

editorial opinion

Tinkering Around

by LOUISE OKRUSKY

Take heart, sweet trivia fans



Hors d'oeuvres by Lynn Orr

Wanted: woman pols

It's a safe bet to say that this year's senatorial and gubernatorial campaigns lack oomph. But they also lack something else: female candidates.

While women are at least peering over the landscape into just about every other predominantly male arena, they've yet to make a splash in state and national politics.

What makes that even more surprising is that women are making strides at the local level. Farmington Hills City Council has a majority of women on the council. Southfield's City Council boasts two women, while Lathrup Village's council has one woman out of five council members.

Three out of seven Farmington School Board members are women, while Southfield has one woman board member.

SPECULATION might foresee greater inroads at the state and national level after woman pols get their feet wet at home first.

But I have my doubts. It takes money, grass roots support, and party support to get a major campaign off the ground. Grass roots is the basis for successful local campaigns, but very few politicians make it in Lansing or Washington without money and "The Party."

That's where time works for those who prefer their politicians in wingtips. Those who dispute "The Case of the Missing Lady Pol" point to Martha Griffiths for an argument. I have only one response: one woman in congress smacks of tokenism in the same way one black senator fails to make a case for black political power.

Voters don't seem to mind some unusual spices in the political stew as long as they don't interfere with the meat and potatoes.

IT'S EASY to say that the late Phil Hart would have beaten anyone, but he did manage to soundly

beat longtime Republican party activist Elly Peterson, as well as Lenore Romney in his last two campaigns.

At least we had some woman candidates, then. A quick look at the state legislature today gives a dismal picture of females in politics.

The only woman state senator, Republican Lorraine Beebe, is long gone from the legislative scene. There are eight out of 110 state representatives, six Democrats and two Republicans.

Black women appear to be making a stronger claim than their white sisters. Three black women state reps constitute 27 per cent of the total black delegation; while the five white reps are a mere six per cent of the total white delegation.

It's an all-male stronghold at the congressional level.

Why? Money and political clout aren't the only answers. Perhaps it's easier to combine home responsibilities with politics at the local level, than commuting to Lansing.

My colleagues suggest that women aren't prepared to make the sacrifices required of politicians.

The psychological argument might suggest that women fear rejection such as a political loss, more than men.

I frankly don't think those arguments hold much water. Taken together, they may constitute some rationales, but I have the feeling that most women don't think they're qualified for political leadership.

Perhaps Regina McNully could enlighten them. She's definitely lost in her bid for lieutenant governor along with her running mate, Human Rights Party candidate Zolton Ferency.

But she was in there running. If women still have doubts about their abilities, I'd say take a look at the field.

That should inject some daring into the veins of some female would-be politicians. The competition's pretty lightweight.

Driving into work the other morning, I noticed a strange glowing orb in the sky. Since it was just before 8:30 a.m., I surmised that it wasn't the moon.

Surprise. The sun also rises. Even in Michigan's winter months, it occasionally manages to raise a faint, shimmering protest against the cloud-filled skies and ice-covered lawns.

With the first notice of the sun in the morning, thoughts begin to wander toward notions of spring and warmer weather.

Remember what it's like to walk around without boots, coat, gloves and a hat? If you do, I'm willing to bet you've just returned from Florida, Tahiti or South America.

The rest of us winter-bound souls must pick through the ice carefully when walking and try to conjure up warm thoughts of spring. About this time of year, it's difficult to imagine there really are flowers ready to bloom under all that snow and ice.

WITH SPRING arrives thoughts of loving couples and April in Paris. To help you escape a little from the monotony of white-on-white scenery and a snow forecast that won't quit, it's time for yet another Tinkering Around with Trivia Quiz (April in Paris edition).

Keeping within the theme of spring time, today's quiz will deal with loving couples from fact and fiction.

For two points each, name the missing partner in the following pairs. At last, the Lady of the Camillas has

fallen in love. Never mind that the young man is her junior, not only in years but in experience. If one was set on being unkind, you could call him a blithering young idiot and wonder whatever kept that match together. Others, more romantically inclined, thought the young man was the most decent thing that happened to the young courtesan. What was his name?

We all know that Rhett Butler eventually captured the heart of Scarlett (tomorrow is another day) O'Hara. (Not that he gave a damn when he did, mind you.) But we sometimes forget Rhett was husband number three. Name one and two. (Subtract two points if you surrendered to the impulse of noting that the two men were gone with the wind.)

Who was Alice B. Toklas' friend? (A friend is a friend is a friend is a friend. I'm told.)

GEORGE Sand's real name was Aurore Dupin. She switched genders in her name but not entirely in her manner, although she was known for walking the streets of 19th century Paris dressed in men's clothing and smoking a cigar. For two points, name the man with whom she is most closely identified? (For a bonus point, name George's occupation.)

Heloise was a household name long before the columnist began to pass on helpful hints. In medieval times, Heloise was a young student in Paris who fell in love with her teacher. It was quite the scandal. He was older and had an established reputation as something of a renegade philosopher.

What was the man's name?

Who was Wallis Warfield Simpson and what sort of furor did she raise when she fell in love? (That's an easy one, folks.)

Edward Rochester found his match in a strong-willed young lady who worked as a governess in his house. What was her name? It's the title of a book by Charlotte Brontë.

Tristan was a dashing young knight madly in love with a suitably medieval lady. What was her name?

Name Lady Chatterley's lover. You remember him, he was the groundskeeper for the Chatterley family.

Cyrano de Bergerac was madly in love with a beautiful woman. But Cyrano wasn't all that confident and helped Christian, his handsome but less worthy friend win the woman's heart.

BEFORE Cyrano died, the woman discovered that her old friend was really the man who wrote those wise, touching letters to her in youth. But Cyrano, true to form, died denying that he wrote those beautiful words to her. What was her name?

Since the snow's still on the ground and spring hasn't truly appeared yet, we have time to wait for the answers to this quiz.

Until next time, then, drag out that bottle of wine, light a fireplace, turn on some mood-of-your-choice music and find those pencils. With the right partner, this quiz could get really interesting, couldn't it?

from our readers

Colossal misfeasance

Editor:

I read with disbelief and then with utter rage Michael Mizerowski's story on the "Great Midwest Blizzard," in which John Grubba, the managing director of the Oakland County Road Commission, admitted:

"That less than three weeks into winter (Jan. 9), the road commission had run out of road salt."

"That 17 days later, when the 'Great Blizzard' struck, road crews were still without salt."

"That as a result, 83 trucks were rendered virtually useless in what was billed a red alert, emergency situation."

But that's not all. As any motorist can testify, four days after the storm, the road commission was still without salt. County roads were treacherous beyond belief, with a thick layer of ice—despite near-perfect weather conditions for salting the roads and melting the ice.

The cost of this colossal misfeasance—in terms of auto accidents and personal injuries, as well as general inconvenience and hardship to the citizens—is literally incalculable.

THEREFORE, county officials

should be advised that a sizeable segment of the citizenry is of the opinion: "That Mr. Grubba should be summarily fired and never again be allowed to hold so much as a sweeper's job with county government."

"That once this is achieved, the entire Oakland County Road Commission should resign and submit themselves to 30 days in the stocks and pillory, where taxpayers may properly reward them for their dismal performance in office."

"That the county commissioner representing my own district, namely, Mr. John H. Peterson, come forth and explain his incompetence in this matter."

"And finally, that County Executive Daniel T. Murphy, who is fond of boasting of the "efficiency," "innovation" and "progressive" character of county government, be called upon to give a full accounting as to why, given what was perhaps the most accurately charted and forecast winter storm of recent times, the county was unable to provide even minimal road service."

CHARLES FERRY
Avon Township

Hills firefighters praised

Editor:

During the recent snowstorm, my nine-year-old son became quite ill. It was impossible for us to get out of our subdivision and we had to call Farmington Hills Fire Department for help. Many of our firemen had been on call for 24 hours. They responded within five minutes.

They were helpful, cheerful, friendly and just marvelous. They transported us, and we think they deserve a very special "thank you."

SHARON SUKENIC
MATT MAY
Farmington Hills

I would like them to know that what they do in emergencies is appreciated. Enclosed is a letter from my son to our wonderful firemen:

"Dear Fire Station No. 2: My name is Matt May, I am nine-years-old. I am writing to say thank you for the help when I was sick. It was nice of you to come in the snow-storm to take me to the doctor. Thank you."

SUSAN RENNELS,
Farmington Hills

Disc jockey 'humor' deserved a lambast

Editor:

Thank you for your comments in the Farmington Observer on the backyard humor and back alley attitudes of disc jockeys and athletic commentators.

I agree with you wholeheartedly—and better yet—your statement appears in print.

SUSAN RENNELS,
Farmington Hills

Pageant defended

Editor:

This letter is in response to Lynn Orr's editorial on the Miss Farmington Pageant.

If you had done any research on the topic, you would have found in 1974 the Founders' Day Pageant had been turned into the Miss Farmington Pageant, a franchise of the Miss America Pageant, and that the festival committee, realizing the faults existing in such scholarships to colleges and universities started awarding cash scholarships in 1975 to any higher institution of learning the winner chose to attend. Obviously, your knowledge and comprehension of this event is limited. If you were involved you would find that the majority of the entrants have high grade point averages, are physically attractive, yes, are talented and don't wear Vaselene on their teeth, either on stage or on the street.

But most importantly they use poise and tact to their advantage, which is more than I can say for Lynn Orr. Intelligence, talent, beauty, poise and personality, what you call a dumb and warped grading system for awarding scholarships, happens to be an excellent system for finding a young woman to represent the City of Farmington and possibly the United States.

For those of us who work months and long hours to prepare for not only the Miss Farmington Pageant, but the entire Farmington Festival, let's hope you get your act together and come out from behind your desk and hold editorial opinions to eyewitness what 99 per cent of your readers would agree to be downright fun and excitement.

Stay in town this year for the Farmington Founders Festival, Elks Ox roast, Sunday in the Park, Masonic Temple chicken dinner, the parade and other activities.

You'll have a ball and you might even enjoy the pageant.

SUSAN REED ARCINAGA
Executive Director

Miss Farmington Pageant, 1977

Citizens can win

Legislature falters again

It seems as though the Michigan Legislature is incapable of acting until a problem reaches crisis proportion and the public loses all patience.

In the case of Michigan's PBB tragedy, it took literally thousands of letters and phone calls from angry and frightened voters and more than two years of inexcusable stalling before the Legislature finally moved to eliminate PBB contaminated products from supermarket shelves.

With double-bottom tankers it has taken more than a dozen deaths to convince the legislature that decisive action is needed. A total ban on these death traps still has not been enacted though citizen pressure is forcing lawmakers in that direction.

Now the legislature is balking on yet another measure with overwhelming citizen support—a bill to limit the legislature's use of taxpayers' money to junket out of state, lavishly decorate Lansing offices, and mail excessively at public expense.

These abuses of legislative privileges are costly both in terms of public dollars and lost public confidence in state government. Legislative provinces to fight bureaucracy and cut government waste are hardly convincing.



By

DOUG

ROSS

coming from a group of lawmakers who are unwilling to put their own house in order first.

THE ABUSES in question have been documented by the press and citizen groups. Senators spending as much as \$30,000 in a given year to furnish a single office with necessities as wall length mirrors, velvet wall covering and carpeted bathrooms. Legislators traveling to California or Hawaii or Las Vegas at taxpayers expense. Legislators' meetings that have no relationship to the problems they are working on in Lansing. A deluge of self-promoting mail sent at taxpayers expense by Senators just before an election.

Kerry Kammer, a courageous young senator from northern Oakland County, is pushing a measure to end this waste of our tax dollars by placing enforceable legal limits on legislative

travel, office decoration and mailing. The bill, SB 495, was first proposed by the Michigan Citizens Lobby last year.

But in Lansing, many senators are privately confiding to colleagues and lobbyists that they have no intention of voting for any restrictions on these much abused practices.

In fairness, the House of Representatives under the leadership of Speaker Bobby Crim and Joseph Forbes (D-Southfield) has moved to take the most flagrant of these abuses. But the Senate has been adamant in declaring that what it does and how much it spends is none of the public's business.

UNFORTUNATELY IT is our business because it is our hard earned money they are spending.

SB 495 to make the Legislature accountable for its own expenditures can be passed this year. But only if concerned taxpayers insist that it can be done. Call or write Senate Majority Leader William Faust and tell him you expect action on this important bill this spring. Tell him that both your pocketbook and the senate's credibility are at stake.

Senator Faust can be reached at State Capitol, Lansing, 48909

Tuition break welcomed

I was only joking when I used to quip that now that my three youngsters were out of high school, there would be no more PTA dues to pay.

Now, seven years later, with two out of the three still in graduate school, I know the 'jokes' on me.

No matter how well you prepare, no amount is too much if your goal is a higher education for your child. You have to begin to get ready by steering the youngster toward higher learning when he's barely out of grade school these days. Financially, planning ahead is the only way is only to take away some of the sting of the college crunch on middle income families.

If you're part of those folks in the middle, up to now there was no outside help, no relief from that old uncle in Washington. If you are in the lower income brackets, there are tuition grants and loans available to ease some of the burden. And, of course, if cost is no object, then you have no problem.

But the bite on families earning from \$15-25,000 has been getting more oppressive in recent years. Costs at public universities and private schools both, have simply skyrocketed.

Congressman William Brodhead says the cost of sending a young per-



Shirley Iden Writes

son to college has increased by 77 per cent in the last 10 years.

TO GET A bachelor's degree at a private college these days will cost \$20,000, give or take a few. This includes tuition, room and board.

"At some colleges, yearly costs have risen to \$7000 or more," Brodhead said. "At many public universities, a student can be expected to pay over \$2,500 per year to cover education-related expenses."

Brodhead is convinced that many middle income families simply can't bear the burden of these runaway costs without some kind of relief.

He and Congressman Bill Ford have worked out a bill called the Middle Income Student Assistance Act which would attack the problem on three fronts.

The bill would begin by augmenting

the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant program by \$2.1 billion with the amount of the grants increased to \$1800 and the family income eligibility figure increased from \$16,000 to \$25,000. Some 3.1 million additional students could receive grants under this program.

Also proposed is an increase to 80 per cent of salary for a student's part-time job under the work study program. Opportunities for work for 200,000 new students would be provided.

The Student Loan program which guarantees loan repayments and subsidizes interest costs would also be upgraded. The family income limit would be raised from \$30,000 to \$45,000. This will make loans available to 260,000 more students.

BRODHEAD's has the support of the administration and of Bill Ford, whose committee has jurisdiction over post-secondary education. It has to evoke a sigh of relief from parents everywhere.

After all, it's pretty hard to even pinpoint where middle income level is these days, with the cost of living taking taken off to the upper stratosphere.

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