented as historical fact, yet every Turkish government, including the present one, has denied this.

Authorities like Toynbee, J. Lepsius and Howard Sachar have dedicated volumes to the Turkish atrocities on the Armenians. As a result of the massacres, hundreds of thousands of Armenians were orphaned and dispersed throughout the world.

Americans still recall the expression "starving Armenians." The Armenian community of Detroit numbers over 25,000, while there are close to 400,000 Armenians in the United States.

NOW IT IS learned that the U. N. Commission on Human Rights discussing a report compiled by the Sub-commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities has voted in favor of a request by Turkey to strike out from the study any reference to the massacres of Armenian people as being "the first genocide of the 20th century."

Mr. Osman Olcay, the Turkish representative to the United States asked, on March 6, that the reference to the massacres of Armenians be deleted because the arguments are one-sided and tendentious.

The blood of over two million Armenians is certainly one-sided and as for being tendentious, why do the Turks question the cause for human dignity?

The request by Turkey was supported by the United States, Pakistan, Italy, France, Iraq, Nigeria, India, Austria, Ecuador, Iran and Rumania.

On this day, April 24, Armenians all over the world will pray together. It is a time for remembering. Many will march to demonstrate peacefully that our his-

toric lands in Turkey lie empty and that our monuments decay under Turkish indifference.

THE TURKISH government continually refuses to admit to the planned elimination of its Armenian population in 1915. The Armenian provinces of Turkey are wasting.

A united Armenian homeland remains a dream. April 24, Mar's Day, is a day for prayer and for action.

Justice for an entire people demands it.

Lorne Shirinian  
Southfield  
April 19, 1974

### Welfare supported

To the Editor:

In response to your call to abolish welfare abuses in Oakland County, there are certain misrepresentations in your editorial of April 11 which we feel compelled to answer.

The whole welfare system needs overhauling. But the only recommendations Mr. Patterson has offered concentrate on welfare cheaters and the increasing cost of the welfare budget.

Your editorial concluded that "welfare payments this year in Oakland County will total 70 million dollars, a figure nearly double similar expenses in 1969."

This does not take into account the fact that the cost of living in general, increased enormously since 1969.

Your editorial also does not take into account that the state of Michigan has been experiencing skyrocketing unemployment figures.

ALTHOUGH IT is true we are one of the wealthiest counties in the nation, the fact remains that Oakland County has large pockets of extreme poverty and has had for many years.

We agree that welfare costs have risen, but we disagree that fraud or error are the only causes of increasing costs.

Specific figures confirming the points we make in this letter can be easily obtained by your editorial staff from a report of the City-

zens Advisory Committee which was established by our own Oakland County Department of Social Service and funded by U.C.S.

Our organization has long been involved in the poverty scene, providing volunteers in Head Start, Wics, Jobs Corps and as members of Community Action Boards.

Our Human Services Department, after intensive study, feels a deep concern in bringing about a reform in the welfare system that will be equitable to the taxpayers, but will also protect and respect the rights and dignity of the recipient and provide at least the minimum national standard of living for every individual.

Beryl Winkelman  
President  
Greater Detroit Section  
National Council of Jewish Women

April 17, 1974

### Deteriorating

To the Editor:

Who's responsible for the deteriorating condition of Green Road in West Bloomfield Township?

When contacting the township, one is told that it is an Oakland County road and it is the road commission's responsibility to maintain it — which they do, by leveling it every week, no matter what condition the weather or the road is in. One wonders how much taxpayer's money has been wasted by this operation over the past years in contrast to paying the road and putting in proper drainage.

Or does the responsibility belong to the builders who were granted permits by the township to engineer and develop the land west and north of Green Road? Trees were cut down and the natural contour of the land ignored, causing erosion, land washouts, and debris to pour into Green Road each time it rains or snows.

Is it possible that the township officials are in agreement with the builders when they allow them to leave a subdivision with building materials, trash and polluted water from inadequate drains and sewers in the subdivision to be washed out on Green Road?

WHERE IS the anti-litter sign which forbid West Bloomfield citizens from throwing trash, debris and junk on the vacant land along the east and west sides of Green Road? Did the builders bulldoze it away?

What happened to the owners whose property and basements were damaged from the mud, erosion and trash, which continues to pour into the inadequate drains and overflows? Have the builders compensated the owners for this destruction or do they continue to make promises?

It is past time for those responsible for the deteriorating conditions and the subsequent damage of Green Road and the surrounding properties to take action and correct the mistakes.

If these conditions are allowed to continue, it will become increasingly dangerous for drivers using Green Road when the road is wet and slippery in winter, not to mention the dust from the traffic in dry weather. The pollution and debris in the drainage system creates an unhealthy environment for all of its residents with an over abundance of rats — evidenced this past winter.

G. Ratliff  
5282 Hardwoods Drive  
West Bloomfield  
April 16, 1974

### Got a raise

To the Editor:

Citizens in Oakland County should be aware that, after turning down the salary increases for some 60-odd administrative people, a majority of the county board of commissioners (after jockeying around—much of it unknown to the public) voted just about the same increases as the Personnel Practices Committee proposed in the first instance.

I ask what good it is for a citizen or a group of citizens to protest these increases? No wonder citizens don't participate in county board decision making.

John H. King  
5430 Longmeadow  
Bloomfield Hills  
April 16, 1974