

editorial opinion

Think of kids' education when voting on millage

A sound educational system is the foundation for a strong community. Therefore, voters in the Farmington School District should approve the four-mill property tax renewal on the April 5 ballot.

A misguided temptation exists among residents to strike back at the tax system by voting down school millage requests.

That's folly. The price of quality education continues to spiral.

A gentleman puts OCRC in its place

Bill Miliken is so gentle of voice and manner, but when the governor of Michigan publicly bawls out someone, his target had better listen.

And so the ears of the Oakland County Road Commission should still be pink after what Miliken said last week about the OCRC's crude attempts to shoulder aside the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority as the author of public transportation policy.

The SEMTA board is designated by state law as the transit agency for southeast Michigan and will be making the transportation decisions," said the governor. The road commission has been trying to ignore the fact that only SEMTA has a legislative mandate to be in the public transportation business.

"Now is not the time to try to do away with SEMTA and attempt to create other agencies or to fractionalize responsibility for public transportation in this region because of disagreements over specific policies," said the governor. The road commission had been brazen enough to suggest that the Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties road commissions take over that function.

The fact is the federal government—and the state, to some extent—are saying today, "We're simply not going to work on a one-on-one basis with every unit of government," said the governor. Only a few days before, the Oakland County Road Commission had been trying to bull its way to federal attention by submitting its gimmicky slide show transit plan to the federal Urban Mass Transit Administration.

"Bill Miliken is gentle in his wording, but what he has delivered is clearly a stinging rebuke to the behavior of the Oakland County Road Commission. And the governor of Michigan is dead right."

If NEA wants political funds, it will have to ask members

Let's say you and I both live in Communityville, with a total of 10,000 registered voters.

Let's say there's a property tax millage election, and the usual 15 per cent turnout means only 1,500 persons go to the polls.

Let's say that 800 of your folks are against it, and 700 of my folks are for it. You would conclude your side had won, 800 to 700.

But I come back and say: "Whoa! There are still 8,500 who didn't vote against the tax hike. We will count them as 'yes' votes. Therefore, the tax hike wins, 9,200 to 800."

YOU MIGHT ASK what kind of dictatorial, vicious, power-mad thinking is going on here, and for an answer I would have to refer you to the National Education Association, potentially one of the most politically potent labor unions in America.

With 1.8 million members, NEA ranks second only to the Teamsters (nearly two million) and ahead of the United Auto Workers (1.4 million). Here in the suburbs, most teachers are in collective bargaining units that are affiliated with NEA.

Well, here's how NEA has sought to operate: It has a checkoff system for political contributions whereby every member is assessed by a payroll deduction. In 1976, this system was good enough to raise \$3 million, with \$800,000 going to Jimmy Carter and most of the rest to other Democrats running for Congress.

Now if you happen to be a Republican or just don't want to contribute, you can get your money back IF you ask for it with the appropriate paperwork. In other words, you automatically contribute to the political campaigns of NEA-backed candidates unless you are angry enough or independent enough to demand your hard-earned money back.

It's the same as if all 10,000 voters in Communityville were recorded as voting yes on a tax proposal unless they went to the polls and voted no.

THE FEDERAL ELECTIONS Commission (FEC) has proposed a regulation that would stop this checkoff system, and NEA is sore about it, figuring it has a lot of political clout to lose.

FEC regulations take effect unless Congress

acts. Voters who cast ballots against school millages may believe they are getting even with "the system." But, in reality, they are cheating themselves.

When you walk into that voting booth on Tuesday, forget about your particular prejudice about the school system and that nasty tax assessment you just received.

Rather, think about the kids who need a good education to survive in today's world. If you received a lousy education, think about what a better place your community will be with better educated residents.

IF YOU RECEIVED a good education, think about how you would be cheating defenseless children by cutting them off at the educational fount.

Presently, the school district is working with too few funds, yet administrators are striving to provide the community's children with a comprehensive education. The \$2 million generated from this renewal barely will keep the system going.

Without it, Farmington School District education will take a nose dive.

A lot of nay-sayers claim "frills" should be cut. But for the most part, a school budget is locked in with fixed costs. Only a few areas can be cut—and these are the areas which most directly affect a child's education.

If the millage is defeated, administrators and board members must decide on these alternatives in considering cuts: laying off teachers; eliminating the academically talented program and reading services; cutting or reducing art, music, physical education and media services; cutting class offerings.

Even with the renewal, the district only will be receiving a three per cent increase—hardly what you would call living in the lap of luxury when the consumer price index is going up by six per cent.

Most importantly, remember why you moved to the Farmington-West Bloomfield area. You wanted a better educational system for your kids. It's up to you to keep that educational system flourishing.

A yes vote isn't going to break you, but a no vote will break the back of education in the Farmington School District.



Tim Richard

acts to "proscribe" or veto them. NEA lobbied Congress hard to overturn the FEC regulation, but as of this writing Congress hasn't acted, which is good. Deadline for congressional action (if any) was March 30.

It's good to report that a regulatory agency did something right, and it's also good to report Congress declined to do something wrong, so let's hear three or four cheers for the FEC and Congress for putting a halt to NEA's heavy-handed money-raising.

No one is saying NEA can't raise money from voluntary contributions. No one is saying NEA can't spend its money. But Washington is saying NEA can't make a payroll deduction for political purposes without asking teachers' permission first.

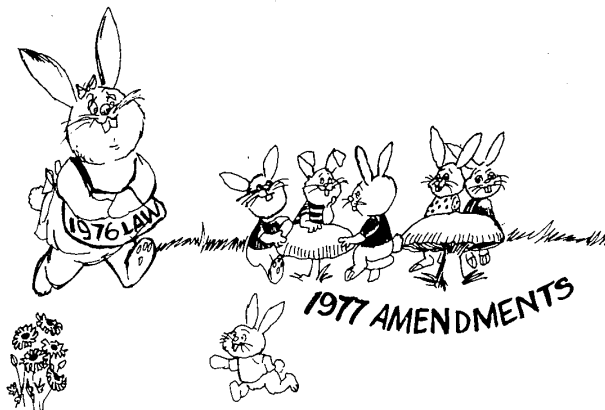
TEACHERS UNIONS tend to be run by persons heavily oriented toward getting what they want from government and politics, which is to say, the political left.

Among teachers as a group, however, there is no such monolithic, left-wing militancy. Teachers cross the political spectrum. Indeed, their lack of uniform thinking is the chief reason their union leaders aren't more powerful than they are, which is plenty powerful enough.

In practice, however, only 10 to 15 per cent of teachers were asking for their political dollars back. The rest were either too apathetic (like other Americans, in general) or didn't want to make a hassle over a buck or two.

But NEA did want to make a hassle over a buck or two, multiplied by 1.8 million members.

Teachers are good folks, but you gotta watch out for those teachers union militants.



One new law breeds a great need to amend it

A sage used to say "No one was ever hurt by a bill the legislature didn't pass."

As our legislature grinds through its annual session, thousands of bills will be considered. Each one that finally passes will add more government to our lives.

A Great Falls, Mont. newspaper summed it up very well.

It recently noted that more than a thousand bills have been introduced in the 1976 legislature and commented that, "It hardly seems possible that so many things need doing and correcting" in one session.

It doesn't matter whether the legislature meets annually or biennially, or, for that matter, three times a year. The lawmakers will always find more than enough to do.

One reason is that legislation generates legislation. A law passed this year will have to be corrected, amended or otherwise modified—even repealed—next year. Often, laws are passed which produce effects the sponsors didn't anticipate, and those effects have to be dealt with later.

A good example is the proposal to legalize prostitution, introduced by a Billings legislator.

FORTUNATELY THE BILL was killed.

Had the measure passed, the next legislative session would have seen a flood of bills designed to make prostitution a more perfect profession. Among the first would be proposals to set up complicated rate structures, with a concurrent drive to place brothels under the jurisdiction of the Public Service Commission.

Questions of advertising regulation would arise. Some senator would seek to attach a presumption of malice to the transmittal of anti-social diseases.

Shock...and honors

Suburban good and bad

Not since the 1967 riots in Detroit have I seen these suburbs as shocked or as frightened as now in the aftermath of the kidnap murder of Tim King of Birmingham.

Somewhere in our midst is lurking a very, very sick person. Until he is caught, none of us will feel safe unless our children are in sight.

Fourteen-year-old Linda Rose, who lives in Livonia where Tim's body was found, sent in a poem which said:

I wish I could go out and play;
My mom says, "Sorry, not today."
I'm scared to walk from here to school.
"Be in at dark!" That is the rule.
Why does all this have to happen?
All the murder and kidnappin'.
I wish it would all end today;
And all bad wounds would mend some way.

IN THIS connection, I think it's worthwhile taking another look at capital punishment.

For a person as sick as the murderer of Tim King and probably at least three other children in Oakland County, capital punishment is surely no real deterrent. For a punishment to deter, it takes a sane person to evaluate the risks that criminal action will bring. But this murderer is plainly not sane.

So once he is caught and convicted to life in prison, has he been adequately punished? I'm not so sure, especially after watching Mr. and Mrs. King in their agony and after taking with a lot of very frightened suburban parents.

The Old Testament talks of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." This may be harsh justice, but for this kind of savagery, it may well be just.

ON THE happier side of the news, it's a deep pleasure to notice that the City of Livonia has decided to honor a man of great distinction while he is still alive and going strong.

This Saturday, Ford Recreation Center will be rededicated as the Eddie Edgar Sports Arena, in honor of Eddie's distinguished career as journalist, local pioneer and all-around fine guy.

Eddie started his career on the Detroit Free Press in 1923, rising to the lofty position of sports editor during the golden age of sports when Ty Cobb, Gar Wood, Mickey Cochrane and Gus Dorais were the greats. After retirement in 1948, Eddie became executive secretary of the Bowling

Eccentricities

by HANK HOGAN



Environmentalists would insist on a Sporting House Sling Act, designed to keep the houses out of the scenic areas (or in the scenic areas—we're not sure). Other environmentalists would oppose them altogether on the grounds they constitute pollution. The other side would say they provide jobs.

The civil rights people would appear to demand that the houses be kept free of discrimination by race and, we're afraid, by sex, too. Senior citizens would lobby to make sure no woman is deprived of her job because of age. Women's lib groups would insist on measures to protect the dignity of the prostitute.

Licensing and taxation proposals would occupy committees endlessly.

NATURALLY, LABOR WOULD sponsor bills to establish rules for job safety and hours. There'd be the question of union houses and the right to strike. Vacation rights, health insurance and pension benefits would have to be settled.

Consumer groups would argue for refund provisions. Welfare groups would argue for free fun provisions.

And the legislature would run overtime. That's one little example of the sort of thing that causes all that legislation.

Observation Point

by PHILIP H. POWER



Proprietors Association of Greater Detroit, and in the 16 years that followed he probably was more responsible than any other person for the growth of bowling as a sport in this area.

Always he has been a community builder. In 1964, at the age of 67, Eddie started his third career, this time with these newspapers as a reporter and columnist. Today, at 79 and going strong, he's still at it.

It's an honor to know and work with a man who is not only a legend in his own time but who is also getting the recognition he so well deserves.

AND WHILE we're at it, another local suburban man is in the news these days.

Keith Geiger, who teaches math at Livonia's Stevenson High School, is running for president of the Michigan Education Association, at \$2,000 strong one of the most powerful labor and political groups in the state.

Geiger's tussle with MEA incumbent president David McMahon is touted by insiders as close. Geiger says he's got an important advantage: "We were local association presidents and have negotiated local contracts—and our opponents haven't."

"You can't address problems if you haven't been there," Geiger adds.

Although some of his ideas (regional bargaining for teacher contracts, for example) might send the hair on school officials' necks straight up, Geiger was well respected by local school officials while he served on the Livonia Education Association bargaining team.

"He was one tough son of a gun at the bargaining table," one administrator told me, "but once you got an agreement with him he kept his word. And he is really concerned about the kids and their welfare."

Voting will be at the MEA convention at the end of April in Dearborn, and a lot of local teachers will be there pulling for their man.

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