

editorial opinion

City manager search needs public forum

The search begins.

Finding a new city manager to meet the challenge of pulling Farmington Hills together after a difficult six months won't be easy. But a comprehensive, well-planned search marks a good opening effort.

Using executive search firms, which the council suggested recently, is one method of seeking candidates. But we hope the Hills council will avail itself of other opportunities to attract qualified candidates.

Advertising in professional publications, such as the International City Managers Association's Newsletter, probably will bring a truckload of resumes, far more than the council needs. But it's a fair and efficient method of getting the word out.

And Hills residents and employees deserve the chance to attract the most qualified person to take the helm in the years ahead. Professional association advertising offers another advantage—applicants not affiliated with professional search firms may be attracted to Farmington Hills.

Despite the climate, the Hills is an attractive community. In fact, we expect the task of screening applicants to be one of the most difficult facing the council this fall. But the job will be well worth the effort if the final interview phase includes top candidates.

FINAL INTERVIEWING will give Hills residents the first opportunity to view the Open Meetings Law in action regarding personnel. Although that section of the law has its critics, we believe it is sound public policy.

Regarding hiring practices, what can or should be done in secret that cannot be accomplished in public?

Councilmembers and city officials must be aware that a fishbowl existence comes with the territory. If an applicant balks at open interviewing, that tells us something about the way he or she views public access to information.

AT THE same time, issues such as low income housing, the city's future growth patterns, and attitudes toward the public deserve some airing in the interview process. The kinds of questions asked by councilmembers may be just as important as the kinds of answers they receive.

In addition, we'd like to see the public get a chance to ask questions of candidates. The Farmington Board of Education recently interviewed applicants for a board appointment, employing the card method of soliciting public questions. The orderly method proved effective, providing public input without disorderly interruptions. It's a method that could be translated easily in City Hall.

Finally, we would hope the councilmembers put aside all bias in its search for a city manager. Granted, the city management field is basically white male. But we hope a qualified woman or black or any other person regarded as a minority has a good chance of working in Farmington Hills.

Back to yecch days

It's bad enough that Halloween advertising starts right after Labor Day, that Christmas advertising starts right after Halloween and that St. Valentine's Day advertising starts right after Christmas.

But it sure must be depressing to a kid to see "back to school" advertising hurled at him a full month before the onslaught teachers, blackboards and books.

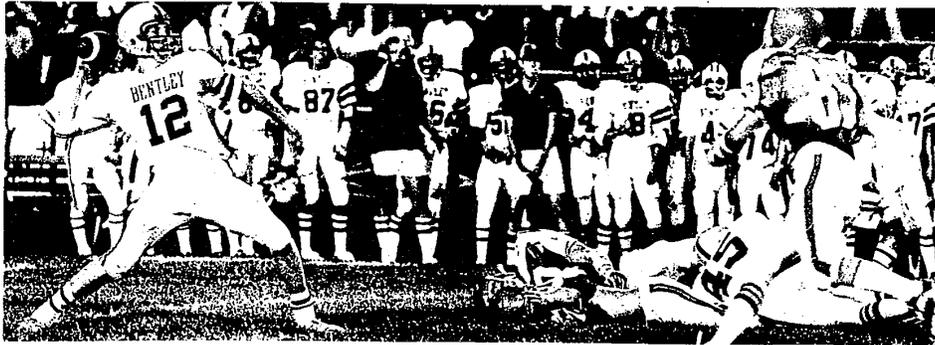
Indeed, the back to school message runs in commercial messages for a period as long as most adults' vacations. Families who head for the north country in August are bombarded with back to school ads before they even reach Bay City.

It's all a working man or woman can do to think of the office or plant two days before the actual return to work. What suffering must our beloved offspring endure when they have to view bombardments of ads for school clothing, books, supplies and gimmicks weeks in advance of the dreaded date.

Christmas advertising isn't quite so horrible because Christmas is a nice season. But yecch! Back to school!

Surely, our local chamber of commerce could tap the creativity of American business by sponsoring a contest to give a new name to back to school advertising. Call it autumnal equinox sales. Call it colorful fall bargains. Call it growing up days. Call it anything but back to school. Have mercy on the little darlings, whether they deserve it or not.

"THE GAMES THE THING..."



The game, not standings, draws crowd

Normally, one would write about Bill Veeck in relation only to baseball. Not me. I'm going to parlay him into football, high school football at that. After awhile I'll explain why.

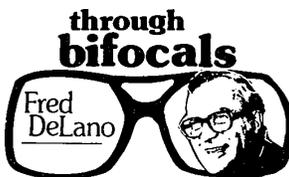
The most informative special section devoted exclusively to football ever prepared by Observer & Eccentric writers will accompany all of our editions Thursday, Sept. 7. That will be the day before the 1978 prep season opens in Michigan.

Schedules of all 34 high schools which our sports staff covers will be one of the features, but far from the only one. Roundups on the prospects in every league in which these teams compete will give you coaches' pre-season thinking as to the title races.

The so-called "road to the Silverdome," the print system by which teams reach the state playoffs will be one of the features. Personal columns by John Bozzo and W. W. Edgar will take the reader behind the scenes of the gridiron world. Margaret Miller's article on the color which our hard-working high school bands add to the football spectacle, and Ellie Graham's piece on cheerleaders are "must" reading. And don't overlook the spectacular cover by photographer Dick Kelley and artist Glenn Merrill.

To these several names add the bylines of Doug Funke, Ken Voyles, Dennis (Doc) O'Connor, Marty Budner, Brad Emons, Dave Saunders, Chuck Risak and Tom Baer—experts all—as the backbone of this section.

SO WHERE DOES that man named Veeck, who was reared on baseball in a Chicago of long ago, fit



into the picture? Not specifically as principal owner of the White Sox, I grant. Nor as former No. 1 man of the old St. Louis Browns or, later on, the Cleveland Indians.

It's more as Veeck the showman, Veeck the philosopher, Veeck the realist.

The last time the White Sox were over here to play the Tigers, a Free Press reporter wrote of an interview with the 64-year-old Veeck which finally got around to Bill's basic box office philosophy in about the 17th paragraph.

The main point to Bill's thinking is that the game is the thing—today's game—and that the world's fate isn't determined by the won-and-lost columns.

"Position in the standings has absolutely nothing to do on a particular day with whether that game is good or not. And that's the thing I'm afraid we all tend to lose sight of," was one of the quotes attributed to Veeck in the "morning friendly."

How to measure Milliken's coattails

Normally, political ads aren't a reliable source of voter information. But it will be interesting to watch certain Republican outpourings in 1978. They will be a major clue to the future intentions of Gov. William Milliken.

Let's start at the beginning.

Everyone was shocked when Milliken persuaded James Brickley, his former lieutenant governor now on leave from the Eastern Michigan University presidency, to rejoin him in the No. 2 slot. Brickley wanted a bigger job with more money. What would induce him to be lieutenant governor four more years?

The key words are "four more years." It's entirely possible Milliken wouldn't serve out his term if re-elected. Where would he go?

ONE LINE of reasoning says Bob Griffin, if re-elected to the U.S. Senate, won't serve out his term either. Gov. Milliken could appoint Lt. Gov. Brickley to the senate. Or Milliken could resign as governor and Gov. Brickley could appoint Milliken senator.

That seems like a lot of fuss and bother. I think moderate Republicans, if they have any sense, should be looking to Milliken for a spot on the national ticket.

Today Milliken is 56 and looks closer to 40. If re-elected, he will have won the governorship of a major industrial state three times, in an era when one industrial state after another was falling to Democrats.

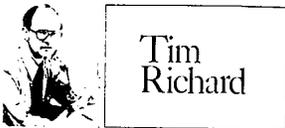
WHAT PUZZLES me is why no one is talking about it.

I put the question point-blank to Peter Fletcher, Republican national committeeman and a Milliken political confidant.

The governor, he said, "doesn't have the all-consuming drive" to go for the presidency—the months of primaries and politicking.

Milliken might just be a compromise presidential choice if the 1980 convention deadlocks.

More likely, Fletcher said, Milliken could be a vice-presidential choice. A senator from a non-industrial state might enjoy having an industrial



state governor—one of the senior governors in the nation—as his political partner.

In a tight convention, a Michigan delegation committed to favorite son Milliken could bargain for the vice-presidency or even a cabinet appointment.

ALL OF THIS pre-supposes two things: That Milliken is re-elected and that he brings some other Republicans into office on his coattails.

Whether the can and will be re-elected I leave to the tender efforts of Democratic nominees Bill Fitzgerald and Libby Maynard and to the voters.

The question, if you recall the opening stanza of these prognostications, is what kind of effort the Grand Old Party will make to elect other Republi-

These words should be emblazoned in bronze and hung in every newspaper, radio and television sports office, and maybe on every sports scoreboard at all competitive levels—little league, high school, semi-pro, sandlot, college and professional.

Some of the greatest duds in sports history have been supposedly climactic battles for the championship in a league (and you can nick your sport), or even for a national championship.

Yet some of the finest contests for sheer suspense have been tooth-and-nail struggles between combatants who couldn't even spell title, let alone win one.

THUS, AS WE APPROACH a new high school grid campaign, don't put the knock on a family suggestion that you go out on a weekend and take in the spectacle. Forget that grandstand quarterback second guessing and applaud the kids for their effort—win, lose or draw.

There's no way to shut the founts of glory for the winners, nor should there be. It's fun to win. But it's also fun just to be in the contest, even the band, or leading cheers, whether it's in a victorious cause or not.

And Veeck is right; the game is the thing—today's game. As any oldtimer would say, "After owning the St. Louis Browns, how could he preach anything else?"

But it's just as true for a Brother Rice which went undefeated in its march to the 1977 state Class A grid championship as for a Plymouth Canton, which was 0-2. If one waits long enough, the won-lost pendulum will swing your way.

cans—in other words, how far will the governor extend his coattails?

At the 1977 state convention, Bill McLaughlin, Milliken's choice as state chairman, almost got dumped by delegates angry that so much money went to help the top of the ticket and so little to the legislative candidates.

McLaughlin survived, but his acceptance speech indicated he got "the message." Hereafter, it would be a team effort.

In 1966, Gov. George Romney extended his coattails and helped elect a young senator named Griffin, six congressmen and a bunch of legislators. It made Romney the presidential front-runner for a year.

In 1954, Gov. G. Mennen Williams led a Democratic sweep and made himself a national power for several years afterward.

Fletcher said many Republicans will be helped in 1978; the governor can raise only \$250,000 of his own money under campaign finance laws, and the rest can be forwarded to other candidates.

And that's why it will be interesting to see how many GOP candidates get the coattails treatment this year.

A good tennis father?

I noticed him sitting there all by himself by the tennis court. He looked in pretty good shape, as if he were quite an athlete in his day.

His eyes were glued to the court. He was barking orders: "Watch your alley!" and "get to the net."

The object of his commands was a wee boy with a racket that looked twice his size. This was a tournament, and every time the man opened his mouth, the boy got a little more nervous.

I was observing a tennis father.

NOW WE ALL know what tennis mothers are. They are those unselfish, lovable gals who devote their lives to driving their kids to tennis practice and tournaments.

They only have time for things like community volunteer work when it doesn't interfere with the little professional's schedule.

They are not necessarily good tennis players themselves, and they can be easily identified at a tennis match by their large bags filled with half-finished needlepoint and half-finished books.

On the sidelines, they disagree with most of the ump's calls if the calls are against their offspring.

They are aggressive and competitive.

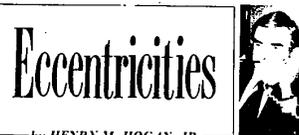
They are only interested in tennis for the good of their children.

Their first question to their children, if they miss a match, is: "Did you win?"

THE TENNIS FATHER is different. He tries to be nonchalant about his kids' involvement in tennis, but he comes home early several nights a week so he can hit the ball with his child.

He buys the child the newest rackets and the newest tennis shoes to make sure the youngster has the best.

He was probably a decent player in his day, but



by HENRY M. HAGAN, JR.

probably never played the tennis circuit.

Parents always say they want to give their kids the things they didn't have when they were kids.

In the case of the tennis father, he is really living vicariously through his child, savoring each win as if he were on the court. This is kind of a reverse twist to giving kids things because the parent is really trying to give himself what he missed in childhood.

He lives by the creed: "If winning isn't important, why keep score?"

He drives his child to be competitive and win.

THE INTERESTING part about the progeny of these tennis fathers is that most of them lose interest in tennis after a while because they become tired of it.

It is not like the child who learns the piano at a young age and later becomes a concert pianist, because the child piano player is not faced with the possibility of losing each week, and hence displeasure from the parent he or she is trying to please.

However, the tennis father is a devoted father and spends time with his kids. The competitiveness he instills in the child may help the youngster in later life—if the youngster doesn't become a neurotic mess.

A Division

of
Suburban Communications
Corporation

Farmington Observer

"Successor of the Farmington Enterprise"

Steve Barnaby
Editor

2210 West Nine Mile
Southfield, MI 48075
(313) 552-5400

John Reddy, General Mgr.
Thomas A. Fioridan, Executive Editor

George J. Hagan, Advertising Director, Fred J. Wright, Circulation Director

Philip H. Power

Chairman of the Board
(on leave of absence)

Richard D. Aginjan

President
Chief Executive Officer