

editorial opinion

Let public in for council selection

In the next month, the Farmington Hills City Council will show what brand of political class it occupies as its members decide who should replace Councilman Robert McConnell when he departs in January.

This decision, more than many, is surrounded by an aura of special importance because the council is making a decision that usually is made by the voters.

Because they have been vested with this trust, councilmembers should be particularly sensitive about the way in which they go about the selection process.

OPENNESS in their deliberations should be foremost on councilmembers' minds. All discussion should be conducted in public. The council has a moral obligation to show how and why the replacement is chosen.

Although it may seem easier to some to ponder the question of a replacement in private, it's important to maintain the trust of the voters—and that involves discussion in public.

The excuse that public discussion could be embarrassing to applicants doesn't hold water.

Those persons have applied for an elected official's job. They must be willing to take all the political flak that comes with the job.

Politicians can't afford thin skins. Although the circumstances are unusual, the council should seek as much public input as is possible. Names of all those who have applied should be made public. Voters, in at least one meeting, must have the opportunity to say what kind of candidate they would like to see appointed.

Secondly, councilmembers should make their judgments on who is the best person for the office, rather than who would make the best political ally.

WITH McCONNELL LEAVING the council is politically split on a 3-3 basis. Mayor Keith Deacon is the swing vote. If deliberations become heated, the decision could take months. This is all the more reason to open the doors to the public.

As one councilmember said in a relaxed moment, "If we can't agree with the other side on an appointment, the seat just could remain vacant."

That would be bad for the council and even worse for the city. It would demonstrate that the council is unable to work cohesively.

Politicians have an uncanny knack of cleaning up their acts when they have to work in the public eye. We hope they have the courage to face the public in making this decision.

May the best person win.

STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor



Seventy per cent (of tax rebates) will go to low-income families who will spend it on food and shelter which won't boost the economy that much, or that broadly, for that long.

Mother Nature and alcohol

It gets to be a time of holiday parties—the Aunt Sallys who gets pithed at you wane the cork of a bottle under her nose. But it isn't a joke. Aunt Sallys' body is telling her to be careful about alcohol and the body knows what it's talking about.

Women in general get drunk faster than men, one reason is that women have less water in their body tissues than men so whatever they drink is concentrated in a smaller body.

Also, it is true that female hormones speed the absorption of alcohol.

If Aunt Sally is getting a little older, her tissues are changing. Most inhibitors with the

body's use of calcium. A woman's bones tend to soften with age. So alcohol abuse may lead to more broken bones among older women.

An expectant mother who drinks too much risks her baby's health. If the mother drinks, the fetus drinks. The expectant mother who abuses alcohol may cause her baby to have abnormalities such as faulty facial bone construction and brain damage.

So if the Aunt Sallys and even younger women are hesitant about drinks at your holiday party, don't make excuses about it. Mother Nature is protecting them by giving them some abnormality to alcohol, and it's not time to fool Mother Nature.

Blumenthal at Treasury

Extraordinary man tackles economy

Reaction to the selection of W. Michael Blumenthal to be secretary of the treasury should no well beyond praise in the accomplishments of a local man.

President-elect Jimmy Carter, to put it simply, has made an outstanding appointment in choosing the board chairman of the Southfield-based Bendix Corp. to fill the sensitive and demanding Department of the Treasury post.

At the press conference put in Tuesday's press conference, Blumenthal says that the economic circumstances of the country are much worse than we had anticipated six months ago or even three months ago. "I think no matter what the definition is, the economic problems are very severe."

Unemployment remains high, growth in the economy remains sluggish, massive federal deficits are a dark certainty, the spectre of renewed double-digit inflation stalks throughout the land.

Mike Blumenthal is extraordinarily well qualified to framing experience and skill to cope with what surely is our major national problem.

A REFUGEE from the horrors of Nazi Germany, Blumenthal arrived in America after World War II with no money, no job, no education and dim prospects.

In short order, he was earning money from a series of jobs including one as a still in a gambling casino. He compiled a dazzling academic record, leading to a PhD in economics from Princeton University.

He was asked in the early 1960s to lead our negotiating group in the complex bargaining that set the pattern for international trade patterns for the next decade.

And he wound up as chairman and chief executive officer of Bendix Corp., currently ranked 70th in the Fortune list of the 500 largest companies in

Observation Point

by PHILIP H. POWER



America and regarded as one of the best managed corporations in the world.

It's a blaring record that Blumenthal has written. It should yet again affirm that for people of talent, America is indeed the land of opportunity.

BUT THERE'S MORE to Mike Blumenthal than just a dazzling record.

I had the great privilege of serving with him when he was selected chairman of the Michigan Economic Action Council, a broadly-based group asked in 1975 by Gov. Miliken and the Michigan Legislature to make recommendations to improve the state's economic climate.

Leading a group that included representatives of every conflicting sector of our state's economy was no bed of roses. And to wind up with a final report that was both imaginative and far-reaching—and which was enthusiastically endorsed by both the UAW's Doug Fraser and GM's Thomas Murphy—speaks volumes for Blumenthal's intelligence, persistence and skill with people. Blumenthal is very, very bright without being an egotist. He is tough-minded and demanding without being abrasive. He is a successful businessman who is deeply concerned with the human problems of our society and with business' responsibility to help solve them.

And he is transcendently concerned with the central role which the highest ethics must play in

any business or governmental activity.

It is a superb appointment, and anyone who has had anything to do with Mike Blumenthal knows it. Everyone on this level wishes him well in his new assignment.



W. MICHAEL BLUMENTHAL
A successful human being

Sets good precedents

Oakland executive beats off attacks

One would think Oakland County politicians would be proud that their constituents were enlightened enough to adopt the "unified" government plan with a county executive. Instead, some of them keep trying to gum up the works of what is the closest thing to a model county in Michigan.

In part, the attacks are just poorly thought out. In part, the attacks are transparent attempts to pick fights with County Executive Daniel T. Murphy and paint a political picture of him as being uncooperative.

An example of the former is the budget proposal from the circuit court. An example of the latter was the board of commissioners' effort to interfere with the administration of car assignments.

PRESIDING JUDGE James Thorburn proposed, in his recent state of the judiciary message, that the court be allowed to make its own budget, getting a lump sum from the commissioners and bypassing the executive.

Politically, the judges' proposal couldn't have been more ill-timed, with such wide public disenchantment with the courts that the public is demanding harsh punishments be imposed automatically by law.

The courts still lack—thank goodness!—power to levy taxes and so the judges are off base in suggesting that they have total authority over their own budget.

Moreover, the judges hire many of the same kinds of persons that general county government hires, so it would be a serious mistake to have two different sets of pay and personnel policies.

The state law under which Oakland County operates plainly gives the county executive the duty to "prepare and submit to the board a recommended annual county budget and work program, and administer the expenditure of funds in accordance with appropriation."

We are confident Murphy will tolerate no such affront to the intention of the law and Oakland

voters as giving the judges their own blank check budget-making powers.

THE BOARD of commissioners was wrong in giving itself final authority over car assignments despite the alleged alibi of saving money.

Properly, the board should—and does—control the number of cars and general transportation policy. Who uses those cars is the kind of day-to-day question the executive should be left to deal with.

In vetoing the board action, Murphy attacked the Democrats on the board of commissioners. The attack was correct, but it should be pointed out, in fairness, that several Republicans were apparently seduced by the money-saving talk and also voted to interfere with the executive's car authority.

Thus, neither party can truly boast that it is the champion of the "unified" government system.

MURPHY HAS BEEN vocal in defending his powers and area of authority. Sometimes he makes enemies and gives the appearance of being a curmudgeon about it.

That impression is less than the truth. Murphy, throughout his two-year tenure, has been subject to constant attacks on the authority of the executive. He has used his veto power consistently to ward off such attacks.

It has hurt him politically, as evidenced by the fact that he ran behind much of the rest of the Republican ticket Nov. 2.

But if Oakland County is to continue the executive system and be the outstanding county government in Michigan, it is important to set proper precedents in the early years. Murphy must continue to guard the integrity of his office—and political imagery be damned.



Eccentricities

by HENRY M. HOGAN, JR.

Strong economy must be built in private sector

The economists are death-wishing us again.

Many of them are lining up, trying to be the first to forecast gloom and doom for 1977. Then, if it happens, they can say, "I told you so." If it doesn't happen, no one will notice.

There is no question that nationally the rate of growth of the economy has been slowing down after a great first quarter this year. But the fact that the growth rate of the economy is slowing down doesn't mean that the economy is not growing in fact.

In Michigan, we are doing well because the auto industry is doing well. The auto people expect 1977 to be a good year that not a vintage year, so Michigan will move along.

The Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan still says there is consumer confidence in the economy. This is a bellwether to see if people are willing to buy.

THE NEW ADMINISTRATION in Washington has to come up with a strategy in January. Do they want a big turn around or slow and consistent growth?

There is no question that a government created big turn around will mean deficit spending and create more inflation. More inflation means the value of the dollar goes down and you get less for it.

The present thinking revolves around a tax rebate early in the year to put dollars in people's pockets. Seventy per cent of this will go to low-income families who will spend it on food and shelter which won't boost the economy that much, or that broadly, or for that long. It would be a three-month pump-priming.

ANOTHER SUGGESTION is public works jobs. This area always bothers me because it doesn't build anything permanent. It puts people on a payroll for a given period of time but when it is over, no permanent jobs have been created for these people.

Worse than that, it has become a device of not creating new jobs but switching payrolls. Mayors love it because it allows them to lay off police and firefighters and rehire them on the federal payroll. Under this plan, a lot of new jobs aren't created. And when the program is over, the city has a real budget problem trying to switch them back to local payrolls.

Unemployment can only be solved in the long run in the private sector unless we are prepared to have everyone work for the government forever. If this happens, I'm not too sure who will pay their salaries.

If we are to have federal pump-priming, let it be used to encourage the private sector to expand and hire more people by giving incentives to purchase new plants and equipment.

If we are worried about unemployment, let's use the funds to retrain workers because there are jobs available.

Once these retrained people are hired in the private sector, they are off the public dole and not a problem again when the federal funds run out.

IF WE WANT a healthy economy in 1977, we can't scare people out of buying, predicting what could happen if such and such doesn't happen.

If we want a strong economy to last longer than 1977, it can't be done by federal government manipulations. We have seen over the last four years what happens when the government manages.

To make 1977 a great year requires everyone's confidence that it will be a great year.

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