

# Symphony women's association merits thanks

Volunteer groups seldom receive the recognition they deserve.

And the West Bloomfield Symphony Women's Association is no exception.

This collection of some 45 volunteers is a fund raising arm of the six-year-old West Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra.

"It's hard to get volunteers together today to donate their time and efforts to receive such little reward or recognition," says association President Virginia Templeton.

Mrs. Templeton, now in her second year as presi-

dent, says "all women of the area should be part of the group. If we want to keep the symphony going, then it's going to take work."

And for the past several years, the association has been doing just that.

Last year, for example, the group collected about \$5,500 from its various fund raising projects. Those funds help pay the symphony bills, which include paychecks for musicians and sheet music rentals.

Those funds also help maintain the quality reputation the WBSO has developed since its birth in 1974.

IT'S PROJECTS like the association's art auction and musicales which need community support. And it's the women's group which needs the dedication of more people like Mrs. Templeton and her crew of volunteers.

The WBSO faces a cash-flow problem. Although most of its concerts were almost sold out this year, costs continue to rise. Grant money is being curtailed. Economic problems are taking their toll.

But members of the women's group and the symphony board continue their efforts to provide Oakland County with top-rated symphonic programming.

THE ASSOCIATION and board plan several fund raising projects in the next few months, including a May 2 art auction at the Gallery Art Center in Lathrup Village, a May 19 event featuring a Detroit Symphony Orchestra quartet at the Oakland Hills Country Club, a June musicale and a July 19 evening of cocktails and music at the Edsel Ford House in St. Clair Shores.

Their events everyone should support.

If we don't, the symphony's musical accomplishments could go flat.



Tim Richard

## Road work stories just don't add up

The story from the Oakland County Road Commission is pretty much the same story we've been hearing from the Michigan Department of Transportation - and it doesn't quite add up.

In the next few years, said OCR Managing Director John Grubba, revenues will fall nearly 12 percent while costs will increase 12 percent a year.

For Oakland County, it will mean laying off or attritioning 100 of the more than 500 employees, selling off its Beverly Hills office building, consolidating departments, building and improving fewer roads, and skimping on maintenance.

I'll not quibble with Grubba's numbers.

ROAD OFFICIALS, locally and in Lansing, point the finger of blame at falling gasoline and weight tax revenues.

With our lighter cars and compact pickup trucks, we are paying less weight taxes.

Our smaller vehicles are burning less gasoline, which is taxed on a cents-per-gallon basis.

We are using our vehicles for fewer frivolous trips and shorter vacations, and some of us are even using SEATA buses, so we drive fewer miles.

Naturally, the gasoline and weight taxes we pay will fall.

WHAT DOESN'T add up is our road needs.

That is, if we are driving lighter vehicles fewer miles, we shouldn't have so much need of improved roads. We are pounding the roads much less.

Why, then, should our friendly road officials in Lansing, Beverly Hills, Detroit, Bay City and Sault Ste. Marie be warning us that our roads will deteriorate?

The answer must be somewhere else than falling gasoline and weight tax revenues.

To some extent, the weather is to blame. There would be some road breakup even on roads never used at all, just because of the freeze-thaw cycles of Michigan weather.

That answer still isn't good enough.

BIG TRUCKS may be the answer.

Michigan is famous - even notorious - for the high weight limits it puts on trucks. A few years ago, there was hot debate in the Michigan Legislature about lowering these limitations. A lot of figures were tossed around about truck damage to our roads.

The trucking lobby won that one.

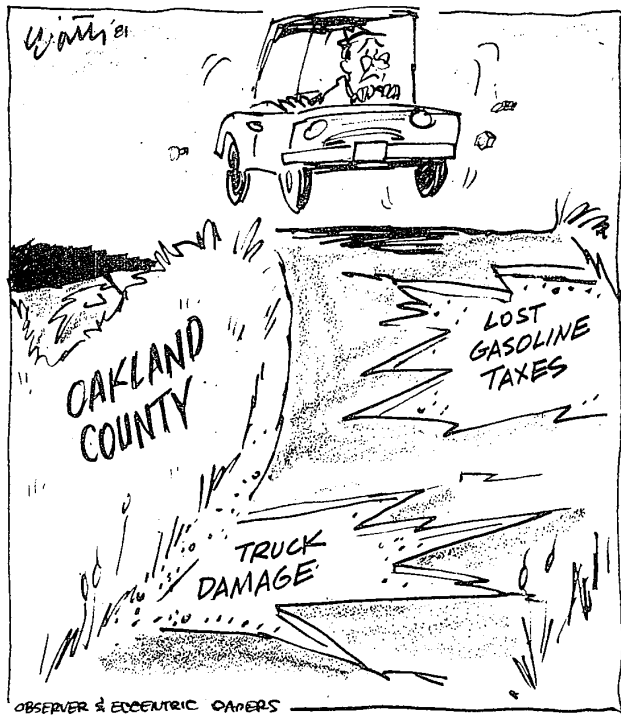
Automobile Club of Michigan comes up with a proposal that we raise the tax on diesel fuel 5 cents to the same 11-cent level that gasoline users pay. In return, says Auto Club, the state should drop "\$92 in registration and sticker fees for Michigan (truck) drivers and only \$12 for out-of-state truckers." Its handout says:

Auto Club noted the extra fees were to have made up the \$10 million revenue lost from the diesel tax rebate, but they fell almost \$2 million short of that.

"All unbiased cost studies show that heavy trucks do not pay their fair share of highway costs. . . . Based on these cost studies, the diesel tax actually should be greater than the gasoline tax, as it is now, in nine other states."

"Certainly, I might add, auto owners should resist any talk of adopting *ad valorem* gasoline taxes, where the tax would rise with the price of gasoline."

"There is one bright note in all of this. With all the cutting back of jobs, salaries, benefits and departments in the Oakland County Road Commission, maybe we will hear less second-guessing and backbiting about the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority's public transit decisions."



## The passing of 3 old friends

After a fellow travels along life's highway for more than a half-century, he reaches a point where he hates to read the obituary columns in his favorite newspapers or listen to the news on the tube.

This happened to The Stroller the other morning when his eye caught the passing of two of his favorite personalities - "Gee" Walker, one of the most colorful of all the Tigers, and Sammy Lieberman, the stout little fellow who became the country's No. 1 host while operating the Raleigh House on Telegraph in Southfield.

And no sooner had he recovered from that shock than he was given the news of Joe Louis' death during a quiet Sunday afternoon. This was not exactly shocking, but it meant the passing of a friend to whom he was especially close while the Brown Bomber was climbing the pugilistic ladder to the world heavyweight championship.

It was The Stroller's good fortune to be with him the day before every major fight and have him as a companion on drives through the New Jersey countryside to keep his mind off the fight. It was during these trips that he began the fad of naming the round in which he thought he would win. Joe seldom missed. The lone time he refused to pick a round was for the first fight with Max Schmeling when, as you recall, Joe was knocked out.

THE STROLLER came to know "Gee" Walker while covering the Tigers for the Detroit Free Press in the '30s. No better companion ever could be found on those long road trips around the American League (we travelled by train in those days). He was always ready to give you a Jaugh, often at his own expense.

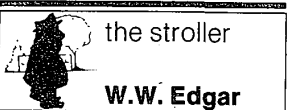
But the most memorable moments came when Mickey Cochrane, then the manager, gave him a verbal lashing for being caught off first base.

The Stroller happened to be nearby, and he never will forget Walker's rebuttal. He had listened to Mickey very attentively, then said, "I have to take a big lead to steal second. Then I get caught. If I don't get the big lead, I'll be caught at second, so I am out no matter how you look at it."

Cochrane just walked away.

WHO COULD forget Sammy Lieberman, whom The Stroller met years ago when the late shift workers at the Free Press used to drop in on Sammy's delicatessen on Dexter Avenue. His was the most popular on the street.

The Stroller later followed him to the Avon on Wyoming and then to the Raleigh House. Always with a cigar



the stroller

W.W. Edgar

in his mouth, he was good for a laugh even on the most dreary days.

And he was shrewd, too. He built up the Raleigh House, then sold it, and got himself hired back at a fabulous salary. One of Sammy's best yarns was his recital of how he named the Raleigh House.

"I was riding downtown one morning," he'd say, "and I saw a big billboard advertising Sir Walter Raleigh tobacco. I thought, if it was good enough to sell tobacco, it was good enough for me. And besides, the name 'Raleigh' was eye-catching. It put Raleigh in people's minds, and then they came out here."

Sammy was one of those fortunate persons who was bitten by a fox when he was young.

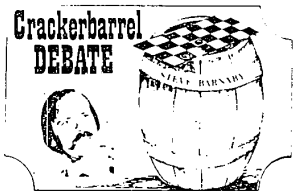
Joe Louis . . . "Gee" Walker . . . Sammy Lieberman . . . all in a week. The ranks of old-time friends is fast closing, and The Stroller can't help feeling a bit lonesome these days just recalling his visits with them.



discover Michigan

Bill Stockwell

Did you know about the Big Snow of 1978-9 in the Copper Country of our Upper Peninsula? It piled up a whole year's average of 235 inches by January - and kept right on snowing. The official measuring station in Delaware Township, near the tip of the Keweenaw Peninsula, reported a record 350.6 inches for the year - more than 32 feet of snow.



## Public TV's ultimate test yet to come

The TV studio set looked the same this year - hot lights, colorful streamers, tables of auction items and smiling celebrities.

A constant din of ringing telephones meshed with the clatter of volunteers, hustling and bustling with messages in hand.

This was the scene at the 13th annual Channel 56 auction - a familiar scene from years past, but somehow different.

For years public television supporters have lived with the cross realization that it takes much more than funds raised at auction time to make alternative viewing successful.

The auction does raise badly needed funds and does act as a catharsis. Maybe my little extra effort will make a difference, volunteers tell themselves.

WHILE MANY of us admire the goals of public television, and have stuck with it through the years of English soap operas, recent developments make us feel less hopeful than ever before.

Sure, hundreds of volunteers, merchants and bidders did a yeoman job in adverse economic times - they raised \$723,000. Less than last year's take, but still good.

Under the tutelage of general manager Jack Caldwell, the station's programming has improved immensely. Ratings are up, and the station has built a strong foundation of respect among a broad range of viewers.

SOUNDS GOOD But public television's biggest battle still is ahead.

And you could feel the tension among Channel 56 staff members who know that, after years of hard work, their battle could be lost.

The enemies: Reaganomics and cable television. To put it lightly, the Reagan Administration is less than enthusiastic about government's subsidizing the arts. Administration budget hatchet man David Stockman has made sure that public television, perceived by many conservatives as the enemy liberal media, will be reduced to ineffectiveness.

Public television is likely to be left at the mercy of multi-national corporations which have a penchant to subsidize public television productions as their good deed for the day.

The only alternative funding would come from the donor-viewers. But \$723,000 does not a television station make.

The double whammy for public television has come with the emergence of big spending cable television. Cable outlets have a way of swatting a fly with a two-by-four.

IN SHORT, if money will solve a problem, spend it. Presently, cable outlets are buying up productions which otherwise might have been purchased by public television.

Naturally, the better programs are in the center of the bidding war.

Public television doesn't have a chance. Non-commercial stations simply are being outbent in their quest to improve programming. And as the programming gets worse, the publicly donated funds will decrease.

The circumstances definitely paint a grim picture for public television.

Advocates can only hope and pray that in years to come, an alternative television station has the option to survive.