

# Administrators' bad habits given a new lease on life

Real quick like, they snuck it by us.

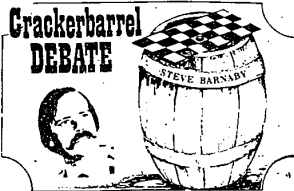
I'm talking about the venerable bunch in Lansing. Faster than you can say "adjourn," the state Legislature slammed closed the door on a significant section of the Open Meetings Act.

Since 1977, when the act was put into effect, some public officials, from the lowliest village to the largest university, have been winning about the clause that insists the likes of superintendents and city managers be interviewed in public sessions.

In a concerted lobbying effort, they finally prevailed on their legislative kin to change the rules of the game.

Hoping to avoid the ire of those who believe in open government, the state Legislators squeezed through the legislation on the final day of the 1980 session.

Just another bill among many, lost in the bureaucratic shuffle.



Presently, these two repulsive pieces of legislation await Gov. William G. Milliken's signature. Advocates of good government hope Milliken vetoes.

The most offensive bill would allow councils and boards to interview applicants for school superintendent, city manager or other public office in private as long as a final "decision" on hiring is made in public.

This cutesy piece of chicanery was sponsored by state Sen. Richard Allen, R-Alma.

**THE OTHER GEM**, allowing an evaluation of job performance of a public employee to be held in a closed session, is sponsored by state Sen. David Plawecki, D-Deerborn.

Plawecki would like to be governor in 1982. Remember that when the candidate starts talking about open government.

But the real disillusionment comes when learning that even such purported liberals as state Sen. Doug Ross, R-Southfield, voted in favor of the double whammy.

Ross' feeble excuse is that open interviews act as a deterrent to getting the best persons to apply. Bunk, pure, unadulterated bunk.

Open interviews allow the public to see their legislators in action, performing one of their more important functions — determining what kind of chief administrator will run the day-to-day business of a governmental unit.

They also give residents a chance to see what they're getting for their tax dollars.

Problems enough about with the Open Meetings Act as is. Ever since enactment, boards and commissions have been playing a cat and mouse game with the public in their attempts to skirt the law.

The Oakland University Board is in court over interviewing candidates in secret. The Wayne County Charter Commission recently interviewed candidates for executive director in a clandestine gathering. In Farmington, they're even contemplating interviewing candidates for a council replacement in secret.

Worst of all, public officials flaunt the Open Meetings Act with a self-satisfied scorn for the public. Redford Union's Board of Education even had the audacity to discuss the act itself in a secret session recently.

The public has enough problems finding out what their governmental officials are doing without a regression in the law to help them. Signing of this law would be a big step backward. You hear that, Bill?

**Daniels' den**  
**Emory Daniels**

## Popular air rifle retired

After 65 years the Daisy Air Rifle Co. has stopped producing its Model 25 pump-action BB gun.

The pump-action air rifle was the most popular version ever produced by Daisy, which for many years made and distributed BB guns throughout America from its headquarters in Plymouth.

In fact, Daisy has sold some 20 million of the Model 25 rifles since the first one was produced in 1914.

In reaching the 20 million mark, the Model 25 outstrips the total all-time production of sporting arms by Remington and Winchester combined. It clearly was the hottest seller Daisy had during its 93 years of selling air rifles.

**THE STORY OF** the Model 25 BB gun began in December 1911 when Edward C. Hough, secretary-treasurer of Daisy, received a letter from a St. Louis gunsmith named Charles F. Lefever, a grandson of an arms maker.

A couple of months later Hough traveled to St. Louis to meet Lefever and not only purchased his invention but convinced the gunsmith to move to Plymouth to help get the new gun into production.

Daisy President Charley Bennett and Hough, who both recognized Lefever as a genius, bestowed special favors on him to convince Lefever to remain in Plymouth.

They set up a small, private machine shop for him and told Lefever he could keep his own hours. And he was placed in charge of product development for the Daisy Air Rifle Co.

Lefever stayed in Plymouth and during the next 42 years earned 60 patents on Daisy air guns. The best of his creations, though, was the Model 25 pump.

Hough reportedly recognized the value of Model 25's design as a training tool for young shooters who would become adult hunters using pump guns. And through the years the model underwent only a few changes in design.

When Daisy moved from Plymouth to its new plant in Rogers, Ark., in 1958, the Model 25 was re-equipped with a bronze finish and blond stocks produced in Rogers.

In its early days the Model 25 used a BB shot made of soft lead, as did all other BB guns made by Daisy. Then in 1939 Daisy switched to steel shot BB which really made BB guns popular. Within a short time the Plymouth plant was producing 60 million BB shots per day.

Another fact about the Model 25 gun is that it was one of the first items given away as a prize in retailing — by a seed company. It also became the first to use comic books for advertising.

And through the years that advertising and many other promotions, Daisy has sold some 20 million Model 25s over the years — enough to form a line 12,000 miles long if laid end to end.

The Plymouth Iron Windmill Co. was formed in 1882 and was renamed Daisy Manufacturing Co. in 1895, some seven years after the company began making air rifles.

In earlier years the Hamilton Rifle plant in Plymouth made 22 calibre rifles from 1899 to 1945. Another arms manufacturer located in Plymouth was the Markham Air Rifle Co. which Daisy acquired in the early 1930s.

The Daisy company was founded by Lewis Cass Hough who also was the person who came up with the name "Daisy" for his company's air rifle.

Cass Hough's story goes, decided to diversify and step up the production of air rifles when sales began to lag and demand dropped for windmills.

After that change was made, and for the next several years, Plymouth became the BB-gun capital of the world with the ole Model 25 pump leading the way.

So if you have one in the closet, hang on to it. Even though 20 million were produced, 65 years later very likely there are not that many Model 25s left today.



## Two firms fought back

At the peak of a discussion of the problem now confronting the Chrysler Corp. and whether the government should continue attempting to save it. The Stroller asked:

"What has become of the free enterprise system on which our country was built?"

Since his childhood, The Stroller was taught that if you built a better mousetrap, customers would beat a path to your door. And he always has believed it.

Now, it seems, men in high places are turning this old belief aside, and free enterprise no longer seems important. In turning it aside, as in the Chrysler case, the taxpayers' money is being subjected to a real gamble.

It was the means of creating a real discussion the other luncheon period. But it recalled for The Stroller one of the most trying moments of his family's battle to stay alive.

**YEARS AGO**, the family operated a small luncheon room in their little town. It was the only place in our community to purchase a lunch. The Stroller's father had established it when his failing health forced him out of factory work.

For a while, it was a great success and it was his legacy to the family when he passed on. Desperately, The Stroller's mother, a husky Pennsylvania Dutch woman and a good cook, decided to carry on.

She did for quite a while. Then, one day came the word that another restaurant was about to open not too far down the street.

Folks began to wonder if mother could meet the challenge of a restaurant. But she didn't seem to worry about it.

She showed her hand the first week the new place opened. She decided to bake pies and sent the word around town that she would not only bake them, but have them delivered.

You can imagine what happened. The little lunch counter became more popular than ever. And in a few months the new restaurant decided to close its door and bowed to the "widowed pie baker," as mother was popularly known.

This was free enterprise at its best. There was no asking the new restaurant to limit its sales or make other concessions like we are making to the Japa-

**the stroller**  
**W.W. Edgar**

nese these days. Mother used the free enterprise system — and won.

**LATER IN LIFE**, when The Stroller was toiling in the sports department of the Detroit Free Press, the mighty Chicago Tribune tried to establish a tabloid paper in town. Some folks thought the Tribune would cause a great deal of damage.

But it didn't face our editors. They simply passed along the word that this was a challenge that could be met only by putting out a better paper. And that's what happened. The tabloid failed.

In none of these cases was there a cry to the government to be bailed out. In those days, it was thought to be silly to send good money after bad.

It might be well to follow that example in today's economy.

**discover Michigan**  
**Bill Stockwell**

Did you know that few, if any, of the thousands of people visiting the Cranbrook Institutions in Bloomfield Hills realize they are walking on the remains of a small Michigan village known as Morris Mill? The small community included not only the grist mill but also a smithy's shop, a potash and pearlash foundry — and a distillery.

**Tim Richard**

## Michigan: The injured can revive

To use a boxing analogy, southeast Michigan may be on its knees for an eight-count, but it's neither knocked out nor dead yet.

That, on balance, is the assessment I come up with after wading through reams of economic literature and talking with friends in the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan.

Nationally, housing builders are expecting big things in the decade of the 1980s. Stock prices of a number of Big Board companies leaped in mid-1980.

The thinking — again nationally — is that the babies of the late 1950s and early 1960s will be moving into the housing market during the '80s.

**BUT DOES THAT** hold true for southeast Michigan? The local builders are talking optimism.

"There's a trend to the Sun Belt," concedes association President Dave Pink. "But once they get there, it's not so easy to find a job."

Irvin Yackness, the builders' general counsel, notes quite correctly that "efforts are being made to improve Michigan's economic climate," notably in reform of workers compensation and unemployment compensation.

Adds Jeff Spoon, a vice-president: "The Sun Belt can't hold major industries because of water. It can hold dry industries, like computers. We have the availability of water in the Great Lakes for industries like steel and autos. Detroit and Michigan have a tremendous future."

And builder Frank Winton chipped in: "The military budget will be increased by the incoming administration. Defense work will be siphoned here. There will be a resurgence."

That's the bright side.

**THE CONTRARY** side is that Michigan's population has grown a meager 4 percent in the last 10 years. That's 4/10ths of one percent a year.

Four factors determine population growth: Births, versus deaths, and move-ins versus move-outs.

Normally, births exceed deaths by several percent a year. So when you see a population growth figure like 4/10ths of one percent, you are seeing an area where move-outs greatly exceed move-ins.

It's a genuinely bad sign.

Wayne State University's placement service reports: "Opportunities for college graduates are on the rise, but those looking for employment are more likely to find they have to leave the state of Michigan to land jobs."

**THE REALLY** disturbing news is that the persons who pack up and leave Michigan are the best persons.

"I'd estimate that about 70 percent of our electrical engineering graduates will move out of the state this coming year," John Cruse, WSU's placement director, is quoted as saying in a Detroit Chamber of Commerce publication (of all places).

"Young, single people are most likely to leave the state in search of job prospects, says Lawrence Leuzzi, of Michigan's Office of Revenue and Tax Analysis. "Professional and skilled workers are, most likely to leave the state," he adds.

The New York Times recently profiled a high-growth county in northwest Arizona, characterizing its newcomers as having higher than average IQs and being highly enterprising.

It's possible, as the builders' counsel Irv Yackness contends, that Michigan's population loss is largely due to retirees heading to Florida.

Plus signs. Minus signs. There are lots of each. The bottom line is this: If Michigan can attract new industry, the next decade will only be tough. If we continue to hassle and punish industry, the future will be disastrous.