

## editorial opinion

# Mayoral choice system needs reexamination

In the coming weeks there is bound to be debate over Farmington City Councilman Bill Hartsock's action in abstaining to protest the mayoral election process.

Hartsock would like to see the process changed so the mayoral tap would be given to the person receiving the high vote in combination with performance. Presently, claims Hartsock, the mayoral position is handed around, with the choice being determined months and even years before hand.

HARTSOCK also would like to see the process debated in public. In the past, councilmen have been gathering in private to debate the choice.

Other councilmen contend the system is fine as is and maintain basing the choice on high vote getter is impractical because of staggered terms.

Both arguments have merit, but it is clear, a change is needed to firm up the charter language so a choice is made on clear cut guidelines.

First, residents have the right to see the selection debated in public. One councilman contends it would be embarrassing for some councilmen if the selection was debated in public.

So what? When a person enters public life, he should be cognizant that such matters will be debated in the public eye. All councilmen contacted say they

have no reservations about discussing the matter in public. So be it.

Secondly, dealing with such a selection in private not only defies state law but it breeds distrust among the electorate.

Many persons who attended the council meeting, where John Richardson was selected mayor, remarked how the selection seemed to be cut and dried. That's reasonable since public discussion by the councilmembers was lacking.

The situation was made even worse by Hartsock's unwillingness to explain his abstention during the meeting.

IT WOULD BE UNFAIR to say there is any deviousness intended in selecting the mayor. But in these days of distrust toward politicians, it is necessary for leaders to take precautions in avoiding actions which might seem questionable.

Hartsock has expressed a willingness to work in harmony with his fellow councilmen. But this issue should be cleared up.

It would take a charter amendment to better define the process through which a mayor is chosen. But the effort would be worth the aggravation it would avoid in the future.

STEVE BARNABY



## Be thankful we're solving some of our problems

Thanksgiving is a remarkable holiday, a time to pause, reflect, count our blessings and give thanks for the good things in our life. And in this year of recession, political futility and rising crime rates it's easy to lose track of the many things that we have here in the suburbs which are well worth giving thanks for.

Clearly, the automobile industry is going to have a better year than anyone had dared to expect three or four months ago. For executives living in the suburbs, it means bonuses at the year-end; for the small businessmen and workers in the area who are dependent on the industry for their well-being, it means the hope that things will get better.

Gasoline prices are off by a penny, which is well worth giving thanks for. Sugar prices are down, and so are turkeys.

Let us thank the state highway people for being one year closer to whenever the I-46 Schoolcraft expressway and all of I-275 are open to traffic. And let's not forget the folks who finally got Ann Arbor road paved to four easy-flowing lanes.

IN PLYMOUTH there is reason to give thanks for two important developments which will improve the area's economy: the First National Bank of Plymouth opened this year, giving added financial support for local growth, and the refurbished Plymouth Hilton opened recently, giving increased tax base to the township.

Canton Township may in fact get its own postal designation, giving greater identity to this rapidly-growing community.

All of us can join with the residents of Birmingham-Bloomfield in giving thanks that young Timothy Stempel was rescued safe and sound from his kidnappers.

Southfield has had another year of success in its remarkable municipal recreation programs, and Redford Township at last has a dial-a-ride service which will improve the generally poor state of

## Observation Point

by PHILIP H. POWER

public transport in the area.

Livonia can give thanks and praise to the team: coaches and fans of Franklin High, which won the state Class A football title over the weekend. Garden City will open next year with a full-blown city manager system, which will improve the city's administrative efficiency.

ROCHESTER kids in need can be thankful for the success of the area's "Kops for Kids" program, sponsored by the city police department and the Avon Township Sheriff Department. Next year, Westland's senior citizens can be thankful that the city will break ground for the new high rise facility for them.

Despite a \$120,000 slash in state aid the Farmington school system can give thanks that nimble administrative budget work enabled the district to make it through this year without a whopping deficit. And the entire Farmington community ought to be thankful that the Orchard Ridge campus of Oakland Community College has such a vast clump of programs of benefit to local residents.

The city of Troy cut taxes last spring by one-tenth of a mill, and thanks are due that the city got through the year with a balanced budget.

THE EAST could go on endlessly. But the collage makes the point. Although it's been a tough year, there is much to be grateful for.

And on top of a beautiful fall, Michigan's going to the Orange Bowl.

## Eccentricities

by HENRY M. HOGAN, JR.



## Numbers tell tale of bureaucrats

Did you know that:  
• The "over 60" age group in our country is growing at a rate of 18 per cent a year; the "20-39" group at the rate of 30 per cent a year. But the group that so many of us belong to, "40-59" is declining. Fourteen per cent of all women are heads of households -- a figure that will continue to grow.

• Divide the last 50,000 years of man's existence into lifetimes of approximately 62 years of age; 650 of the 800 lifetimes were spent in caves. Writing has been possible in the last 70, mass printing in the last six, precise time measurement in the last four, the electric motor in the past, and most of the current material goods in the present.

• Of the juvenile delinquents, only six per cent have ever had contact with any organized program and only four per cent have had any church relationship.

• The federal Office of Management and Budget reports that individuals in business firms spend 130 million man-woman hours annually in filling out 5,000 different government forms, exclusive of state and local forms. It costs taxpayers more than \$2 billion just to pay the regulators to read the reports. It costs business billions to fill out the forms. This cost must be passed on to the consumer.

• The reporting burden imposed on business and, subsequently, the consumer, increased by 50 per cent between December 1967 and June 1974.

• Car buyers paid out \$3 billion in 1974 for federal government mandated features. The federally required items cost an average of \$320 per car for the 1968-1974 period.

• A seat belt buzzer system for cars introduced by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration added \$200 to the cost of every 1974 car, and 40 percent or two out of every five people who bought cars had the system disconnected.

• Regulations governing the trucking industry frequently allow firms to ship goods in one direction but not to make a return trip.

• Airline fares are 50 per cent higher on airlines regulated by the Civil Aeronautics Board than on non-regulated airlines.

• Proposed lawnmower safety standards currently being prepared by the Consumer Protection Safety Commission could raise the price of a mower from \$100 to \$108 -- an increase of 86 per cent.

• The list of new regulations by the federal government issued last year alone covers 45,000 pages of fine print.

• 5,146 new forms had to be devised.

• Our unemployment insurance system was created 40 years ago under the Social Security Act. By next year it will have paid out \$100 billion to claimants. Nearly one-third of that will have been expended in 1975 and 1976 alone.

## Sense And Nonsense

BERNIE LENNON is hardly a household name. He's an Oakland County commissioner from Ferndale who suggests a way to stimulate voter interest and give folks some property tax relief. With only 10 to 25 per cent of the eligible voters going to the polls, Lennon suggests giving a household a \$5 rebate on its property taxes for every person in the household who votes in a municipal election.

Well, we've always assumed that those who stayed away just weren't interested, were uninformed or just didn't care. If you pay them to vote, they'll still be uninformed, uninformed and careless. Why pay good money for that kind of participation?

## Let's make a deal on commuter tax hike

Coleman Young's got a good case, no doubt about it. The question is whether suburban legislators have enough savvy to turn the situation to their advantage.

The situation is that the City of Detroit, like New York City, has big money problems. Detroit's Mayor Young, unlike certain eastern officials, is trying to do something about it before there's any talk of default.

Young wants the state to give Detroit authority to raise its income tax rate by one per cent. For Detroit residents, the rate would go from two per cent to three; for non-residents who work in Detroit, the rate would go from 0.5 to 1.5.

He and the council can't just lift the rates by themselves, however. They need an enabling act from the state.

NATURALLY, legislators from Detroit are in Young's corner. Out-state legislators can be wooed to give Young what he wants because it's not costing them money. In fact, lawmakers from Dollar Bay and Alpena would be happy to be able to help Detroit without dipping into the state treasury.

Suburban lawmakers, on the other hand, can be expected to balk. It's the old theory of taxation without representation.

That's a mistake. Suburban legislators shouldn't automatically say "no" to Detroit, because the bill may pass anyway. What they should do is, some old-fashioned, hard-nosed, Yankee horse-trading.

## Tim Richard writes

Sure, give Young what he wants. But make him pay a price.

WHAT KIND of price?

Well, Young runs the Detroit Metropolitan Water Department with an iron hand, selling water and sewerage services to 90-some suburban communities. The suburbs don't like the way he's running it. Indeed, the Detroit mayor calls it "our" water, even though it comes from Lake Huron.

So go ahead and let Young hike the city income tax—but demand a stronger voice for the suburbs on the Detroit Metropolitan Water Board. Better yet, put the DMWD rates under the jurisdiction of the state Public Service Commission, just like gas and electric rates. Even better yet, make the DMWD a regional facility and apply the "one person, one vote" theory of representation.

Young is also making a power grab for control of the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority, with Gov. Milliken's backing. Suburban legislators could offer to trade the income tax enabling act for Young's promising to keep hands off SEMTA.

Detroit operates several regional facilities—the Zoo, the Art Institute, the Bicentennial Commission but Detroit won't have suburbanites for city jobs. OK, if Young wants to hike the income tax on non-residents, let him cut out the discriminatory hiring practice.

Western Wayne County residents would like to have a county services center in the suburbs—a clerk's office, a circuit courtroom, a jail annex. Detroiters on the county commission refuse because they want to keep as many services as possible at 2 Woodward Avenue. Well, let's make a deal: Suburban votes from western Wayne County for the income tax bill in return for Detroit votes on the county board for an out-county services center.

GOT THE idea? Don't give Young what he wants, but don't automatically be negative. Make him pay a price. Remember the first three rules of politics: Compromise, compromise, compromise.

## The sleeper

As holidays go, Thanksgiving is the sleeper—the one you expect to be safe because it's so short and you don't travel as far.

Although motorists travel 50 per cent fewer miles, the Auto Club notes, traffic deaths of Thanksgiving weekend are higher than the summer holidays. Short trips lead drivers into a false sense of safety; alcohol during the festivities is a factor; the first winter driving of the season can catch us off guard, too.

Three-fourths of all holiday fatal accidents occur within 25 miles of home.

A round trip to a point 200 miles away is the maximum one-day trip a driver should attempt. Starting at 8 a.m., you can travel 200 miles in four hours on the freeway, enjoy five hours at your destination, and be home in the early evening.

Again, overindulgence in alcohol can make that trip home a long, tiring, sleepy drive.

As a killer, the Thanksgiving holiday is a real sleeper.

## Sense And Nonsense

ABC-TV gets good marks this year for its handling of "the battle of the bands." As all warm-blooded Ohio State and Michigan fans know, there's as much pride in the two marching bands as there is in the football team.

A couple of years ago, the television producers made the terrible mistake of ignoring the half-time band shows for some insipid commentary by a retired coach.

In 1975, happily, ABC rectified the error by getting in half or more of both bands' shows to the amusement and edification of all true sports fans.

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