

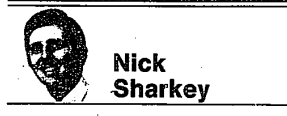
Women deserve a place in service club ranks

A sign outside the door at weekly luncheons held in all suburbs may as well read: "Men Only." It's not that blatant, but the message is the same. The men who attend these meetings do many wonderful things to help build suburban communities. Members teach kids sports. They build ball fields for recreation areas. They raise money to assist the blind.

But they are exclusive about membership. I'm speaking of men's service clubs.

Most service clubs meet once a week over lunch while members sing songs and enjoy fellowship. At various times of the year, members take part in special projects which benefit the community.

BUT MEMBERS also form a network of men helping men get ahead in their professional careers. It may be trite, but contacts do help in this world.



Nick Sharkey

Service clubs provide men with membership into an exclusive society of other upwardly mobile men. That's why men-only service clubs are wrong. They're outdated and unfair. Women executives and professionals make significant contributions in most industries. If they choose, why can't they be "one of the boys" at a weekly service club luncheon?

Most service clubs were started early this century when there was a vastly different view of women and their "place" in society. As a woman in a cigarette commercial used to say, "We've come a long way, baby."

It's time for service clubs to change with the times.

EVERY FEW YEARS, a movement begins within a local service club chapter to admit women. Their recommendation gets passed on to regional level and is often forwarded to a national convention. Usually, only well-heeled and older service club members attend national conventions.

"We've been getting along for years without them, so why rock the boat?" the reasoning goes. Women are then voted down again and the convention moves on to other matters.

But this issue won't be resolved that easily. Rotarians, Lions and Optimists must change. Or someday there won't be Rotarians, Lions or Optimists.

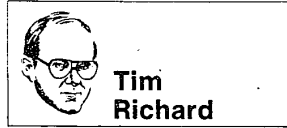
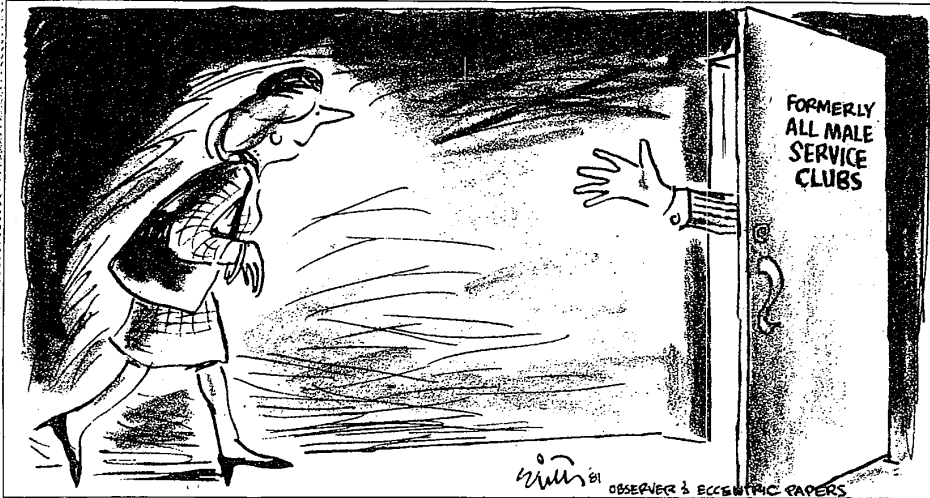
SO WHY DO I still belong?

In my heart I hope there will be a change and someday I may break bread at a weekly luncheon with Ms. Professional. I hope that change is possible by working from within.

But in my head, I'm afraid it will never happen. I really believe that in the next few years a new kind of service club will be started. This club will accept professionals of both sexes.

It will be popular with both men and women executives. And soon there won't be Rotarians, Lions and Optimists because those clubs won't attract new members.

I hope I am wrong.



Tim Richard

Capitalists lose spirit of bird dog

History books don't tell you why the automobile industry, which in the early days was scattered across the country, finally became centered in southeast Michigan.

The reason wasn't the availability of iron, steel, coal and cheap water transportation. Many cities on the Great Lakes shared those advantages.

The real reason — the one which made the difference — was capital. Many persons who made millions in Michigan's lumber industry settled in Detroit and Grosse Pointe, and they had a lot of loose change rattling around in their silk purses, looking for a productive outlet.

Capital, on top of the other advantages, gave southeast Michigan the productive edge in becoming the home of the auto industry.

THAT THOUGHT came to mind as I contemplated the ebbing fortunes of industry here and perused the 1975 report of Michigan Economic Action Council, the so-called "Blumenthal Commission."

In the chapter on "Growth and Diversity," there appears a hard-hitting commentary on the state of venture capital in Michigan — the sort of venture capital that financed Ford and Dodge and the other auto pioneers.

"Michigan ranks seventh among states in the total assets of its banks . . . Yet only one Michigan bank is involved in the ownership of a Small Business Investment Company, the legal method by which banks can participate in venture capital activity as well as certain other small business financing, despite the fact that legislation making such participation legal has been in effect since the mid-1960s.

"Similarly, U.S. Department of Labor statistics indicate that 10 of the 100 largest pension plans in the United States in 1971 are headquartered in the state of Michigan. Clearly, investable assets are available . . ."

"Michigan ranked 43rd among the 50 states in investments held by SBICs . . . the SBIC directory showed only three venture capital firms in Michigan.

"THIS STATE of affairs does not necessarily mean that there are no funds available for venture capital idea in Michigan. Certain venture capital projects are financed by venture capital firms located in other states . . ."

"But the lack of established venture capital firms in the state seeking ideas that fall outside the current activities of the Michigan economy lends credence to the suspicion that certain ideas go unfunded simply through the lack of a properly developed informational network to tell the entrepreneur where sources of capital are available." (Italics added.)

One of the Blumenthal Commission members tells me that in business circles one of our leading banks has been nicknamed No Big Deal. The best-known bank holding company in the state has a policy of being a "consumer bank" rather than as a place to get venture capital.

The late "Engine Charlie" Wilson, head of General Motors and then of the Eisenhower Defense Department, once commented on the unwillingness of workers to seek jobs in new locations. Wilson said something to the effect that he had more respect for a bird dog who went out looking for food than for a kennel dog which sat on its fanny and whined to be fed.

Perhaps Michigan's sagging economy could use a revival of the bird dog instinct among its capitalists.

Ride to work can be cheaper

Imagine if somebody walked up to you and said he would give you \$1,000 plus a chauffeur for the year.

You'd jump at it, right?

Well, that's what the folks over at the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) are trying to give away. Unfortunately, they are having one heck of a time selling the idea.

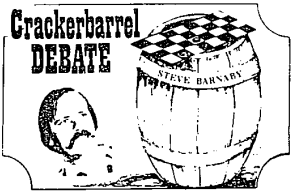
The concept is called van pooling. And those who have chosen to take advantage have really saved that kind of money with a minimum of inconvenience.

They've also avoided the hassles of fighting the traffic, finding a place to park and paying outrageous prices for gasoline.

Way back in what seems like prehistoric times, 1977, a national poll revealed that 86 percent of Americans had vowed they would ride in a car or van pool if gasoline skyrocketed to \$1 a gallon.

Some kind of resolve. Today, 80 percent of American commuters drive alone to work — and pay through the nose for the privilege. Sometimes that old American spirit of independence gets the better of us.

The other day, I wandered on down to a presenta-



tion made by a SEMCOG representative in which the virtues of van pooling were extolled. I was amazed at how convenient and how cheap it would be.

BUT I COULD feel the tension in the room. The presentation was made before a group of executives whose offices were within yards of one another.

You could read the trepidation on their faces. Imagine the horror of actually having to ride to work

with a stranger. Heaven forbid!

A noticeable change swept over their faces when the pocket book issues were laid on the table. Look at it this way. Say you drive 20 miles round trip to work. That costs you approximately \$97 a month. Van pooling would cost you \$42, a \$55 savings.

Not bad.

If you make a 40-mile round trip it costs \$171 a month. Van pooling costs \$49, saving you \$122. Now that's nothing to sneeze at.

The savings get better as your mileage increases: 60 miles you pay \$239, van pooling costs \$57, a \$182 savings; 80 miles, you pay \$304, van pooling costs \$84, you save \$220; 100 miles you pay \$368, van pooling costs \$71, you save \$297.

With those kinds of savings, you can almost see yourself on that Caribbean cruise ship or on that sailboat you've dreamed about all your life.

All you have to do is get a bunch of workers in your area together, notify SEMCOG and you're on your way to the bank.

THE AIR CONDITIONED van is provided, maintenance is paid for; insurance is taken care of. All you have to do is ride.

So if you're interested call SEMCOG at 961-4266.

Her advice haunted him for years

The most dramatic moment The Stroller has experienced on his long journey along life's highway happened more than a half-century ago, and the memory of it still lingers on.

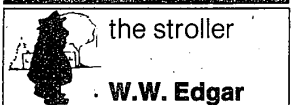
It was on Feb. 2, 1924 — the night he bid goodbye to his hometown folks to head west for Detroit and pick up the journalistic trail on a "big" paper — The Detroit Free Press.

For more than a week it was known that he had been invited by the late Edgar A. Guest, the Free Press poet, to take a seat in the sports department. But when the day came when he was to leave, his friends called all through the morning and afternoon to wish him well.

The word had spread around our little town that the Edgar boy was going out west, and they emphasized that he was going to work on a big paper. They recalled him working on the little four-page town paper that was printed on an old-time flat press, and it was a thrill for them to learn that he was going onto the big time.

SOME, OF COURSE, were skeptical that he wouldn't make good. They pointed out that he had so little experience and that he might find things too difficult.

Then, one afternoon when the reporter for the city paper was around town collecting news items



was told that The Stroller was heading west, he answered that he wouldn't bother putting that item in the paper because the Edgar boy would be home again in a couple weeks.

When this was conveyed to him, the Edgar boy became that much more determined to make good in the big city.

Things went along fine until the hour came to leave for the railroad station and the final goodbyes to the family — his four sisters and mother.

There was a fond embrace with each one, and then he came to his mother. She wrapped her arms around him, kissed him goodbye and then walked to the door.

As he was about to step outside, she took one more embrace and whispered, "If you ever want your watch fixed, don't take it to a blacksmith. He wouldn't know what to do with it."

With that she patted him on the back, and he was

off on a high adventure.

AS THE BLACK Diamond, the Lehigh Valley's best train, headed west, The Stroller sat in his seat wondering just what she meant with those parting words. Surely, there was hidden meaning somewhere. But what was it?

Never having been on a sleeper on a train, The Stroller had trouble sleeping, but his mother's words kept ringing in his ears.

Finally, it dawned him that what she meant was that, being in a strange city and knowing no one, he shouldn't take chances. If he needed anything, he should go where he was sure he would be doing the right thing.

It was a fair warning, and her words came back to him the other morning when he read in the morning paper at the breakfast table that the new administration in Washington was planning a program to put the unemployed to work after drawing 13 weeks of unemployment compensation.

The article stated that these unemployed could be put to work in various departments as clerks or doing other duties in the offices.

The Stroller read the bit, and then his mother's words came back — "they would be blacksmiths trying to fix watches."

The plan may never work.