

Monday's Commentary

Progressives face tough uphill election battle

No matter how you play with the election statistics, one fact rings clear — the two remaining Farmington Hills council incumbents are going to have a tough time getting re-elected.

The conservative trend which has been chipping away at the council for years has become a completely overwhelming the city's legislative body.

One political observer put it this way: "they plunked for their side and we plunked for ours."

For those unfamiliar with political lingo, plunking is when voters cast ballots for just one or two candidates rather than voting an entire ticket.

And the battle lines are drawn clearly — those for subsidized low-income senior citizen housing and those against.

Victimized by this were incumbents Cathy Jones and Keith Deacon who went down to defeat. Mrs. Jones was a progressive supporter of the housing project. Deacon was a moderate on the issue.

This leaves only Jan Dolan and Joanne Smith as council progressives. And their showing at the primary polls was poor.

One of the lowest voter turnouts in Hills' history, 12.3 percent, the election reflected a discontent with the status quo and an astounding amount of apathy among progressive supporters.

In short, the "nays" may be noisy. Conservatives Donn Wolf, William Lange and Jack Burwell, all opponents of the housing plan,

garnered strong support from both absentee ballot voters and those who went to the polls.

Keep in mind that the vast majority of absentee voters are senior citizens — those who would be expected to generally support the progressives on the housing issue.

But a look at the statistics shows that Wolf and Lange tallied 11 percent each from absentee ballots. Burwell received 10 percent of that vote — in total 32 percent among the three.

Deacon, Dolan, Jones and Smith garnered collectively 43 percent of that same vote, with Smith and Dolan receiving 28 percent of that column.

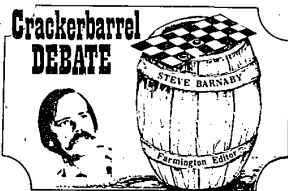
Extending the absentee vote, the statistics are even more grim for Dolan and Smith.

Wolf received 20 percent of voters going to the polls; Lange, 18 percent; and Burwell, 16 percent. Smith received 6 percent and Dolan 7 percent. And based on that vote alone, excluding absentees, Dolan would have placed sixth and Joanne Smith eighth.

Political unknown Michael O'Hair would have placed fifth on this basis and Planning Commissioner Shirley Stadler, fourth. So it was the senior citizen vote which saved the day for Dolan and Smith.

But their luck could run out in the November general election.

IF VOTING TRENDS remain constant, reflecting primary voter sympathy, the two progressives could be in deep trouble. General elections for local



elections usually increase to about 20 percent of those registered. And while absentee voters remain generally constant, those persons going to the polls will comprise the majority of the 7 or 8 percent voter increase.

This is where the moderates play the most important part. O'Hair, Stadler and Terry Sever could draw away votes from the two progressives, knocking them both out of contention. All three moderates had a higher percentage vote among those going to the polls than did Dolan or Smith.

But statistics have a way of becoming distorted when examining elections. I.e. the predicted victory of Thomas Dewey over President Harry Truman in 1948.

As Jimmy the Greek might do, we must consider the intangibles.

To place in the top four in November Dolan and Smith must put a fire under their supporters. Both have shown vast popular support in past elections. Whether either can wean supporters away from their easy chairs in November is the critical challenge for both.

In the past year, the two have been under strong political opposition pressure. Although a recall attempt against them failed, it was a sign that political support was eroding.

Their strong stands in support of senior citizen income housing has definitely hurt them. But to their credit, they have stood by their guns.

Hampering them further is the present petition drive sponsored by the Citizens for a More Responsible Government (CMRG). The drive calls for an advisory referendum on zoning for Freedom and Drake property on which the senior citizen-low income project would be built.

A thinly veiled attempt at destroying the project completely, the petition drive has rallied voters around conservative candidates. And while Lange and Wolf campaigned hard to win votes, Burwell barely lifted a finger and managed to place a strong third.

Burwell's strength came simply from the energy of the CMRG movement. Whether that movement maintains its impetus will determine Burwell's fate.



"Around the edge"

by Jackie Klein

Who's the key to my heart?

I just discovered a mailer under a pile of bills, promising me a key for opening doors to better relationships.

In case you haven't guessed, the folder was from a dating service. It said a staff of professionals, not one of them a computer, would introduce me to my perfect mate.

He would be similar to me in temperament, sociability, moral outlook, interest, education, working knowledge and personal background. He wouldn't be a clone, but a reasonable facsimile of me.

No tall, dark, handsome, wealthy stranger has yet shown up with a key to open the door to my heart.

You see, there's a catch to this matchmaking game. You have to take an exam on the mailer and return it to the dating service. The test is supposed to reveal all.

The first question is, "Should the theory of evolution be taught in public schools?" It all depends on whether you want to make monkeys out of the teachers and kids. How many parents understand Darwin's theory?

"SHOULD SINGLE men and women cover take trips together otherwise unaccompanied?" was the next query. I checked the "undecided" box on that one. My generation didn't approve of unmarried couples living together, no less traveling without a body guard and three chaperones.

The next biggie was, "Can they ever

be justified?" I suppose it can if you're a thief. If you lift a package of sugarless gum, can that be justified by good check-ups from your dentist? There are many variables.

"Do you normally repeat the good jokes you hear?"

That was a toughie. I haven't remembered a good joke, or even a bad one, for 20 years. I even forgot to write them down. Will my perfect mate think I have no sense of humor? Some of my column readers wonder the same thing.

I don't quite dig the question asking whether going to night clubs is permissible for people who work with children. Does that mean parents or professionals? If you can afford a baby-sitter or you have a willing grandmother, why not go out and groove?

But don't take your kids to a cabaret — if you can find one within driving distance of Southfield — unless they're old enough to drink and are willing to be seen with you in public.

"AFTER YOU die, will you be penalized for your sins on earth?" How can they ask me that question when they haven't even fixed me up with a guy yet? Besides, I don't know anyone who ever came back to tell if they're suffering for their earthly sins.

The quiz asks if my moods rise and fall for reasons I can't explain. Taking this exam is enough to put me in the pits, and I have no trouble explaining that. Otherwise I'm even-tempered —

always miserable. That's what my kids tell me.

"Are you sensitive about certain things? Are your feelings easily hurt when you're criticized by others?" I gave that one a definite "yes."

I cry a lot when I'm criticized about my writing, my appearance, my temperament, my personality, my viewpoints, my lack of tact or the way I crack my gum.

I never read the book about being one's own best friend — I figure only the second half of "I'm OK, You're OK" is valid.

"IS IT all right for women to ask men for dates?" Women can ask me for figs for all I care. I expect my compatible boyfriend from the dating service to ask me out. After the first date, he'll probably realize he's no match for me in spite of our personality inventories.

"Are you a critical person?" gets a "no" response from me. All I expect from anyone is perfection and complete agreement with my opinions and ideas. So you can see I'm super tolerant, liberal and broad-minded.

I can't answer the question about whether nervous tension causes me to have aches and pains because right now my head is throbbing and I have to take two aspirins. Maybe the dating service will send me a doctor. A rich one would be preferable.

Being shy doesn't cause me any problems. I gave that one a "definitely no."

Juvenile jockey could be good for the economy

Get 50 kids. Put them in jerseys and football helmets. Now, take them out on a practice field and have them do push-ups.

Plenty of folks will think this means warm-up time for secondary school blood-letting. Surprise!

This time they were no high school students. Not unless they're growing high school students 4 feet high.

It was Little League football.

Now, there's Little League baseball, soccer, swimming, golf — in fact, you can find kids who like to play just about any sport that adults like to watch on television.

Except one — Little League horse racing. Sports as diverse as boxing and swimming find common ground in their public image as the surest way to build good Americans. Little League horse racing offers similar, tangible benefits — at least to those willing to look for them. Carefully.

For instance, it would give experience to the horses — kids are small, so they could start running the steeds at an earlier age.

Kid cashiers could give other kids an early lesson in the fine old art of short-changing.

Kid ticket sellers could learn to smoke small cigars.

Kid owners could haul around kid girlfriends who would gain experience in dresses with slits.

Kid officials could learn new math fast, much the same way that grown-up officials now find nothing fishy when a \$3 perfecta ticket is only worth \$10 in a race won by a 30 to 1 shot.

Kid drunks could get looped, blow the rent, and have their parents scream at them instead of their spouses. This would give the kids practice at being screamed at, and since their sisters and brothers would overhear it, it would give future spouses the same benefit.



Mike Scanlon

AND KID WINNERS could learn income tax evasion at an early age.

All these things would offer benefits to the country at large.

Surely the learning we do early stays with us longest, so one could reasonably expect such a great leap on training to result in highly-polished adults.

People who start booking bets at age 8 are much less likely to get caught doing it at age 28. This would reduce our prison population and save the taxpayers plenty of money, although there is little doubt it would serve the financial interests of horseplayers nowhere nearly as neatly.

People looking to avoid income tax at age 11 will be highly skilled in the various and esoteric techniques of tax evasion as adults — maybe, although this would be too much hope for, maybe even as skilled as the accountants employed by oil companies.

If you and your neighbor knew the things about tax law that Exxon does, you could manage to do what grown-ups so far haven't — manage the size of government.

Government would have no alternative but to raise the taxes at racetracks.

The Flip Side by craig picchura

A swipe at a guttural snipe

Ever wonder how you would react to things in this city if you were a tourist — or worse yet — a conservative Republican?

If I was a tourist, I'd probably be back home complaining about the rude treatment I received recently at the information desk of the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Vacationing last week at home, I decided to view a free silent film one afternoon at the art institute in Detroit.

The free film that week was a 1927 silent movie which the films are shown. Thinking the movie deservedly been deemed a classic. Nosferatu is a vampire who also goes by the name Dracula and spends his days sleeping in Transylvanian dirt.

On the Thursday I went to see the film, an art history class was using the same auditorium in which the films are shown. Thinking the movie would be shown in another room, I asked a lady at the information desk where "Nosferatu" was showing.

The lady didn't understand my request and asked me to repeat my query. I again asked her where the movie "Nosferatu" was showing. Again, she gave me a puzzled look.

She questioned another employee nearby who told her it was a German film that would be shown the next day and during the weekend but not that day due to the class.

EVEN THOUGH the film was scheduled to be shown that day, I wouldn't have minded the minor inconvenience if the uninformed information lady would have left it at that.

But, NOOOO, as John Belushi would say. This woman lashed out at me instead.

"Oh, it's a German film," she said. "Well, no won't I couldn't understand him. He pronounced it like it was just another American word. If he had given it a German pronunciation I might have known what he was talking about."

Well, Excuse me! There I stood listening to this rude patron of the arts talk about me to her friend like I was an invisible, unobtainable. Granted, I was wearing a promotional T-shirt, but I was on vacation.

Maybe I'm at fault. It's just that I always thought public cultural institutions were open to anybody and not just linguistic experts. However, I noticed the woman never attempted to pronounce the film herself, lest she get her come-uppance from the upper crust.

I didn't dare attend the film theater's Sept. 8 showing of the German film "Kamaradschaft" fearing that my ticket request would be denied because it wasn't guttural enough.

This bugged me for days. Nobody likes to be publicly berated as a cinema slob. Finally, I called Eliot Wilhelm, director of the Institute of Arts Detroit Film Theatre (DFT). I gave him the same pronunciation of the word "Nosferatu" that I gave to the lady at the information desk.

Mr. Wilhelm told me I pronounced the word per-

fectly. So, "Nyah, nyah" information lady and may the curse of King Tut descend upon your cultured coiffure.

Wilhelm profusely apologized for the treatment I received and explained that the museum employs many volunteers who work for free and are often worth every penny.

"THERE ARE rude people everywhere, but especially in an organization that uses as many volunteers as this one," Wilhelm said. "Art institutes tend to attract that kind of snobbery."

That kind of rudeness would not be tolerated from the people who are employed in the performing arts department, Wilhelm said.

"Ideally, I'd love to control every aspect of the film series," he added.

Understand, I'm not angling for free tickets to the film series as reparation for rudeness. My point is that museums already are too haughty, too highbrow and too intimidating for many. Even if I would've butchered the pronunciation of the movie title, so what?

What makes it worse is that the film series usually is above such arrogance. Movies with mass appeal like "The Godfather," "The Wizard of Oz," Charles Chaplin's "Modern Times" and Walt Disney's "Pinocchio" have played to large crowds.

Films that would never play Detroit movie houses — such as Ingmar Bergman's "The Seventh Seal" or David Lynch's weird "Eraserhead" — are shown regularly to an appreciative Detroit-area audience. And that's the same audience that film distributors feel can subsidize entirely on Clint Eastwood shoot-em-ups and disaster epics.

Under Wilhelm's direction, the series is in its sixth year and is self-sustaining through box office receipts.

Prints shown on weekends are usually in top condition and a benefit performance of "The Deer Hunter" in Southfield last winter paid for a Dolby stereo sound system installed in the DFT's 1,150-seat auditorium. Some of the finest films from around the world are shown for \$2, well below commercial box office prices.

I harbor no hard feelings against the DFT, just the information lady, you little guttural snipe.

Did you know?

It was five years ago Sept. 8 that former president Gerald Ford issued a full pardon to Richard Nixon following the uncovering of one of America's most damaging presidential scandals — known as Watergate.

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