

Thursday, April 8, 1982

# Tickets to historical ball too steep for most

At the risk of being accused of sabotaging an already controversial event, the feeling here is that \$100 per person is too steep a price to pay to raise funds for the new Farmington Historical Commission.

The cause is a worthy one. Preserving history in an historical setting is a commendable goal which the residents of Farmington and Farmington Hills have always furthered with their funds. The home of Farmington's own former Gov. Fred Warner is a crowning jewel encompassing the town's historic treasures.

But asking a couple to spend \$200 on tickets alone and at least \$50 more to rent or buy period costumes of the 1870 era is insensitive to the economic realities of the 1980s.

In defending the decision to charge museum patrons a \$100 donation fee to attend the 1870 Governor's Ball and Banquet, the Farmington-B Lions Club cites as precedents the expensive dinners and balls that raise funds annually for the Detroit Symphony and the Detroit Institute of Arts.

But patrons to each of those institutions come from the entire metropolitan region as well as out-of-state areas. Corporate contributions pour in along with the gifts of well-heeled socialites. The Farmington Historical Commission draws from a much smaller segment.

Undoubtedly, there are some persons in Farmington and Farmington Hills who can afford to donate \$100 toward the refurbishing and restoration effort. They should be encouraged to do so without requiring everyone else to do likewise.



Persons who aren't boycotting the 1870 Governor's Ball to be held May 22 will ride from the candlelight banquet on the grounds of the Warner Home to the ball at the Masonic Temple in horse-drawn carriages.

**FIFTY DOLLARS** a ticket as a minimum donation seems a more sensible figure that would accomplish the stated goal of the banquet and ball — raising money for the museum and providing benefactors with an elegant evening to commemorate the museum's opening.

It's unfortunate that the sincere effort to help extended by the Lions Club is being so poorly received. But to deny that it has caused a stir is to be blind and deaf.

Ralph and Jane Jarvis (above), directors of the Michigan Horse Drawn Vehicle Association, are providing the fringed surreys.

Five of the seven members of the Farmington Historical Commission itself have said the high price will keep them from attending. Farmington City Council members have publicly stated the same.

If many who already have generously donated time and effort toward making the Warner home a museum can't afford the function, from where will the support come?

Surely the classy setting, elegant banquet fare, horse-drawn carriages and 19th-century costumes will attract some who just love a lavish party. But they risk falling far short of bringing out the hoped-for 400 guests.

Maybe Farmington-area couples are willing to spend \$200-plus on such a worthwhile endeavor. But even if there are enough persons paying \$100 each to fill the banquet and ball, it would be more egalitarian to allow the city's middle class the chance to support their museum, too.

**HISTORY SHOWS** that Gov. Warner, the home's founder, cultivated the common touch. His descendants even objected to the house being called the Warner "mansion."

Museums have to fight a public image that they are the domain of only the intellectual or the elite. Museums are for everyone.

The Farmington-B Lions Club doesn't want to leave the public with the impression that only big-buck benefactors and invited dignitaries are welcome to celebrate the opening of this community resource. But that's how many perceive the affair.

Talk about boycotting the banquet and ball is self-destructive. If the Lions Club decides it's too late to lower admission, let the ball continue. Let us hope the affair is successful in raising funds for the museum. But let us learn from the experience and make the next fund-raising affair accessible to the mainstream.

It may entail more work for organizers if more persons attend a fund-raiser, but people are what any successful museum is about.

Craig Piechura

## OCC deserves voter attention, good candidates

The diligent voter no doubt already has circled June 14 on the calendar, for that is when local school board members will be elected.

The date deserves a second circle because three seats on the Oakland Community College Board of Trustees are to be filled at the same time. OCC is an important educational arm which, perhaps by design, gets little public attention.

One sees few newspaper ads, billboards, leaflets or visible effort on behalf of OCC candidates. Past campaigns seem to have been conducted almost by word of mouth.

Two years ago, no public forums were held at which all candidates could speak. The college faculty union held a lightly attended reception at which persons could circulate and meet the candidates one at a time. It was highly unsatisfactory because there was no chance to compare the candidates' views and let them respond to each other.

We hope such civic organizations as PTA's, chambers of commerce, Jaycees, the League of Women Voters and even the political parties will see fit to remedy that lack of debate in 1982.

**CANDIDATES FOR** the OCC board have until 4 p.m. April 27 to file nominating petitions with at least 50 but not more than 300 signatures of registered voters.

See Sylvia Pascauau, administrative assistant to the president, in OCC's George A. Bee Administrative Center, 2480 Opdyke, Bloomfield Hills, for petition forms.

The six-year terms of trustees Earl Anderson and Suzanne Reynolds expire at the end of June. In addition, a two-year vacancy, currently filled by Gordon Henderson by appointment, must be filled.

The OCC board has need of diverse points of view. Currently trustees number four men and three women, and their age range is about 30 years.

Unfortunately, five of the seven trustees are either current or former teachers. If OCC's board is

to avoid becoming what is known in the business world as a "closed corporation," then persons with other backgrounds should step forward as candidates.

**SEVERAL CHALLENGES** will face the OCC board in the years ahead.

One is to provide quality education close to home in an era when federal aid to college students is shrinking and state aid is being hacked down. Soaring tuition at major universities is forcing many persons to seek college educations nearby.

A second is a developing disagreement between trustees, particularly the old-timers, and the administration about what kinds of business matters are placed on the board agenda. The president is inclined toward a briefer monthly meeting, with more chaff handled by the administration. Some trustees see their power being eroded.

Trustee spending conventions has raised a few eyebrows. The board would like to handle the potentially embarrassing issue quietly.

Like every sort of government, OCC must budget tightly, but it is by no means in the same bad shape as other Michigan colleges, schools and cities. Enrollment have increased, and the property tax base is healthy.

Trustees will need to be supportive of the administration as it introduces more vocational and technical programs to help a changing economy. At the same time, they will have to guard against erosion of the liberal arts programs which foster wisdom and human decency as well as job skills.

The law says candidates for the board of trustees must be registered voters — thus, at least age 18. The law does not require that trustees be well educated themselves, experienced in handling budgets, insightful in dealing with college personnel or dedicated to the community college concept.

The voters will have to see to that.

## The Crusher



## Smuggling smokes

## Coughers won't aid state coffers

I'm about ready to celebrate an anniversary come April 20. That's the day I crushed out my last cigarette, stuck my pipes in the bottom drawer and vowed never again to smoke — not even a single cigar after dinner.

Now don't get me wrong. I'm anything but one of those evangelical reformed smokers urging others to save their hearts and lungs.

Sure, smoking is bad for a person's health. That's why I quit. But quite frankly, I enjoyed the evil and truly do miss it.

**THAT'S WHY** an increase of 10 cents in the Michigan cigarette tax will do nothing but cause trouble for our already economically burdened state.

The state has raised the excise tax on non-smokers about 10 cents a pack since 1978. It's to smoking, increasing prices will do little to quench the flame.

As a matter of fact, smokers enjoy their habit so much, they'll do anything to satiate it — including break the law. Gov. Milliken and other well-intentioned legislators should heed the lessons learned in other states which have attempted to profit from the habit.

In New York City, whose smokers pay a 23 cent-a-pack tax on cigarettes, half the cigarettes sold have been smuggled from other states where smokes are cheaper.

The smuggling has actually cost the state \$100 million annually in revenue and put many legitimate wholesalers out of business.

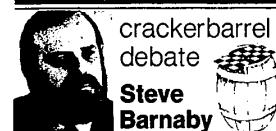
**MILLIKEN** would like to beef up the state cash flow by \$140 million with this new tax increase. But State Revenue Commissioner Sydney Goodman begs to differ.

The 10-cent increase, bringing the tax to 21 cents a pack, would only garner the state \$35 million because of smuggling and an estimated 12 percent decline in consumption, says Goodman.

Now, I question this "decline in consumption" business. I remember my grandmother swearing to the Almighty that when cigarettes increased to 25 cents-a-pack she would quit. She lived to see cigarettes kill her for at least 50 cents a pack.

Actually, a lot of folks in this state would chance breaking the law to take advantage of the increased tax. After all, filling up a U-Haul with thousands of cigarettes and driving them from 3-cent-a-pack Kentucky to 21-cent-a-pack Michigan could be very profitable.

Michigan, remember, is the hardest-hit state when it comes to unemployment. We're nearing Depression-era levels. And believe me, when you or the kids are hungry, breaking a silly old law tax to eat is pretty tempting.



At present the Contraband Cigarette Tax Act prohibits transporting more than 300 cartons across state lines without paying state and federal taxes.

### BIG DEAL

It would cost this state millions of dollars in additional law enforcement officers just to catch the smugglers. In truth, only a handful would be caught. Those apprehensions would increase court costs by jamming up the dockets even more.

And then, if prosecuted, the smugglers would cost taxpayers additional dollars in prison room and board costs.

No thank you, Gov. Milliken. Try some other way to raise revenue, legislators. Smoking is an American way of life from which neither the participants or the state can ever profit.