

# After a stormy year, legislators are wary

By Diane Gais  
staff writer

Activity in the state legislature last year will certainly make the history books. Angry taxpayers recalled two state senators for the first time in the state's history.

Recall threats caused tempers to flare, and tensions between the parties often reached the boiling point, especially on the Senate floor where Democrats held a slim majority until the recall. Partisan fighting was common in both houses, and legislators openly shied away from making decisions on controversial issues for fear of losing their jobs.

Throwing legislators out of office was the response to a temporary 35 percent hike in the income tax rate, which will decrease periodically over a 2½-year span. Both parties agreed there was a need for a tax increase to offset a budget deficit, but Republicans and Democrats differed on how much was necessary.

THE TAX increase was approved by Democrats supporting the first governor from their party in 30 years, leaving Republicans to feel bulldozed on an

issue which affects all other state spending. The conflict widened the rift between the parties.

But opinions on 1983 depend on the yardstick used. Richard Cole, Gov. James Blanchard's press secretary, enumerated the governor's successes of 1983, including the fact that all but one bill proposed by Blanchard was passed by the legislature.

"Blanchard saved the state from bankruptcy, restored the credit rating and in the first of the 38 states that raised income tax to also reduce it in 1984," Cole said.

Other major accomplishments he cited include a workforce program to train welfare recipients for private sector jobs; \$18.5 million in tax credits for 5,000 businesses; and enacting a Youth Corps program that created summer jobs for 25,000 young people.

"Those legislators that may have been discouraged by the recall fever took steps up and join the governor in taking credit for many of these plans and programs," Cole said. "This will be recorded as one of the most productive years."

THE FOLLOWING are comments from Blanchard and area legislators,

reflecting back on a turbulent 1983 and looking ahead to 1984.

## Blanchard

"The reapportionment and recall issues have clouded the achievements of the year," Blanchard said. "But, they (legislators) came to an agreement with a bipartisan vote on the reapportionment, and that may be the start of a better climate next year."

Asked how he feels about taking the heat for the tax increase and recalls, Blanchard said, "The Republicans managed to bring Michigan to its knees with the Japanese government last year by asking for financial help for the credit rating, and they seem to forget that they presented me with a \$1.7-billion deficit."

Blanchard added that he "inherited the worse deficit in the nation," but he promises to "rebuild the state."

"As long as rubber-necked people continue to run, and they don't have the backbone to stand up to the issues, we're going to have a hard time," Blanchard said. "But, no one said it was going to be easy."

Blanchard boasts a 20-point program for jobs and economic development, which will be a "good foundation" for the state next year. Other accomplishments include education disinvestment, the establishment of an \$800-million construction fund for state roads which employed 23,000 people and tax incentives for small businesses.

"The legislature was helpful on some of the accomplishments, and on the others we were able to move ahead anyway," Blanchard said.



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## McGee

State Rep. Robert McGee, D-Union Lake, whose district includes West Bloomfield, emphasized that a major priority for 1984 is to make Michigan more attractive to business.

"A few things have been started, but there's a lot to be done," McGee said. "Attitudes have to change."

"For too long it was felt business was the golden goose and you couldn't do anything but pluck it," he said. "The result is lost jobs."

McGee predicts education will be another important issue next year.

"We've got study upon study on what seems to indicate it can't be neglected any longer," McGee said. "Our number one resource is our children."

## Fessler

State Sen. Richard Fessler, R-West Bloomfield, said his wish for the 1984 legislative session is to see the "legislature settle down and start to do the people's business." He sought earlier adjournment of the legislature to ease the recent turmoil between the parties.

Working on ways to help business also is high on his agenda for 1984.

"We're long overdue on passing legislation that would aid the small business community," he said. "That would help the economy and improve the business environment."

"We've got legislation pending that would bring the single business tax triggering mechanism into play," Fessler said. "That would help the small business people and bring jobs into the state."

## Berman

State Rep. Maxine Berman, D-Southfield, said the tumultuous 1983 sessions might have been improved if the governor better educated the public on the income tax increase.

Berman said the legislature could have accomplished more, but noted it did move forward on some very important issues.

Examples were House actions on changing interest rate regulations for the consumer's benefit, creating incentives for businesses to locate in Michigan and debates on closing and consolidating colleges and universities.

The Prudent Purchaser Agreement encourages competition in the medical

field and will help contain costs. The Energy Assurance Package ensures poor people will have heat. Both passed in the House.

Looking ahead, Berman said the major controversy toward the end of 1984 could be a ballot issue on voter's choice. If petitioners garner enough signatures, voters will be asked if the public should vote on every tax increase or rollback.

## Faxon

State Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Southfield, said attracting businesses to Michigan and thus improving the state's economy is his No. 1 priority for 1984.

He said there's a need to "revise and reform" school aid formulas.

Faxon said more time should be spent on legislation for cleaning toxic sites and preventing potentially dangerous situations from occurring again.

Looking back at 1983, Faxon said, "The overwhelming major accomplishment was the restoration of (Michigan's) credit (rating), and balancing the budget."

"The tax issue was absolutely vital, because it's putting the Michigan economy into forward step," he said.

## Cruce

State Sen. Doug Cruce, R-Troy, his voice heavy with anger, said tax and budget issues will remain the hottest subjects of debate in the state legislature during 1984.

"Since he (Blanchard) felt he could pass the tax hike with his own party and pass a budget that was 12-percent higher for 1984, we felt there was no reason for us (Republicans) to give our endorsement on other programs," he said.

"There were no major accomplishments in the legislature, because the governor failed miserably in directing," Cruce said.

When Democrats banded together to pass the tax hike, they "caused us to be ineffective to get involved in other programs that could cost more money," he said.

As for the future, Cruce said the legislature would have to deal with reducing the income tax faster than is presently planned. Also, the 1984 budget must be slashed before other programs are considered, he said.

Since the "ball is in the governor's court," when he's ready to look realistically at the issues "we can begin fine tuning the other programs," Cruce said.



*'Reapportionment is strictly an example of power politics of the worse type.'*

— Rep. Sandy Brotherton



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## INSIDE ANGLES

Know someone doing something notable? Let us know. Write: Inside Angles, Farmington Observer, 23352 Farmington Road, Farmington 48024.

**KERRIE KAY PRIDEMORE**, daughter of Raymond and Betty Pridemore of Farmington Hills and a junior majoring in psychology at Northern Michigan University, will serve as a resident assistant during winter semester. Resident assistants provide leadership in homecoming and winter fest festivities, help students with problems, and advise the governmental units which help to plan social, recreational, academic and cultural programs for the residence halls.

**JUNIOR GROUP LEAGUE GOODWILL** members had plenty to celebrate this holiday season with a record-breaking \$71,000 profit when the books were closed after their annual pre-Christmas Antiques Market. Members have passed the \$2-million mark now in money raised to help the handicapped help themselves. By mid-January the cycle will begin again as members start working toward their 37th annual sale.

**TIMOTHY JOHN MALONE** of Farmington Hills was awarded a diploma from Southeastern Louisiana University. He earned a bachelor's degree in marketing.

**LARA JO ANSELMINI** of Farmington Hills received her master of science degree in Epidemiologic Science at graduation ceremonies at the University of Michigan. She is the daughter of Dolph and Phyllis Anselmi and a 1977 Harrison High School graduate.

**HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS** interested in attending Pontiac Business Institute-Farmington can apply for \$200 per term scholarships through the Michigan Business Schools Association. Deadline for applications is Feb. 28. For more information, interested students should contact P.B.I. Schools at 333-7453.

**WOMEN OF NORTH FARMINGTON** will feature Andrew Shaw, handwriting analyst, at their Jan. 19 meeting at Oakland Community College. A luncheon will be served by the students in the gourmet cooking class. The price for this event is \$12. Anyone interested in attending may call Marion Prover no later than Jan. 11 at 471-4351.

**JULIE WHELAN**, daughter of James and Judith Whelan of Farmington Hills and a student at Aquinas College, has been selected to be included in the 1984 edition of Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges. Students achieving this recognition are chosen based on their academic achievement, service to the community, leadership in extracurricular activities and potential for continued success. Outstanding students have been honored in the annual directory since it was first published in 1934.

**FREE DOOR LOCKS** are available to Farmington Hills residents who are 60 years or older. The Farmington Hills Police Department will install two dead bolt locks and a door viewer for

those who qualify by calling Loretta Conway, director of senior adult activities, at 474-6115, Ext. 286. There are a limited number of locks available and the rule is first-come, first-served.

**JOYCE ANNE ROGERS**, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Rogers, was graduated in winter commencement exercises at Belmont College, Nashville, Tenn. She received the bachelor of science degree. Her degree involved a cooperative curriculum with the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Nuclear Medicine Technology Department. Joyce is a 1979 Farmington High School graduate.

**FRED TRAVALENA**, one of the entertainment world's most sought after singer-impersonators, will do a benefit for Providence Hospital, Friday, Jan. 20 at Ford Auditorium. Proceeds from the show will go for Providence Hospital's planned Perinatology Center, an obstetrical and neonatal intensive care unit for high risk mothers and critically ill infants. "This will be a fun-filled evening for the entire family," promise the chairs Mrs. Virginia Brock and Mrs. Beverly Moore. Tickets are priced at \$15, \$25 and \$100 sponsors. The sponsors will be invited to a reception for Travalena after the show. Tickets may be purchased by check, VISA or MasterCard. For more information, contact the Providence Hospital Foundation at 552-9001.

**JAMES T. ANDERSON** of Farmington has been named to the President's List for fall term. To achieve President's List recognition, students must earn a 4.0 grade-point on a 4.0 scale. James is the son of Gordon and Pat Anderson.

**MARY RAUTH**, a recent Michigan State University graduate from Farmington Hills, received the MSU Board of Trustees Award for achieving the highest grade point average among MSU's 1,401 fall term graduates. Mary, an audiologist and speech sciences major, is the daughter of Theresa and Frank Rauth and a 1979 graduate of Harrison High School.

**AS COOL AUTUMN** nights foretell the colder weather, southeast Michigan cross-country skiers are already eyeing their equipment in anticipation of the approaching ski season. One group of skiers, the Independence Oaks Nordic Ski Patrol, is particularly anxious to let the good times er... slide. The 44-person unit, established in 1978, is the only one of its kind in southeast Michigan. The patrol is particularly interested in recruiting new volunteers this year because of plans to extend the patrols to other Oakland County parks offering cross-country skiing. Golf courses with ski facilities include Glen Oaks in Farmington Hills, Red Oaks in Madison Heights, Springfield Oaks in Davisburg and White Lake Oaks near Pontiac. For more information on the Nordic Ski patrol, call Jim Meloche at 879-8510 or 825-8368, or for information on Oakland County Parks cross country ski programs, phone 858-0906.

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