

Best to remember stupidity of war

A SHORT DECADE after an American war ended, we stand on the verge of yet another. We don't know where, for sure, or exactly when. But we know another conflict lurks in the shadows, eager to snatch away another generation of youth.

Perhaps the stench of a future war lingers so heavily on this Memorial Day because so many forget so easily. While wars rage around the globe, Americans once again have withdrawn into their shell of denial and isolationism.

Increasingly, we hear the naive refrains of the Neville Chamberlains and Charles Lindberghs. Yet, today, many who mouth those words know Lindbergh only as the man who flew the Atlantic, and they have never heard of acquiescent Chamberlain and "peace in our time." The consequences of their fatal political legacies of isolationism and appeasement have been all but forgotten.

Sometime in the very near future it will be the young who will inherit "the tribulation, the sorrow and the triumphs that are the aftermath of war," as Herbert Hoover so aptly put it.

OF COURSE, triumph is illusory when it comes to those who actually fight the wars. No one really gains anything in war, even the notorious monied interests who so often are cited.

But America forgets these lessons.

In previous decades, many would lament the patriotic celebration surrounding the Memorial Day. They would recoil at the glorification of tanks and artillery paraded down our streets. And they were right. There really is nothing to celebrate.

But today we choose to forget, altogether. Memorial Day is just another day away from work — one

of those many three-day weekends to which we have grown accustomed and have come to cherish.

We picnic, play softball, go to the cottage, watch the Indianapolis 500, wax the car, plant the garden, and lie in the sun. We do all the things we would do on any other day when we didn't have to go to work. For many Americans, Memorial Day is the kickoff to summer — although it officially begins later in the month.

WHILE WE'VE finally grown away from celebrating war on Memorial Day, it is a mistake to forget. We should remember for the sake of the generations to come.

We should remember the perverse acts of all wars. We should remember the cowardice and bungling of political leaders who lead us to war. We should remember greedy industrialists who thought another war would make them rich. We should remember the fanaticism of the ideologues who were overcome by their own power.

And we should remember the masses of people who let these leaders get away with what they did because they closed their minds' eye in hopes that war would go away.

And, yes, we should remember the soldiers — all the soldiers in every war who left home and were separated from their families for a time or forever. If you have a tough time remembering, think of the words of World War II cartoonist Bill Mauldin: "Look at the infantryman's eyes, and you can tell how much war he has seen."

Remember the eyes of the infantryman you know or knew. Then maybe for a time we will stop killing our youths — until that next war which lurks in the shadows.



Bring back the clothing designers

LAST WEEK this state celebrated that unique event called Michigan Week.

Not being a native of Michigan, I have always been intrigued by the idea of having a week designed to honor a state and the persons who live in it.

I also have been struck by the different ways it is celebrated in different communities. In some, it is the highlight of the calendar year with parades, banquets and special school activities. In others it hardly gets a mention.

West Bloomfield takes its Michigan Week seriously. On Friday morning, community leaders attended an awards breakfast which lasted almost three hours because so many persons were honored for everything from planting flowers at township hall to fighting pornography.

The breakfast took so long that late in the program one bearded speaker quipped, "I was clean-shaven when we started this morning."

Yet, no one begrudged the time it took to give out

the laurels. They realized that those who won the awards deserved them.

THE GUEST speaker, Lt. Gov. Martha Griffiths, chose not to focus on the past year but to look to the future.

As co-chairperson (along with former Gov. William Milliken) of the new state task force on high technology, she is in a unique position to assess what will happen in the years to come.

"New jobs in high tech will never replace what has been lost through the slump in the auto industry," she said. "The most we can see is 100-200,000 new jobs in the next 10 to 20 years." This compares with the approximately 300,000 persons laid off today in the auto industry.

Recovery will come only with a rebound of the auto industry, she said, citing a recent University of Michigan survey finding that 66 percent of the people believe it's a good time to buy a car. This compares to 33 percent a year earlier.

Instead, her task force will focus on specific means of diversifying the state's economy. Besides the much publicized robotics area, the task force also is looking into clothing, food processing and timber.

CLOTHING, SHE said, is the fifth largest industry in the United States.

"Few persons realize this, but per capita, Michigan produces more clothing designers than any other state," she said. "Our best young designers leave the state and move to New York or Europe. We have to bring them home."

She proposed creating a Michigan School of Design.

Griffiths said that Michigan residents eat more potato chips than any other state, "yet most of them are manufactured out of state."

Food manufacturers could reduce their transpor-



Nick Sharkey

tation costs 6 percent by relocating in Michigan, she said. "Even allowing 4 percent for higher wages in Michigan, the manufacturer will net 2 percent."

Finally, the task force is looking into the timber industry. Griffiths said the state government owns more timberland than any other state, "but most of this land is unproductive. The state took it over because the owners couldn't pay their taxes."

The task force wants to lease that land to timber companies.

LISTENING TO GRIFFITHS one realizes that she is firmly convinced Michigan will move ahead. At 71, she is not mouthing words to further her political ambitions.

Her plain speaking about the state's future added a dose of reality to the celebration of Michigan Week.



Bob Wisler

noise which ensued from the citizenry, it became apparent that many people thought the state government should have found another way to maintain state services.

Blanchard, now the target of a recall campaign, is a good example of a man caught in shifting tides of expectations and public opinions.

Campaigning, he emphasized he would do all that he could to create "jobs, jobs, jobs" in order to deal with Michigan's serious problems of unemployment and a declining economy, although he cautioned he could not work magic.

In fact, state government can do little to ease the problems of unemployment. Blanchard's almost desperate attempt to fulfill his campaign promise is focused on 20,000 summer jobs for youth, hardly an answer to the state's long-term unemployment.

CANDIDATES DEVELOP campaign platforms to address what they perceive are the people's problems. Once elected, they are trapped into trying to deliver while dealing with dwindling resources.

The fact is that most people feel we have reached the limit with government spending and no need for extra tax funds can be justified. Their message: Whatever the money is needed for, take it out of present revenues by cutting out something else.

Since most governments are working with less and less money, it is becoming apparent that some services which the public has been used to will have to go, even if it means firefighters in Birmingham or parks department employees in Westland.

Government leaders realize this and, in most instances, are taking steps to cut back. The Blanchard recall campaign may not succeed in ordering a recall election, but the organizers have already sent government leaders a message which certainly will loom in the background of every local and state government spending decision.

Tuition hike worse than tax increase

THOSE OF us who had hoped the state personal income tax increase would help colleges and at least hold the lid on tuitions had our hopes dashed last week.

Oakland University was the first of what will probably be a long line of four-year colleges to announce a major tuition hike. The OU hikes will run in the 10-15 percent range.

For five years now, my editorial board colleagues and I have been arguing that the Headlees, the Tisches and now the Recall Blanchard people have been short-sighted in concentrating all their attention on taxes.

There are a zillion kinds of "non-tax" revenues that government is free to jack up even when the lid is supposedly being placed on taxes. Besides college tuitions, these non-tax revenues include building permit fees, inspection fees, admissions to parks and museums, licenses to weld and fish and drive, parking fees, swimming pool fees... well, I've left out a few dozen, but you get the picture.

THE IRONY of this picture is that only folks with jobs get hit by the personal income tax increase, but folks without jobs — students, senior citizens, the impoverished — get hit by the fee increases, too.

In this light, let's look a little closer at the Oakland University tuition increase — not with the notion of picking on that fine school, but just because it's convenient and probably typical.

Freshmen and sophomores will take a 10.9 percent increase, up \$139.50 to \$1,410.50 for a full load of 31 credits.



Tim Richard

Juniors and seniors will absorb a 10.5 percent increase, up \$155 to \$1,627.50 for 31 credits.

Graduate students will be hit for 15 percent, up \$264 to \$1,968 for 24 credits.

Keep in mind that the state income tax increase amounted to a 38 percent hike, but it was the first increase in seven years, while college students have been getting hit with tuition blows like this approximately every other year.

LET'S LOOK again at the tuition increase juniors and seniors will pay — \$155 a year.

One would have to have a taxable income of more than \$8,800 a year for the Blanchard tax hike to hit you to the tune of \$155. (That is, \$8,800 of taxable income times 1.75 percent equals \$154.)

Ah, but Michigan allows a personal exemption of \$1,500. So an unmarried student at Oakland University would have to have earned income of \$10,300 before he or she would be nicked as hard by the income tax as by the tuition increase.

I wonder how many OU juniors and seniors have incomes of \$10,300 a year. Very few, probably.

Yet the OU board of trustees, of which Richard Headlee is still a member, is raising tuitions as much for juniors and seniors as Gov. James J. Blanchard is raising income taxes on a single person with \$10,300 personal income.

And for students with less than \$10,300 income, the OU tuition increase is worse than the Blanchard income tax increase.

The people of Michigan are naive if they think they can hold down the cost of government by holding down taxes because there are too many other ways government can increase revenue.

Ask the trustees of Oakland University if that isn't true.

Public tells its leaders: no new taxes

FIREFIGHTERS IN Birmingham are trying to drum up support for a three-fourths-mill property tax increase to save fire department jobs. A knowledgeable observer, however, says, "I don't think there's a chance that it would pass. I think voters would say, find another way to keep the fire department intact."

In Westland, Mayor Charles Pickering proposed a 10 percent increase in the property tax rate, partially because of a 5.6 percent decrease in valuations. Homeowners would pay an average of \$10.65 more a year in property taxes.

The announcement of his intentions touched off protests and demonstrations.

THESE ARE only two examples of relations between local governments and the public — at best, an uneasy alliance; in some places, simmering hostility. People generally are mistrustful of politicians' ability to manage public money for the greatest public good.

We have been treated for years to investigations of how Washington overreaches. Ronald Reagan became president while creating an image of a man who wants to get government off our backs. Voters who liked it interpreted it to mean getting government out of our wallets.

We also have been served stories of local government waste and questionable activity. Wayne County government has provided a surfeit of examples.

PERHAPS the biggest contributors to mistrust of government, deserved or not, were the income tax increases passed last year under then Gov. William Milliken and this year under Gov. James Blanchard.

Neither governor thought there was any other choice. A majority of legislators agreed. From the