

## State income tax hike seems inevitable in 1983

**L**IKE IT or not, Michiganders will be paying higher taxes in 1983. But it may not be as bad as it seems.

First, the federal government is raising the gasoline tax 5 cents a gallon. Second, the Michigan legislature tied its own gasoline and weight tax into the federal increase.

Those increases were a long time coming — indeed, over due. All things considered, we have been paying about 20 percent less taxes the last three years to maintain our roads and bus systems because our vehicles are more fuel-efficient, and lighter.

**THIRD, THE PRESSURE** is building in Lansing to increase the state personal income tax an unspecified amount.

Politicians, rightly or wrongly, have perceived until now that Michigan voters wouldn't stand for such an increase. They would vote only a 1 percent, six-month increase, which expired Oct. 1.

With an unemployment rate in excess of 17 percent and with more than 700,000 out of work, we find more and more persons exhausting their unemployment and supplemental employment benefits. In a word, welfare rolls are growing, even as individual benefits are being cut.

Michigan risks a serious deterioration in its system of higher education — a system which ranks with fresh water as one of our "aces" in attracting new, high-technology industry.

The state for three straight years has "overestimated revenues, underestimated spending demands and failed to contemplate the costs of financing the cash deficit." In the grim words of the independent and nonpartisan Citizens Research Council.

**WITHOUT QUESTION**, the personal income tax is the top candidate for more revenue in Michigan.

The single business tax, which is a kind of business activity tax, was down 29 percent in October

compared to the same month a year earlier.

The anti-corporation types who like to "sock it to business" just don't have a case any more.

Even the 4 percent sales and use tax, our second largest generator of revenue, is down 4.3 percent in the October-to-October comparisons. Besides, the sales tax is paid not only by the 83 percent who still have jobs but by the unemployed, those on welfare, those who are retired and those struggling to attend college. It is a poor candidate for more revenue.

That brings us, inevitably, back to the income tax. In a high-wage state like Michigan, personal incomes tend to hold up, even in times of recession. So, we find that October personal income tax revenues in the state were up 21 percent over the same month of 1981. Considering that those figures include September incomes taxed at the 22 percent higher rate, it's plain that here is the tax which the Legislature will increase.

**WE DO NOT** advocate increasing the state personal income tax. We observe only that it is inevitable.

In the meantime, we leave the Michigan Legislature with these thoughts:

- Take another hard look at why Michigan's social services costs have increased so relentlessly, in good years as well as bad, and are eating away the funds that used to go for education.

- Look for a tax that can be shifted to non-residents of Michigan. States with natural gas, oil, coal and uranium are enjoying bonanzas and cutting taxes on their residents — a phenomenon which means Michiganders are being taxed twice.

- Look for a way to make the state's excellent system of property tax rebates more visible and more appreciated by the common citizen. While the total property tax bills paid in Michigan went up 8 percent this year, some 19 percent of those taxes are being rebated by the state. Most folks still don't understand that. The system is no good if people fail to appreciate it.



## Blanchard: a suburban centrist

**I**N THE middle of a vigorous gubernatorial campaign last fall, my oldest son informed me, "Everyone in school is behind Blanchard."

I listened carefully. I remembered 1980. While the polls showed a close race for president, Jimmy Carter was derided in my son's grade school as "the peanut man." In 1980 "everyone" in school supported Ronald Reagan. I figured, correctly, that if that many children were against Carter, they must reflect what their parents were saying at home.

So I wanted to know the reasons for their favoring Jim Blanchard.

"If Blanchard is elected governor, he's going to stop I-696," my son said.

I-696 is a controversial highway plan designed to provide a major east-west link from I-75 to Northwestern Highway. It has been planned for approximately 20 years. Homes and parkland in Pleasant Ridge, Oak Park, Southfield and Lathrup

Village belt must still be uprooted for the highway to be completed.

Many persons living in southern Oakland County want to stop the highway. Jim Blanchard lives in Pleasant Ridge.

**SHELBY SOLOMON** of the Blanchard transition committee laughed when I told him of Blanchard's youthful support during the campaign.

"That highway represents a real conflict for Blanchard," Solomon said earlier this week. "Depending on which route is finally selected, it will either take out his house or go right by it."

Solomon said Blanchard does not have a formal position on I-696.

He has tried to assist cities in working out their problems with the highway department over I-696," Solomon said, adding,

"Generally, the new governor does not support the paving of additional land for highways."

His roots and those of his team are deep in this area. For eight years he represented a district of suburban communities, including Troy, in the U.S. House of Representatives. He practiced law for a Bloomfield Hills law firm.

The new lieutenant governor, Martha Griffiths, is a former U.S. representative from a district which included Southfield, Farmington and Redford.

Chief of the transition team is Tom Lewand. He practices law in Southfield and was a 1980 candidate for Oakland County executive. Other key transition executives are Solomon, of Franklin, and Betty Howe, former Oakland County Democratic chairperson.

**EVEN IF IT LOOKS** like an "Oakland Mafia" is taking over the executive wing of state government, it's obvious they will have to reach beyond Oakland County to solve the state's problems.

Blanchard has gained a reputation for his ability



**Nick Sharkey**

to build a consensus among persons of varied backgrounds. He demonstrated that in his work in pushing the Chrysler loan guarantee through Congress. He ran as a middle-of-the-road candidate during his successful campaign for governor.

He must continue to practice his centrist philosophy if he is going to solve the staggering problems facing this state. No one person can turn around a state with an unemployment rate of 17 percent and an estimated budget deficit of \$500 million.

Blanchard must gain the cooperation of business, labor, local governments, financial institutions and the Legislature.

Meanwhile, he will have to satisfy all those who backed him in his campaign — including some grade school kids from Oakland County.

Starting Saturday, he has a big job.

## TV contests: Fantasy hides grim realities

**I'VE FINALLY** figured out why this country is unable to deal with its economic woes.

Forget the traditional excuses — Reaganomics, Keynesian big spenders, excessive taxes, too few taxes, too many social programs, too many guns, not enough butter. The list is endless. The public's penchant of political fingerpointing works for only so long.

Now it must examine its own actions. We know what the politicians are doing wrong. Now let's look at the rest of us.

**THE REAL** problem is that we're quickly losing our ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy. We're falling prey to our own technological revolution.

Everything in life has become just another big TV game show — some people win, others lose. And if we dislike what we see, all we have to do is switch the channel and — Bingo! — it goes away.

Take this business of the burgeoning number of unemployed, persons going hungry and still others without a roof over their heads. Many Americans are refusing to respond because they don't comprehend what they see on television.

During the Depression (not Ronald Reagan's — Herbert Hoover's), America's mind was unclouded by television fantasy. We easily distinguished between the horrors of war and famine as opposed to the gaudy pageantry at the movie theater. The line between reporting news and providing entertainment was definite in the minds of those who worked in the media and for those consuming the information.

In those days America wanted to deal with its problems.

**TODAY, THE MEDIUM** television, which reaches the greatest number of people, has blurred that line to sell itself. The public is having trouble distinguishing.



**crackerbarrel debate**  
**Steve Barnaby**

A viewer can go down the list: "Nightline," Phil Donahue, Sonya Friedman, "20/20," "60 Minutes," the three network morning news shows — all these and more have crossed the line.

We've become so used to the game show news approach that fewer of us each day believe that what we see on the screen is true.

Donahue bounces about, haranguing guests over the latest social issue on the pop charts. Koppel shows us a filmstrip on same and then interviews a victim of this latest social disorder.

"Will the starving family get enough food to eat? Will the unemployed auto worker get a job or lose everything he's worked for? Will the child get the lifesaving kidney or die?" "Tune in next week."

**NOW, WITH THE** sophisticated telephone hooks we can call in from around the nation and contribute our 2 cents' worth.

Newspapers, too, are falling prey to game-show mentality. One newspaper has a contest in which subscribers can pick and choose from a list of needy families to help. Needy persons submit their hard-luck stories, and readers select the one they like best. Nobody knows what happens to the families which don't get tapped. Not much of anyone seems to care. But it's great for circulation.

Fare game show — just like the old TV show "Queen for a Day." Same format, nearly. Women would tell their stories, and audience applause would determine whose needs were met.

Unfortunately, newspaper readers and TV viewers love it. They can fantasize away our social woes. After all, on television the problem is solved when the show is over. Although many of us still may know of someone who is destitute, most of us still only have TV as our witness to the present national shame.

Because of that, people are starving to death in the midst of plenty.

Wake up, middle-class America. Those food lines are for real.

## 1982 - a year of contrasts in economy

**WHEN THE** tooting of the whistles, the ringing of bells and the blowing of horns that bid farewell to the old year and the greeting of the new fade away, the question arises:

How will the historians rank the year 1982?

Sure, it was an eventful year. Many things, some very strange, have happened, and 1982 will take a place somewhere that will stand it apart. But for what will it best be remembered?

Will it be the year that Michigan was declared a disaster area with so many people in need of food?

Will it be the year in which the auto industry that was the lifeblood of the country hit rock bottom?

Will it be best remembered as the year in which the dollar became so cheap that hooligans were given a million dollars for six months work?

Will it be the year in which prizefighters earned as much as \$4 million for a single bout, such as Sugar Ray Leonard received for his bout with Tommy Hearns? Or will it be best recalled that Larry Holmes, the heavyweight champion, was given \$2 million to defend his title — and claimed it wasn't enough?

**IT WOULDN'T** be strange if the figures 1982 were forgotten and the passing year weren't remembered for any of these things.

As he ponders these things, The Stroller recalls that his paternal grandfather, who came to this country from County Cork in Ireland, didn't know the date of his birth.

When asked in what year he was born, he would smile and answer, "The year of the big wind." And he went to his grave without ever revealing a date. In fact, there is no date on his tombstone back home.

So it won't be strange if 1982 is remembered more for its happenings than by the numbers 1982.

Seldom do you hear any of the present generation recall the 1919 depression by the year. It is known



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

as the year of the soup kitchens, when these places were set up to provide food for the needy.

The crash in 1929 is known as the year the banks closed and script was used instead of money — when even executives from the business world sold apples on street corners.

So it is almost certain 1982 will be remembered for any one of the numerous things that have happened during its stay.

**SURELY IT WAS** a year of contrasts. Just imagine the largest list of unemployed in the state's history and those who were lucky enough to have jobs going out on strike, seeking more money!

Can you imagine thousands of folks going hungry while more than 100,000 people fill Michigan Stadium every Saturday in fall with tickets selling at \$12?

Folks are certain to recall that dining out hit a new high in prices — when a steak dinner was priced at \$14.75, an ordinary bowl of soup was \$1.25, a bun 50 cents extra. Or that the price of admission to a movie theater was \$3.75. (Remember when admission was a nickel?)

So long, 1982. You were a year of contrasts that should long be remembered.



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

**DID YOU KNOW** that when Ford built the first of its triple-engine airplanes in the 1920s, it became the first commercial carrier of air mail and was also the first plane used by the early commercial airlines in this country? When World War II started, Ford built the Willow Run plant and produced four-engine B-24 Liberator bombers at the unbelievable rate of one per hour.