

editorial opinion

Respect opinion difference

A comment heard recently in the midst of a heated argument over a zoning controversy was "I think it's just like Watergate — it's part of the same kind of attitude."

In this over-generalized phrase is voiced an eroding confidence in government in general.

While the moral climate of the country is being questioned by many Americans, and to a good effect, one sometimes feels the "spillover" is splashing a bit too far.

Perhaps those people with real griipes against "city hall," wherever it may be, should consider a couple of rules of keeping it a clean fight.

There is nothing unethical about representing a special interest, group or even (shudder) big business.

What is unethical for a politician is con-

cealing exactly which special interest he represents. Deciding whether or not a politician represents your interest ought to be the main consideration at the polls.

A TYPICAL CASE in point is zoning, always a touchy subject. Often a councilman enters "public hearings" with a mind firmly made up.

This kind of stand is irritating to a homeowner opposed to a particular project, and is just cause to vote against the individual in the future.

But it is unwarranted to carry a justifiable difference of opinion to the extreme of accusations of criminal conduct, bribes, etc.—rhetoric which flies without substantiation easily these days.

One should not have to agree with a politician, or even vote for him, to respect an honest difference of opinion.

Cycle safety for young and old

Once again we are in the midst of that time of year when bicyclists are coming out of winter hibernation and already are showing signs of making things rough for motorists on high traffic freeways.

Conservative estimates indicate there are more than three million bicycles in Michigan and that by 1975 there will be more bicycles than motor vehicles on the roads. These same forecasts predict 1974 will be one of the biggest years in the bicycle business due to the energy crisis and especially the gasoline shortage.

Just to add another element to a traffic problem that is already big enough, we have daylight saving time this year which we didn't at this time a year ago.

NOT MANY YEARS ago motorists had to be on the alert for youngsters and teens on bikes. That situation has changed in the past two or three summers, and now there are nearly as many adults astride the two-wheelers as the younger set.

And would you believe it? The older bicyclists don't follow laws and safety rules governing bikes any more than the youngsters.

It doesn't make any difference whether you are driving along a highway in Southfield, Farmington, Garden City or Westland or along Schoolcraft Road through Redford Township, Livonia and Plymouth Township or on Hines Parkway as it winds through Westland, Livonia, Plymouth city and township (and into Northville Township and city — the story is the same: Keep an eye out for bicyclists.

Like motorists, cyclists must obey motor vehicle laws. First and perhaps most important, and the one most violated, is that the bike rider must ride WITH traffic on highways, not against it, as so many parents are prone to instruct their children.

Statistics from the Michigan State Safety Commission show that more than 30 persons lost their lives in motor vehicle — bicycle accidents in 1972, and personal injury accidents increased sharply. The bicyclist was found to be at fault in more than 50 per cent of the cases.

Thus, some of the Michigan laws affecting bicyclists should be repeated. Remember the same caution for motorists applies to cyclists: "The life you save may be your own."

FOLLOWING ARE some of the state laws that bicyclists should be aware of and should follow to the letter:

1. You must ride with the flow of traffic, on the right side of the road.

2. You must ride as near to the right side of the roadway as practicable.

3. Bicyclists must not ride more than two side by side at any time on any public streets.

4. Whenever a usable path has been provided, the law requires bicyclists to use them instead of the streets.

5. You are not allowed on limited access highways such as expressways.

6. Sidewalk riding is against the law in some communities but legal in others. Check all communities you plan to go through before making trips.

7. Where sidewalk riding is permitted, bicyclists must yield right-of-way to pedestrians. When approaching pedestrians, the cyclists must signal, using the required horn or bell.

8. You must come to a complete stop at all stop signs and red or yellow traffic lights. It also is necessary to obey all yield signs.

9. Use hand signals. Bicyclists are required to signal their intentions, just like motorists.

10. It's against the law to "hitch" a tow by holding on to a moving vehicle.

11. It is dangerous and illegal to ride between lanes of traffic, even to pass slow moving cars. On two-way streets, cyclists must pass on the left of vehicles moving in the same direction. On one-way streets, cyclists should use an unoccupied lane.

12. When a rider gets off his bike to walk, he becomes a pedestrian. Where no sidewalks are available, he must walk his bike facing traffic.

13. Bikes are generally for one person only. It is illegal to ride anyone on handlebars or cross bar.

14. At night, bicycles must have an attached head lamp which will shine at least 500 feet ahead and a red reflector must be attached to the rear of the bike.

If you are a bicyclist, then you should digest these rules and regulations. If you do, chances are you won't encounter any trouble this year. If you don't, then be prepared to run into some difficulties with the men in blue.

After all, with more than three million bikes on the streets and highways this spring and summer, the police have to enforce the laws for the protection of all.

From our readers

Why no delivery?

To the Editor:

I read the article about Mrs. Wilke and the mail box situation on West 10 Mile west of Inkster and I was very interested. I noticed that mail is delivered on both sides of 10 Mile between Middlebelt and Orchard Lake Road so why not between Middlebelt and Inkster?

Ten Mile has a lot of fast traffic. I know because we live on the north side and we have to cross the road to get our mail and it is very hazardous for us older citizens. I presume you have heard about the

quick and the dead, you sure have to be quick or be dead picking up the mail.

I do hope the postal people will see the light.

Mildred Musselman
Farmington Hills
May 8, 1974

Thanks

To the Editor:

The Farmington Optimist Club members express their sincere thanks and appreciation for everything you have done to obtain transportation for the three inner-

city members of the Farmington Phantoms track and field team and your efforts in producing the articles and pictures which have appeared in The Farmington Observer & Eccentric.

These articles have helped greatly to promote public interest in the team and have been instrumental in inspiring the team to greater achievement for success in the Michigan Wheelchair Games at Wayne State University on May 10th and 11th.

Art Pusey
Vice-President
Farmington Optimist Club
May 5, 1974

HENRY M. HOGAN, JR., Co-Publisher
PHILIP H. POWER, Co-Publisher

DUANE P. ROSENTHAL, General Manager
R. T. THOMPSON, Executive Editor
NICK SHARKEY, Managing Editor
ARTHUR SHAFER, Sales and Marketing Manager

Member of
MICHIGAN PRESS ASSOCIATION
SUBURBAN NEWSPAPERS OF AMERICA
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

Eccentricities

by HANK HOGAN



What is the largest state in combined land and water area east of the Mississippi?

What state ranks seventh in population?

What state has the headquarters of all automobile companies in the United States and produces more motor vehicles than any state, by far?

What state ranks first in cereal preparations, public-building furniture, non-ferrous castings such as magnesium, zinc and lead castings, hardware for motor vehicles, furniture, buildings and conveyors?

What state has the largest number of winter sports centers?

What state has more than 11,000 inland lakes and more than 36,000 miles of streams?

WHAT STATE has the largest commercial deposit of native copper in the world?

What state has the largest limestone quarry?

What state is the nation's top salt producer?

What state has a greater variety of minerals — metallic and non-metallic — than any comparably sized area in the world?

What state was the first to provide in its Constitution for the establishment of public libraries?

Look about you

What state started the first land-grant college? What state has the first state university established by vote of the people through their Constitution?

WHAT STATE has the longest fresh-water shoreline?

In what state are there locks through which more tonnage passes in an eight-month navigation season than through the Panama Canal in a normal year?

In what state are you never more than six miles from a lake or a stream?

What state was the first to guarantee every child the right to tax-paid high school education?

WHAT STATE leads the nation in the production of red tart cherries, dry edible beans, blueberries, cucumbers for pickles, gladiolus bulbs, eastern white winter wheat and hot-house rhubarb?

The answer to each of these questions and many similar ones is, our own Michigan.

Next week is Michigan Week.

"Si quaeris peninsulam amoenam circumspice." If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you.

Observation Point

by PHILIP H. POWER



He laughed last

Freeways and the automobile made the suburbs possible, but it was their educational systems which enabled them to grow and prosper. For if the kids in the city families had money to live in one place and work in another, it was the excellence of the suburban system that gave them a powerful impetus to move.

And when the history of the suburbs in Detroit is finally written, I suspect that in addition to the anecdotes about the early city fathers and aggressive land developers, we will find the influence of school people — subtle, shadowy, yet always pervasive. Indeed, I have a notion that one of the key factors in determining whether a particular suburb grew and prospered was the quality of the school system.

This column is about one of the schoolmen who made these suburbs: Roland Upton, "Ron" to nearly everybody who knew him for more than five decades, who retired at the end of June as Superintendent of the Livonia Schools.

BUT THIS is also about one of the most remarkable men I have ever met, one filled with wit and wisdom, so driven by good will and dedication to children, that when he walks into a room you have the feeling that the ceiling has risen by about six inches.

He worked for the Livonia school system for more than a decade, as a superintendent and business manager who ran a \$40 million plus operation with an iron hand, as a labor negotiator who could hang tough right down to the strike deadline and afterward retain the respect and even affection of the union leadership, as a politician who deployed teachers and parents in unceasing and Maciavelian maneuvers to get millages passed, as a visionary who urged building an auditorium in Livonia to make the city the national center for performing theater arts for children.

In the sea of gray, colorless school officials who inhabit our state, he was an outsize, blazing splash of color.

One day after the school rules on hair length

were relaxed and he was getting much heat from one of the coaches, Upton bought a shoulder length black wig. He put it on, buzzed for the suburban coach to come into his office, whirled around on his chair, and grinned "Get the point?" at the startled and crestfallen man.

He went to Chicago on a convention with some members of the school board. Standing high in the hotel with one of the members who had clashed with him repeatedly over the years, Upton turned innocently and remarked: "Please don't jump. They'd never believe me back home."

SUCH AN unchained wit, when coupled with a driving determination to make the school system the focal point of the community, made him enemies.

But I think it was his considerable intellectual honesty which made him charge full steam ahead in behalf of causes he believed in, rather than take what might have been the more effective, if less direct, more stealthy approach.

His challenge — and perhaps his greatest legacy — was to build the school system to meet the surging population growth of the city. Of the four high schools in Livonia, three were built under his direction; at one time, the school system was building an average of two classrooms per week, just to keep up with growth. He needed results, quickly, to meet the needs; his methods got the results.

But his contributions go farther. He was a prime mover in the capital fund campaign to build the Family Y. He was instrumental in getting the city's youth employment and drug commission programs into action.

He made his community sit up, take notice, and get action. In so doing, he made liars out of those who claim that the suburbs are homogenized masses of mediocrity.

I'll miss him, and when I think of him in years to come I'll remember one of his lines: "He who laughs, lasts."

From our readers

A personal vendetta?

To the Editor:

The Attorney General of this state, elected by the people is attempting, through distorted and misleading statements, to influence the Michigan Public Service Commission to dismiss Michigan Bell's request for a much-needed rate increase.

For reasons unknown, Mr. Kelley is carrying on a personal vendetta against all of the state's major utilities, and in so doing he is grossly affecting the personal lives of every citizen of this state. In his misguided campaign of recent years to force utility earnings to the lowest possible level, he has failed to visualize the long range consequences to the economy of this State.

He is a major factor in the depressed earnings of not only the Michigan Bell, but of all other major utilities in the state as well.

Michigan Bell has reported that its profit level so far this year has dropped to 6.6 percent, compared with the 7.87 percent return on net plant investment previously approved by the commission. Interest charges on money it has borrowed to finance construction are considerably higher than 6.6 percent, thus making such a profit level clearly confiscatory.

Michigan Bell has further pointed out that, despite three rate increases in the last four years, its return for 1973 was lower than in 1968 when the current round of rate requests started.

Michigan Bell, in submitting its latest request on April 23 of this year, supported its position with hundreds of pages of evidence, testimony and other documents. Yet, within three hours of delivery of

the copies of the documents to the Attorney General's office, Mr. Kelley filed a 20-page motion to dismiss the company's application. Obviously the time interval permitted no consideration whatsoever of the merits of the company's case.

As a result, Mr. Kelley's action does not represent the careful weighing of all considerations which Michigan Bell, along with all other citizens, is entitled to receive from the state's chief legal officer.

Michigan Bell has asked for an overall rate of return of 9.58 percent which includes a 12.4 percent return on the equity (common stock) portion of its investment.

As a comparison, the commission granted General Telephone of Michigan, the states second largest communications company, a 12.75 percent equity return in 1971, and recently approved a return of 12.12 percent for both the Detroit Edison Co. and Consumers Power Co.

To be able to improve upon and maintain the excellent communications system now available to the citizens of this state, the Michigan Bell Telephone Co. must be assured of a strong financial base. To gain this base it must be treated fairly in all areas relative to the structure of its rates. Being a utility does not exclude a company from the present inflationary spiral.

This is not the time, nor is the office of the State's Attorney General the place to bring politics into an area that deeply affects the day to day life of every person living, visiting or traveling in this State. Being a regulated company,

Michigan Bell is entitled to a full, fair and impartial hearing. To deny this would be contrary to law and to the commission's lawful responsibilities.

Robert Byron
Farmington Hills,
May 6, 1974

Cycle trails needed

To the Editor:

I would like to comment on Southfield's serious lack of pedestrian and bicycle rights of way. Southfield is no longer a rural community — it is a sprawling metropolis and traffic is becoming heavier every day, yet next to nothing has been done to provide for sidewalks and/or bicycle rights of way along major thoroughfares.

I have lived in this community for five years, and although it is a fair and impartial hearing, to deny this would be contrary to law and to the commission's lawful responsibilities.

To those for whom the automobile is as necessary to life as food or water, this complaint may appear trivial (perhaps because in the minds, in this city, they feel they have no alternative), but I am sure thousands of persons (especially parents concerned about their children traveling busy roads to school) feel as strongly as I do.

City government is slow to act, and since the situation can only become worse, it is imperative that citizens act now to goad the city to action on this important problem.

Sharon Kelm
Southfield
May 9, 1974

Farmington Observer & Eccentric

DIVISION OF SUBURBAN COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION