

# Carpetbagger tag inappropriate this time

State Sens. Dana Wilson, D-Hazel Park, and Jack Paxson, D-Detroit, have been tagged unfairly as carpetbaggers in a politically expedient move by 15th District state Senate candidate Alan Feuer.

Feuer charges that Paxson and Wilson are ineligible to run in the 15th District because they failed to move into the district at least 30 days prior to the June 15 filing deadline.

On the surface, Feuer's argument holds up. Let's hope voters will look deeper.

Legislators seeking re-election have been victimized by the sticky reapportionment process — the constitutionality of which is being challenged by the Michigan Supreme Court.

By law Paxson and Wilson should have relocated into the 15th District by May 15. But candidates didn't know until May 21 how legislative districts would be redrawn.

The court pointed to the census and a constitutional provision in explaining the troublesome delay in redistricting.

This isn't to say Feuer, who awaits decisions from the Michigan Court of Appeals and the Michigan Supreme Court, is presenting an argument completely devoid of merit.

Admittedly, Paxson and Wilson can be criticized for conveniently relocating into a district which nearly guarantees the Democratic primary-winner the seat and where, before their declaration of candidacies, competition was weak.

Wilson critics also note his campaign signs in the Southfield and Farmington area urge voters to "re-elect" Wilson when, in fact, he has never represented them.

However, voters owe it to themselves to elect the

most qualified and experienced candidates. A good politician can change districts and still function effectively.

With his claim that "if you haven't lived in a legislative district you can't pretend to represent the people," Feuer reasserts the resolve of America's forefathers who created a nation based on a representative democracy and the one-person, one-vote philosophy.

But no candidate should be disqualified from a race because of someone else's ineptitude.

Certification of the census and subsequent redistricting were held up when a lawsuit was filed charging census takers overlooked a sizable number of Detroiters. The state Apportionment Commission was unable to begin redistricting until late last winter.

Shortly thereafter, the court warned of the unconstitutionality of the 1963 Michigan constitutional provision for an Apportionment Commission comprised of four Republicans and four Democrats — "an impossible situation" in the opinion of State Supreme Court Justice G. Mennen Williams.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, state legislators bungled the process and never could agree to a bipartisan redistricting plan.

In the end, a Supreme Court-appointed expert, Bernard Apol, devised a plan which finally was adopted on May 21.

Voters should put behind them the carpetbagger issue and spend their time examining the programs and contributions of the candidates.

— M.B. DILLON WARD



Nick Sharkey

## A newspaper carrier's adventures

WHAT'S A grown man doing riding a bicycle through a suburban subdivision early on a holiday morning?

A week ago Monday, while the rest of you were resting comfortably in bed recovering from July 4 celebrations, I was out on my bike. I was making sure that everything went all right as my oldest son delivered newspapers the first day on his new route. He was working for a newspaper company other than Observer & Eccentric.

It was good that I was out early that morning, because it turned out he had two more customers than the number of newspapers provided. Since it's impossible to find a store open early in the morning on a holiday, I had to get in my car and look for a corner newspaper stand. The newspapers were purchased, and finally the last two customers received their papers.

ASK ANYONE WHO once delivered newspapers about it, and the memories will come flooding out.

I vividly remember my first day on my route. I wasn't smart enough to realize you needed a bag to hold the newspapers. I picked up my newspapers, put them in a stack and walked to the neighborhood where I was to deliver. I put the papers on one corner, picked a few off the stack and started putting them on porches.

Unfortunately, I hadn't planned on a windy day. Soon the newspapers began to blow off my stack. As I would chase some, a few more would blow away. Soon newspapers were strewn all over the neighborhood.

I was becoming very frustrated. I had that sinking feeling in my stomach that my career as a carrier was going to be short. Finally, a kindly man walked up and helped me gather the papers. After about 20 minutes, we tracked down all the papers we could find. At that point, it became my job to try to reassemble all of the newspapers.

Obviously, I've never forgotten that man. As best I can remember, I was able to deliver my entire route that day, but many customers received only partial editions. I was lucky none of the customers made complaints to the newspaper office.

MY SON LEARNED much about people and the world of business in his first week.

Two days after he started, he met with his branch manager. The manager told him that because of a shortage of carriers, the manager had delivered the papers for the previous two weeks, but had not collected any money. My son was told that he was "lucky" because he would make a great profit by collecting for three weeks of newspapers.

But before he could make that profit, he would have to pay a bill for all three weeks of newspapers. I think you get the picture.

I made a few calls to the newspaper office to make it clear my son would be responsible only for the one week he delivered. He would not pay a bill for three weeks of papers.

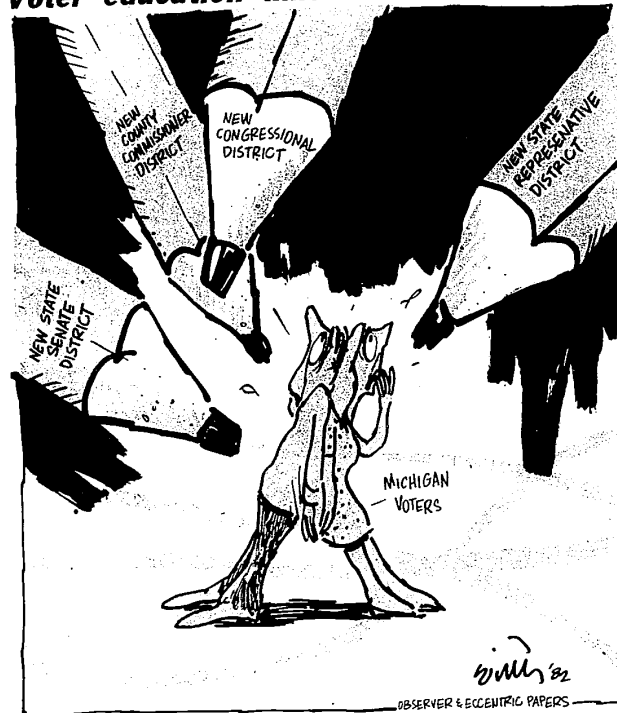
When my son collected (for only one week), he found out that six persons had cancelled their subscriptions weeks ago. But the newspaper company had still kept them on their active route list. Naturally, they were disturbed.

But most of his customers were friendly when he collected. Many expressed appreciation for the good service he had provided. The majority gave him tips varying from 20 cents to \$1.50.

Soon he had collected enough to pay his first bill plus return a nice profit.

During the week, my son learned firsthand about what is good and bad in life. It's not easy for a parent to watch a child struggle in this complex world. But sometimes, for all the help we may want to give, there's no other way.

## Voter education time



## Northwoods Reader

### Extraordinary tales of UP

THE WEIGHT of my giant northern pike was arm-breaking as I lugged it up the hill from the little Upper Peninsula lake, but any boastful plans were forgotten as wife Nancy let out a belly laugh from our tent.

Now, it takes an extraordinary book to make a reader laugh out loud, especially in a campground where you can be overheard. But her discovery, soon shared, was extraordinary.

It was a three-volume set of short stories called "The Northwest Reader" by Cully Gage, published by Avery Color Studios of Ann Arbor. UP shops carry them, but I've never seen the series down here.

More than an old man's recollections, more than merely regional lore, the Northwest Readers contain some splendid, dramatic tales and a lot of fun, lovable characters. They're set in Tioga, a mythical name for a real village of 600 Finnish, Swedish and French-Canadian miners, lumberjacks, drunks and eccentrics, prior to World War I.

AS DICK DUGGAN tells young Cully and pal Mulu the story of "The Haunted Whorehouse," he demonstrates how to run a bullhead trot line.

"Whitewater Pete" is an aging lumberjack who not only fills in the youngsters about floating logs but is a lesson in fatalistic courage as he resolves never to go to the county courthouse.

Young Cully, who has a speech impediment, also discovers he doesn't stutter when talking to Whitewater Pete because of how the old man listens carefully to him and never talks down to a kid. (Reading that tale, I recollected my interview years ago, when I was the higher education reporter for the Kalamazoo Gazette, with Doc VanRiper, head of Western Michigan University's speech clinic and a nationally known expert on stuttering.)

Aunt Lizzie is the town gossip and busybody who takes it on herself to convert two inseparable dareticks, Eino and Emil, who were better off as they were. Aunt Lizzie appears again as a customer of the professional mouse-killer Cully Gage and endeavors to swindle him out of his 2-cents-per-mouse-corpse fee.



Tim Richard

"We Took Care of Our Own" is more than nostalgia about community spirit. It's about Billy Good Boy, a retarded lad whom the town adopted when he was orphaned. Billy did odd jobs for folks and that retarded people are genuine members of a community, not a threat to property values who should be zoned out. Billy's sad end will bring a tear.

MANY OF Cully Gage's tales would fit the format of "The Great American Short Story" on television.

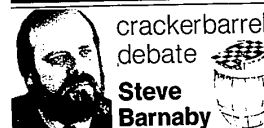
"Whitewater Pete" and "Flame Symphony," the love story of a mad genius and his almost mute sweetheart, are serious candidates for drama. So is the story of the stolid Finnish farmer and the ambitious, vivacious French-Canadian girl he courts and loses.

It's unlikely to happen, though, because of the strong East Coast/West Coast bias of TV. We'll have to be content with local consumption of Northwest Readers stories as long as Cully Gage holds on.

The first volume was published in 1977. The second, "Tales of the Old UP," appeared in 1981. No. 3, "Heads and Tales," is out this year.

By the way, Vol. 2 reveals the identity of Cully Gage, who is really Dr. Charles G. VanRiper, 77, retired director of the WMU speech clinic. For you WMU fans, he has a 122-year-old farmhouse in Portage, where he engages in organic gardening between visits to his UP haunts.

A tiny world, isn't it?



crackerbarrel  
debate  
Steve Barnaby

## Poll reveals suburbs, city pull apart

THE ISOLATIONISTS are winning. Oh, I'm talking about more than the internationalist isolationists. I mean the home-grown, "mind-my-own-business" types who live in our subdivisions.

Unfortunately, all of us are being victimized by this myopic paranoia.

A casual conversation, a political poll and a letter from a disgruntled reader added up this week to demonstrate this disturbing conclusion.

The casual conversation was over the coffee pot at work where I was expounding on the virtues of the foreign exchange programs.

Somehow, they've always seemed sacred to me. Young persons of diverse cultures living and learning together must be a good idea. After all, if persons learn to live together when they're young may be, just maybe, a few wars will be avoided.

"That's just always made me so mad," came the reply from a co-worker. "It's disgusting to see those kids go off to some foreign country when they can't even get along with other kids in the Detroit area."

Shortly before that, I had received a letter from a reader whose intended night of fun at the fireworks in downtown Detroit turned into a nightmare.

HER BOYFRIEND was beaten and cut, her earrings were torn from her ears, they witnessed a shooting, and her pleas to the police for aid were received with something bordering on annoyance.

"Because of all of this, I feel so unsafe, and I think so very low of this city I call my home and of the way the law is. I know that we aren't the only victims in such cases. I just want to be heard," she said.

The poll was released last week and showed that Wayne County Sheriff William Lucas was leading all other hopefuls with 60 percent of the voter support for the newly created Wayne County executive job.

Most folks on the suburban west side were shocked. Livonia Mayor Ed McNamara was tied for third with 6-percent voter support. In these parts McNamara is considered by many to be a political genius of sorts.

"How could only 6 percent support such a fine leader," the logic goes.

But the logic is flawed. This isn't to say McNamara isn't a fine mayor. By all accounts he has done a more-than-credible job.

But get outside of Livonia, Westland, Redford, Garden City and a few other westside enclaves, and the name and reputation of McNamara barely rings a bell with the electorate.

THIS ELECTION, like the disgruntled reader's letter, demonstrates the long road we have yet to travel before the cultural barriers are broken down. Some folks would have you believe the need for a civil rights movement is gone. That's untrue.

We do need to build bridges of understanding — a foreign exchange program between the city and the suburbs. In that way, good politicians will be recognized for doing a good job, and we all will be able to see the fireworks without fear.

## discover Michigan

by Bill Stockwell

DID YOU KNOW that one of the most outstanding college athletes in Michigan is only 4-feet-11 and weighs only 92 pounds? She is Linda Guhl, a medal-winning gymnast at Michigan State University. In her freshman year she was named "most outstanding freshman athlete of the year."