

editorial opinion

Helping balance a budget

The state department of education, under orders from Gov. William Milliken, has reduced the amount of aid to the Farmington School District by \$180,000. It made the reduction in December, only about three months after the state expects a school board to adopt a balanced budget.

Budgets are a conglomeration of inspired guesses and a small number of hard facts. When the state government has trouble with its budget, as it is having because of loss of income from the repealed food and drug tax, it passes along its problems to lower levels of government.

The Farmington School District, unfortunately, has no one to pass its financial problems on to except its students. Students will suffer because opportunities for learning will be lost.

Education is an investment which pays dividends to individuals in the form of higher life-time salaries, governments in the form of higher taxes, and society in the form of more active citizens.

When the state finds it necessary to adjust its budget, it should provide ways for local school districts to adjust theirs. One idea might be to automatically schedule a millage election to replace funds lost in necessary state aid cuts.

Season stresses true values

The holiday season found many of us with less cash in our pockets than usual. Area stores were filled with shoppers regretfully shaking their heads at the prices of gifts they would like to have bought for family and friends.

Many residents found gifts given this year meant more, though. The gifts might have cost less, but therefore more time and effort went into their choosing.

One family gathering exemplified that the important gift at holiday time is love.

A youngster, being reared by grandparents in tight economic circumstances, received only a few gifts to be opened at the family celebration. But he returned a kiss in thanks to each of the givers.

His cousin found many more wrapped packages under the Christmas tree, but that youngster also knew where true values lie. He too gave a kiss to the relatives who had given him presents.

The holidays this year reminded many of the importance of family ties, and the unimportance of costly gifts.

A perspective for 1975

At the start of a new year we find the perspective supplied by the Optimist Club International creed an inspiration worth sharing. The year of 1975 promises to be one in which optimism appears to become a commodity much in demand.

The creed asks us to promise ourselves:

- To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.
- To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.
- To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.
- To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.

• To think only of the best, to work only for the best and expect only the best.

• To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.

• To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.

• To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.

• To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.

• To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

Grades: a failing system

Grades in Farmington high schools are getting higher. Are the students getting smarter?

It's unlikely intelligence could evolve in only a few short years to produce the effects demonstrated by the Farmington Observer & Eccentric's study of high school grades. Average grades for graduating Farmington High School classes have risen about three-tenths of a point over 12 years.

Administrators attribute the higher grades to the wider selection of classes, many of them easier than "traditional" subjects.

Other factors are more lenient teachers and teachers interested in making a good impression with students and parents. Administrators in Farmington added an unexpected reason: some teachers feel the best way to avoid being laid off during the district's current financial troubles is to give good grades.

Several sad tendencies are highlighted by the findings. Easier grading in subjects other than English, mathematics and sciences shows that teachers aren't as qualified as they should be to teach courses.

If teachers are grading more leniently than before, as administrators suggest, the fact speaks for itself. Teachers trying to win respect by being lenient lose respect of their students and, ultimately, their self-respect.

However, one additional factor might play a part in higher grades. The educational system teaches students much more than just subject matter. It also shows students how to fit into a bureaucracy. Students may be learning the lesson of how to fit into the "system" to the extent that their grades increase without an increase in knowledge acquired.

From our readers

Leave guns behind

Editor:

In your editorial of Dec. 19's Observer & Eccentric regarding Prosecutor Patterson's statement on carrying-concealed-weapon violators and their geographic origin, you stated repeatedly that Mr. Patterson wished to make Eight Mile a border against Detroiters.

Apparently, as happens all too often, the facts were misconstrued. Mr. Patterson delivered a message to Detroit and

Wayne County gun toters: Leave the guns at home or stay out of Oakland County. I cannot interpret that to mean all Detroiters.

You further talk of the need for state action to resolve the problem; another dose of bureaucratic buck passing is just what this county doesn't want or need. The penalty for carrying a concealed weapon is strong enough to be a major deterrent when regularly utilized against offenders.

Mr. Patterson is operating within the charter of duties and responsibilities. A five-year sentence is a tough sentence; one community

or county trying to remedy this problem alone is difficult but Oakland County will be better for the Prosecutor's Office efforts.

You further talk of Mr. Patterson's ambition. Your inference makes ambition a bad attribute for a politician. Mr. Patterson did reject drafts for a nomination to a state office last fall.

Journalistic ambition to change the Observer & Eccentric from a glorified "something for everyone" shopping news back to a back to a community newspaper would be welcomed.

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Eccentricities

by HANK HOGAN

For the first time since the early 1930's, Americans can own gold bullion. As attractive as this may be to some people, it couldn't have come at a worse time for the economy.

When someone purchases a hunk of the gold stuff, there is little he can do with it beside letting it lay in the basement and hope it appreciates in value.

It doesn't pay interest or dividends. To buy gold most people will take the purchase price out of either their savings or investments in the stock market.

THE HOUSING industry over the last year and a half has been in worse shape than the auto industry.

This has been primarily because there has been no mortgage money available. The lack of mortgage funds occurred because people took their money out of savings and loan associations and banks and put it into higher interest yielding commercial paper or treasury bills. Economists call this disintermediation.

The interest rates on both these forms of paper is not coming down and money is returning to the S & L's and banks, which could bring back the housing industry.

Observation Point

by PHILIP H. POWER

SUBURBIA, Jan. 2 — "How on earth," people ask, "do you write a New Year's column on life here in the suburbs, mixing wit with wisdom, punditry with profundity?"

On this second day of 1975, I can now reveal that the answer is: Persistence, regardless of point.

You start out writing sentences which don't seem to be going anywhere. Then you throw them away and start over in another direction, and before very long you have a column which

SUBURBIA, Jan. 2 — There can be little doubt that the central crisis confronting these suburban communities during this new year will be recession approaching depression in the auto industry. With area-wide unemployment over 10 per cent and white collar layoffs well under way, many local families are

SUBURBIA, Jan. 2 — Those who put forth the argument that the central crisis confronting these suburban communities during this new year is recession in the auto industry are plainly wrong. The overwhelming evidence is clear that inflation remains the number one problem for these suburbs, with prices going up at a rate of over 10 per cent and countless local families

SUBURBIA, Jan. 2 — Those who think that the twin central crises confronting these suburban communities are recession in the auto industry and area-wide inflation would be well advised to examine the situations in Bloomfield Hills and Garden City, where

SUBURBIA, Jan. 2 — The debate about which is the more important central crisis confronting these suburban communities — recession in the auto industry or inflation — is absurd. What is as clear as the nose on my face is

SUBURBIA, Jan. 2 — How will the little guy, the average taxpayer, fare during the central crisis confronting these suburban communities during 1975? That is the real question for this

All that glitters is not . . .

UNFORTUNATELY a lot of this money will be diverted into gold ownership.

Gold ownership could be a very bad investment unless you have bad teeth or like to make jewelry.

The small buyer will pay too much for gold. The small buyer always pays too much for anything.

If he acquires it through a bank or brokerage, he will be encouraged not to take it home and bury it, but to leave it where he bought it and pay a monthly or yearly storage charge.

IF HE TAKES it home and later tries to sell it, he must have it assayed again to prove he hasn't tinkered with the content. This is another cost.

Obviously when he buys and sells it, some one will be paid a sales commission.

Since the price of gold has reached its highest level ever in anticipation of Americans flocking to the buying scene, the question of appreciation in the near term is quite speculative.

It seems like a glittering opportunity to tuck something away and feel secure, but it doesn't do much for you as compared to other investments that will probably grow faster once the economy straightens out and pay some income in the meantime.

SUBURBIA, Jan. 2—

seen as the experts in Detroit and Washington settle down to

SUBURBIA, Jan. 2 — "I'm fed up with the central crises confronting these suburban communities," said my barber, speaking for the great majority of the American people. "Let's talk about football!"

There can be no doubt whatsoever that more football is exactly what is needed, especially here in the suburbs, where

SUBURBIA, Jan. 2 — After two holiday weeks filled with football games on TV, none including the Lions, it is clear that most folks in these suburban communities have had their fill of the great American game.

Housewives, especially, are anxious to get their husbands back to serious consideration of the twin central crises confronting suburban families which bode ill for

SUBURBIA, Jan. 2 — "Look here," said my wise old barber, "the plans proposed by all those so-called experts to deal with the twin central crises confronting these suburban communities are all hooey. Now if they would listen to the game plan for the economy that me and my buddy worked out a couple months ago when we were deer hunting up in the U.P."

You start by

SUBURBIA, Jan. 2 — Regardless of whether recession or inflation will destroy life as we know it in these suburban communities, there was little hope expressed hereabouts for finding a few cure for cancer as 1974 ended and

SUBURBIA, Jan. 2 — One thing is clear as the new year brings us into confrontation with the twin central crises that threaten to

SUBURBIA, Jan. 2 — The notion that a

SUBURBIA, Jan.

SIGN OF THE TIMES: DISILLUSIONMENT



Your ecology calendar

Ecology-minded persons who wish to save cans, bottles or newspapers for recycling may use these facilities.

To prepare glass, thoroughly wash the containers, remove all metal caps and rinse from the glass and separate the glass by color.

To prepare cans, clean only. Paper need not be removed.

Newspapers should be tied in bundles with heavy string or rope or secured in heavy paper bags.

• BIRMINGHAM-Daily newspaper pickup with regular trash. Newspapers must be bundled separately.

• BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP—Behind the township offices, 4200 Telegraph Road, just south of Long Lake Road. Between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., Saturdays. Glass and clean cans are collected each week. All aluminum items accepted. Newspapers collected on the last Saturday of each month.

• GROVES ECOLOGY CLUB—Bundled or bagged newspapers and cardboard will be collected from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Friday and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday the second week of each month at the high school's front parking lot.

• LATHRUP VILLAGE—At the Public Services Building, 19101 Twelve Mile Road, adjacent to the

high school. Newspapers are collected 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. by volunteers the first Saturday of each month.

• PONTIAC-Oakland County Recycling Center, 350 S. Telegraph, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. every Saturday. Groups bringing in more than 500 lbs. of glass will receive \$10 per ton for glass.

• SOUTHFIELD—In the old city offices, 26000 Berg Road at Ten and One-half Mile, one block east of Telegraph.

• TROY—At the DPW Yard, 4695 Rochester Road, from 9 a.m. to noon on the first and third Saturday of each month.