

editorial opinion

Tax rate could foster an old style tea party

State spending has increased 6.2 times since 1960 while personal income has risen only 3.2 times.
Taxes levied at all levels of government gobble up 40 per cent of your wages, erode your purchasing power and add fuel to the fires of inflation, according to State Rep. Sandy Brotherton (R-Farmington).
Proof that taxpayers and even some legislators

are fed up with fat in government spending is a Nov. 2 ballot proposal designed to limit state taxes to 8.3 per cent of the total personal income of Michigan residents and businesses.
Brotherton, who also represents Southfield, maintains he and other members of the legislature believe it's imperative that state spending be controlled. They claim this can only be accomplished by limiting state revenues and they're backing the proposal.

Register and learn

What follows is a news release description of a course being offered in southeastern Michigan by one of our major degree-granting institutions. See if you can figure what it's about:
"Growth of personal responsibility and cooperative relations is (sic) one of the goals of the educational process. They are also the goals of a course to be offered by Michigan State University.
"The class will focus on several techniques that teachers have found increasingly useful for promoting the growth of personal responsibility and cooperative relationships in K-12 classrooms throughout the country.
"Students in the course will learn to apply practical techniques advocated by Dr. William Glasser of increasing children's sense of responsibility and self-effectiveness. They will also examine recent findings on teacher effectiveness and the purpose and outcomes of schooling as a rationale for the techniques taught.
"The emphasis in the course is on communication, discipline, self-image development and the integration of these components into a cohesive and consistent teacher-student relationship. Glasser's Reality Therapy will serve as the basic model for the MSU fall offering."
Any takers?

IN A RECENT poll of 3,500 taxpayers, 81.3 per cent favored a constitutional limit on the state's taxing power. Early this year, the newly-formed Citizen's Tax Council circulated initiative petitions for the 8.3 per cent levy cap.
Legislative sponsors of the petition drive included 10 members of the Michigan Senate and 58 members of the State House of Representatives.
According to proponents of the tax limitation amendment, personal income taken by state levies increased from 8.3 per cent in 1964 to 8.6 per cent in the last fiscal year. Supporters maintain government's ability to spend will grow only with taxpayers' ability to pay. The limit would allow the state to collect an estimated \$56 million more in the next fiscal year than the last one, advocates claim.

ON THE other side of the financial coin, the board of trustees of the Michigan Municipal League oppose the proposed amendment contending it would have an adverse impact on a wide range of public services and it's uncertain what effect it would have on a local community's ability to raise revenues.
The tax limitation amendment proposal may not be a panacea for the epidemic of government overspending. But the fact that the measure gained enough support to appear on the November election ballot is indicative that the public is more than ready for a 1976 Michigan Tea Party.

Good advice

Abolish road commission?

Many tax and spending issues will be on the Nov. 2 ballot, but one that won't make it in Oakland County is the road commission's proposal to raise two mills for road construction and improvements.
It was part of a package Chairman Fred Harris and his fellow road commissioners offered to the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, the elected legislators of the county general government.
Part of the road group's package was that they, the road commissioners, be made elective so they could genuinely be responsive to the people.
The county board's response was just the opposite. It placed on the ballot instead an advisory question on abolishing the road commission entirely. Theoretically, if voters approve, the road com-

mission's administrative duties would be handed to the existing department of public works under the executive, and the policy-making functions would go to the elected board of commissioners.
The only problem with such a proposal is that state law will have to be changed to permit it. Right now, the law says a county must have a road commission—elected or appointed—whether it needs one or not. The highway lobby in Michigan is strong enough so that it will be tough for the legislature to pass a law permitting counties to abolish their road commissions.
Yet such a law would make much sense. Road commissions in Michigan have become little kingdoms spending vast amounts of funds without being directly responsible to the public. Oakland's road commission is far from unique in being the target of complaints.

Litter Lobby unmasked

The slick news conference, arranged by an advertising agency, made it sound innocent enough, and the press release said:
"The Committee Against Forced Deposits was formed by concerned members of business, industry, labor and private citizens."
But it was rank propaganda. It isn't really a committee against "forced deposits." It's a high-priced campaign to defeat the Nov. 2 ballot proposal to ban throwaway beverage bottles and cans.

And as for these "concerned members," the leaders are actually executives from the Michigan Beer & Wine Wholesalers Association, Stroh Brewery, Faygo Beverages, Michigan Council for Convenience Packaging, Michigan Brewers Association and Brooks Products Co.
In other words: The Litter Lobby. The people who make money on the pop and beer bottles and cans that litter our roads, our parks, our lawns. They dress up in a pretty committee name, but wise voters should know them for what they really are: The Litter Lobby.

Why we stop for school buses

Summer traffic was less snarled without them, but those slicker-yellow school buses are buzzing around the suburbs again, collecting their cargo—our children.
And motorists risk potential tragedy, not to mention a hefty fine, if they fail to stop when those flashing red lights appear. Under Michigan law, vehicles must stop at least 10 feet in front of and to the rear of the bus when it is displaying two alternating flashing red lights.
"Somehow, it's easy to forget about stopping in front of that bus—but children will be crossing the street, usually in a hurry and despite parents'

warnings, without much caution.
Remember how you felt getting out of school? Maybe they're not going home to home-baked bread, but their rest at the end of their schoolday certainly equals the Friday-night relief of most of us.
Sure, it's going to slow you down, and with another Michigan winter approaching, you're going to be forced to plan on additional transport time.
But the alternative to slowing down and watching for those buses could be a lot more costly than time: there's simply some things that an "I'm sorry" will never cover.



Why do we build jails? Let us count the ways...

Of late there has been much talk in this area about jails.
The general thinking seems to be that what is needed is more of them, or least ones with higher capacity. To this is added the demand for longer—or, at a minimum, more certain—sentences for persons convicted of crimes, as well as especially long jail terms for repeat offenders.
Much of the conversation has been stimulated by gangs of young punks in Detroit who evidently think they own the city and the freeways leading to and from it. It has also become known that many gang members—as well as other criminals of various types—who are caught already have records indicating eight to 15 previous arrests, all without having served a single day in jail!
Well, that's a sure-fire way to turn casual citizen talk into outraged citizen demand.
SOME STRAWS in the wind provide evidence that our leaders are taking some heed.
In increasing order of importance:
•Wayne County Prosecutor William Cahalan recently formed a group to push a petition drive to shove the Michigan Legislature into passing a law requiring minimum jail sentences for convicted criminals.
•The legislature is at last getting around to considering minimum sentence legislation. In this case, "at last" means "after the election and after all the egos in Lansing can get their ambitions to run for governor sorted out."
•John Barr, chairman of the Wayne County Board of Commissioners, urged the county to buy the former J.L. Hudson Co. warehouse in Detroit and apply for up to \$17 million in federal public works funds to renovate it into a 400-cell jail, in addition to building the new jail voters approved last May.
•Circuit Judge Horace Gilmore, a thoughtful, tough-minded and decent man, has recently proposed a revision of the sentencing system which is called "presumptive sentencing." Under it, a person convicted of a specific crime would receive a specific, fixed sentence, unless special mitigating or aggravating circumstances could be shown which would work to decrease or increase the sentence.
•THERE IS MUCH to be said in support of all these developments, particularly for Judge Gilmore's ideas about sentencing, which seem to me to provide both the certainty of punishment for criminals together with some reasonably narrow latitude for variations in sentence according to circumstances.



Observation Point
by PHILIP H. POWER
could prove unproductive unless substantial attention is paid to the equally important but so far neglected problem of just what we as a people expect our jails to accomplish.
Just why do we slap criminals into the slammer?
Do we do it to punish them by locking them up in a reasonably unpleasant place for a time, thereby to deter others who might also think of violating the law?
Do we put criminals in jail to rehabilitate them, so that upon their release they are likely to go straight? Do we put criminals in jail to get them out of the way so they will not harm other citizens?
It's my view that our society, in a way both hopeful and fuzzy-minded, is trying to do all three at once. And it's my view that to try to accomplish all three objectives simultaneously is bound to fail. Let me illustrate.
IF OUR PURPOSE in jailing criminals is to deter others, logic says we ought to make our jails just as unpleasant as we possibly can, short of promoting the murder, rape or assault of convicts.
If, however, our purpose is to rehabilitate criminals, we ought to make jails places where trades can be learned, employment opportunities are arranged, and re-education can take place.
And if our purpose is merely to keep them off the streets, we ought not to have parole boards endlessly letting convicts out on good behavior after absurdly short sentences.
PLAINLY, THE DESIGN, administration and funding we put into our criminal justice system will vary enormously, depending on which of these theories of punishment we choose to make paramount. We can't do them all at the same time.
So, by all means, let us build new jails.
But before we spend hours in legislative debate for new laws or (more importantly) millions in taxpayers' dollars for new jails, please, let us debate in public just which purposes we have for punishment.

700,000 die every year when bodies get run down

A couple of months ago, during a luncheon conversation, I commented how trim one of my dining partners was. He looked to be in robust health, and I knew he was in his 60s and that five years earlier he had had a heart attack.
He confided to me that not only was he feeling better than at any time in his life, but that he was leaving next day to go skiing in Colorado.
I asked him the secret of his health, and he said to go out and buy a book called "Aerobics" by Dr. Kenneth Cooper.
Dr. Cooper is the man who set up the training program for the United States Air Force which was used to get astronauts in shape.



Eccentricities
by HENRY M. HOGAN, JR.
ways, and yet we are not doing much about preventing heart disease, which killed more than 700,000 last year.
The basics of Dr. Cooper's training exercises are that you should spend 15 minutes three or four times a week either running, walking, bicycling or swimming—but under an orderly program.
The gentlemen I had luncheon with ran a mile and a half, four times a week, winter and summer. He was living proof the system apparently works.
DR. COOPER HAS an associate who has now moved to Troy—Dr. Joseph Arends, who again is living proof that exercise builds a healthy body. Dr. Arends is 33, weighs less than 170 and five years ago more than 240.
Obviously, a training exercise is not for everyone, and people should consult a doctor as to any physical limitations they should have.
But an hour a week is not much of a commitment to keep the machine we rely on—that is, the body—carrying us through a long life.
We don't ignore keeping our cars tuned up or our furnaces overhauled. Yet the vast majority of Americans is guilty of some abuse of the body.

DR. COOPER'S BASIC philosophy is that the No. 1 killer in the United States today is heart disease, and that people lead sedentary lives and eat the way most Americans eat, they are inviting themselves to join the heart attack club.
The idea behind Dr. Cooper's training exercises is that if you get more oxygen in your lungs, you have a healthier blood cycle and a healthier heart.
He believes that everyone should exercise at least an hour a week, broken up over three or four days.
He is not in favor of such "cosmetic" exercises as weight lifting, calisthenics and isometrics, which make the body look beautiful on the outside but don't help the inside.
IN OTHER WORDS, you can polish the outside of your car, but if there is something wrong with the motor, you get nowhere.
It is amazing that we have reduced the speed limit on expressways to 55 miles an hour because we were killing 60,000 persons a year on the high-