

editorial opinion

Spring fever

Take precautions and enjoy it

An overzealous child becomes overexerted and drowns. A careless driver mows down a young bicyclist.

While the spring warmth turns many of us into free souls, anxious to cast off the cobwebs of winter lethargy, we all should beware of the tendency to become careless.

Every summer we hear of persons needlessly injured or killed because of some haphazard action. Children are, many times, the victims of such incidents.

But whether it's an adult or child who falls prey to spring fever accidents, the results are the same—a life is traumatized or snuffed out.

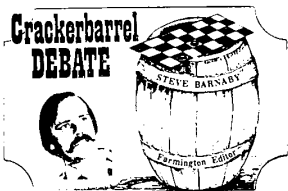
To avoid such accidents, we all should take necessary precautions. If nothing else, parents should prepare their children for summer months activities.

Take the time to teach your child how to swim, for example.

Water sports offer Michigan residents some of the finest pastimes in the country, but surprisingly, too few persons are familiar with the rudiments of swimming.

Motorists, both young and old alike, should resist the temptation to drive just a little bit faster—that extra five miles per hour might just be enough to ruin a life.

MANY SUBURBAN residents are fortunate to have open spaces to enjoy such recreation as



horseback riding, jogging, hiking and motorcycling. When you drive, keep an eye out for these activities which you've become unused to seeing over the winter months.

Many suburban areas are devoid of sidewalks, so you just may come upon someone walking in the street. It may not be a wise for that person to be walking in the street, but if you hit a pedestrian, it's your fault.

Take precautions. Classes are offered in many recreational leisure activities as well as first aid classes. Taking an hour or two a week to become a little more proficient in your hobby not only makes it a little more enjoyable, but a lot safer.



Olympia II in suburbs is sound business decision

There seems to be so much negative comment about Olympia II and the Red Wings moving out of downtown Detroit that you would think the world was coming to an end.

Suppose you have a retail business and you check and find that all of your charge customers live in the suburbs and your store is downtown?

If you're smart, you move your store to a suburban shopping center where your customers are.

Before the Detroit Lions left for Pontiac they checked where their season ticket holders lived and found that they were better serving their fans by moving north.

A new arena or stadium does create a better economic climate around it, because of the service businesses flock to it. There is no doubt that Detroit would have profited from the Red Wings and Pistons staying downtown and playing in a new arena.

But we get so parochial in our views. If the new arena actually will draw more ticket-buyers to Pontiac, then business activity as a whole will improve in the metropolitan area and in Michigan.

And let's face it, an arena outside of downtown Detroit will draw more fans. Take the Pistons, for example. They draw about 7,000 fans a night. Half black and half white. They say it takes 8,000 fans to break even.

THE ABILITY TO FIELD a top-notch team depends on how much money the team can take in so they can bid, attract and keep the best talent.

The top players in basketball are black so you would expect the sport to have the largest number of black fans. But the Pistons are barely filling half the Cobo Hall Arena. So where are the supporters? They can't seem to attract more blacks, and the whites aren't coming.

SEMCOG has work

Now's a poor time to quit

At this writing, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners is considering a demagogic resolution to withdraw from the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments and another to put the question of paying SEMCOG dues on the ballot.

The shallowness of the ballot question is beyond belief. SEMCOG provides no direct services to the public, and it's inconceivable that the average voter will support such a millage question, no matter how small the amount.

SEMCOG is a voluntary association of governments. As such, it serves mainly local government—cities, townships, counties. SEMCOG has resisted the temptation of some, such as former State House Speaker William Ryan's bill, to turn it into a government.

OAKLAND'S CONVULSIONS over the SEMCOG membership question come at an odd time.

On the board, Bedford Township, Westland and Garden City—three Wayne County suburbs hardly known for regional awareness—have joined SEMCOG within the last year. On the other, here is Oakland County—which heretofore has enjoyed a reputation of governmental as well as cultural enlightenment—considering going the isolationist route.

What appears to have angered the Oakland politicians is the new law governing the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority. SEMTA board members used to be picked by SEMCOG (two-thirds) and the governor (one-third). Now, most of the appointing power will be shifted to the mayor of Detroit and the county boards of commissioners.

With one notable exception: Oakland County commissioners will get to appoint only one of Oakland's three members. And so Oakland politicians are asking: What's the use of belonging to SEMCOG?

IN A WAY, they are right. The Michigan Legislature and Gov. William G. Milliken, spurred on by Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, did a bad thing when they robbed SEMCOG of SEMTA appointment powers.

But the Oakland politicians are off-base in blaming SEMCOG for the change. SEMCOG would be unhappy as Oakland about the restructuring of the SEMTA board.



The suburban whites think twice about going downtown. Whether that's right or wrong, it's true. Detroit isn't as bad as its reputation, but people make decisions on what they imagine is real, not what is really real.

If the Pistons want to be a continual contender they will have to do what the Lions and the Red Wings have done. Go where the fans are.

The Red Wings had to make this decision to keep their organization alive.

Whenever anyone says this, they are criticized as anti-Detroit. But where are our cheerleaders for metropolitan Detroit?

If something isn't done to get more spectators to games or events like the circus (which only drew 250 fans one Saturday afternoon at the old Olympia), Detroit won't have any sports teams left and won't be able to attract high-grade entertainment.

BUT ANYTIME SOMEONE wants to move to a better location for business purposes, politicians get on soap boxes and accuse them of deserting downtown.

Until these politicians are prepared to subsidize the sports teams, they should let businessmen make business decisions.

How you can have an impact

A lot of our money goes for taxes and contributions and payments, and we never see the results. It's frustrating, because we get the feeling we've had no impact on society or the community.

But local businesses have an opportunity to have a profound impact on their communities through the 1977 United Foundation capital fund division approaches them in the coming weeks.

UP's once-in-six-years capital campaign aims to collect some \$22 million for 54 voluntary agencies and non-profit hospitals in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties. The funds will be used for new buildings, renovations and major items of capital equipment.

These business gifts will change things. The givers will be able to see the results. The results will benefit worthy people directly.

Where will the money go? Beaumont Hospital in

Royal Oak, Botsford Hospital in Farmington Hills, Providence Hospital in Southfield, St. Mary Hospital in Livonia.

The Boys Club in Redford Township, Detroit Area Boy Scout camps—D Bar A, Howell, Rifle River and Silver Lake, Boys Republic in Farmington, Huron Valley Girl Scout camps—Hilltop, Crawford and Linden, Metropolitan Detroit Girl Scouts—Camp Holly, South Oakland Girl Scout camps—Narrian and Yntema, North Oakland Girl Scouts—Camp Sherwood.

Jewish Vocational Service—south Oakland satellite facility, a YMCA branch in Farmington, Improvements to the Wayne-Westland YMCA, The YMCA Oakland branch.

And others in the metropolitan area. Anyone care to have an impact on the community?

New SBT package looks good as tax principle

It looks good, governor. Gov. William G. Milliken summed up not only good economic sense but a lot of personal courage in calling for drastic revisions of the single business tax (SBT).

It took personal courage for the governor to concede there was much wrong with the first version, which went into effect in 1976.

Milliken has listened carefully to the objections to SBT and has made known, in broad outline, his proposals to correct the problems. At the same time, he has underscored his feelings that SBT has its good points: It stabilized state revenues, and it replaced a hodge-podge of eight different business taxes with a single tax on all kinds of business.

WE NOTE with satisfaction that the governor's proposed changes seem in line with the recommendations this newspaper made in a series of editorials last February.

"The tax would be computed on the gross profit of the business. The gross profit would include profits of the business plus all compensation to owners of the business," he said.

That sounds like adequate recognition of the ability to pay principle. That principle isn't observed, however, under the present SBT, which is essentially a value-added tax. That ability to pay was being ignored became readily apparent when, under recession conditions, many businesses found their state tax bills soaring, not shrinking. The new proposal seems aimed at correcting this problem.

Milliken, in another message, called for adoption of a revenue stabilization fund, following the suggestion of his blue-ribbon commission on the state's economy.

This idea must be adopted hand-in-hand with SBT reform. Business income, particularly in Michigan, is volatile, rising more in good times

and falling more in bad times than such factors as wages, interest, rents and expenditures.

THE GOVERNOR'S proposal would remove taxes for workers' compensation and unemployment compensation from the SBT tax base.

That makes elemental sense. Why tax taxes on taxes? Moreover, those taxes for workers' compensation and unemployment compensation are certainly no gauge of ability to pay.

What is a little cloudier in the governor's message is the suggestion of credits for business cases with small incomes. Some questions have been raised as to what these mean and whether they are adequate.

Surely, however, those cannot be major stumbling blocks as the Michigan Legislature hammers out a new SBT. We will expect our legislators to go over the governor's bill with a fine tooth comb; that's what legislators are for. But we would be disappointed if the clear, logical reforms the governor has suggested were to be dragged down by wrangling over details.

IN THE STATE senate, Milliken's SBT reforms are now in the hands of the senate finance committee, the correlative house committee having declined to take them up right away.

The finance committee is headed by Sen. Patrick McCollough (D-Dearborn), who, as every politically aware person knows, has a burning itch to be governor. That's fine, it's the American way, and good for Pat. But out of behalf of the all-in-businesses in Michigan, we must urge that neither Milliken nor McCollough uses SBT as a political tool, to pandor votes by playing on the fears and pocketbooks of persons who want to get back to business.

The goals are revenue stability, taxation based on ability to pay, and some simplicity in the tax forms. Those can't be such difficult goals to achieve among politicians of good will.

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