

# OBSERVATION POINT



By Philip H. Power  
Publisher

## Candidates All Agree: Taxes Are Too High

We've had quite a few political visitors stopping by the office during the past two weeks. It's understandable since the primary election is now less than two weeks away.

Robert Huber, running against Lenore Romney for the GOP nomination for Senate, dropped in for an interview. He attacked "revolutionaries" who are trying to destroy our system and said taxes are too high.

Then Tim Murphy, Garden City Mayor who is trying to knock off Jim Tierney, Democratic state representative, came along. He said that Tierney had voted wrong on unemployment compensation bills and that taxes were too high.

Then came Bill Faust, the Democratic state senator from Westland who is trying to withstand a primary fight with current state representative Vincent Pettigren. He explained how he had been involved in getting extra state money to support the school systems in this area and said taxes were too high.

Last was Carl Pursell, of Plymouth, who is trying his darndest to bump off GOP state

senator George Kuhn. He said Kuhn had voted for bills which hurt his constituents in Oakland County and that taxes were too high.

WHETHER WE agree with all these candidates or not, we can support their shared view that taxes are too high.

One of the reasons they are high is that our needs for government services are great and getting greater.

For example, just last week the Supreme Court ruled that school systems could not sell text books and other instructional materials to school children. These are part of the system of free public education, the court ruled, and therefore should be provided free of cost.

Best guess is that this will cost the state around \$20 million.

Someone has to pay, and it'll be you and me.

ANOTHER REASON taxes are so high is that they are unfairly distributed.

This is because the basic tax legislation — the property tax — assumes that each piece of

property to be taxed will be assessed at the same rate: One half of fair market value.

But this simply isn't so. Despite the state constitutional requirement that property shall be assessed at 50% of fair market value, Plymouth Township's assessments are only 24.43% of market value, according to the Wayne County Bureau of Taxation.

Livonia's valuation is only 29.50%. Canton Township's is 22.41%.

And so on. The assessments assigned to land simply aren't valuing the land correctly.

THIS IS particularly the case

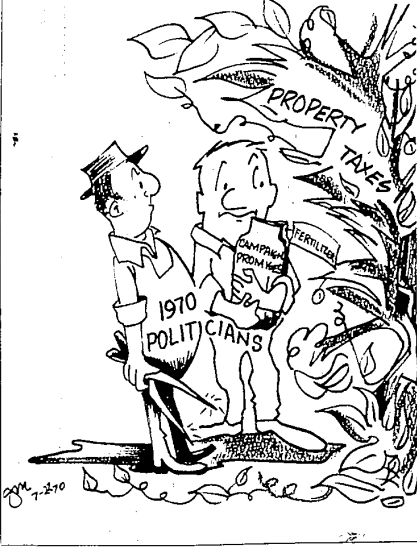
in suburban communities; where land can be farms in one year and the site of a big shopping center development in the next.

People living in newly developed subdivisions are complaining that their land is being assessed at market value. But that the farmer's outdoor lawn land just as valuable but is being assessed for much less.

They are right. If we're going to have any fair tax relief, and if we're going to keep the out-dated property tax, we've got to have a fair and uniform system of assessing property.

Why don't you ask the politicians about that one?

THE FELLA ON THE LEFT HAS THE RIGHT IDEA.



### Leonard Poger writes

## Political Definitions Are Strange

With dozens of political campaigns underway for city, council, state and congressional races, voters are bombarded with politi-

cal literature, and campaign promises of all types.

But many of the candidates' public statements tend to have a number of similarities. The voters may not realize this but a newspaper editor does because he sees a number of political press releases at the same time within any given day.

The editors get a big chuckle out of the phrases used in political press releases and literature. But the voters don't know what certain key phrases mean.

As a public services to the average voter who is inundated with political literature, here is a sampling of the most frequently used terms and phrases:

**GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGN:** It sounds good and close to the independent voter, but what it really means is that the candidate has been rebuffed for organizational support and is forced to carry on his campaign from his basement with the help of his wife, teenage son and classmates.

**SUPPORT OF TAX REFORM FOR SCHOOLS:** This phrase is as popular as civil rights during the 1950's and 1960's. But, as civil rights movements have resulted in comprehensive legislation on the books, tax reform is also a reality.

I'M NOT A TOOL OF ANY

It was politically unsafe a few years ago to support a state income tax to help finance local school districts. But the income tax has been law for nearly three years. To say that he is "for tax reform", a candidate is acknowledging that he is several years behind the times.

**CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS:** If the candidate has any money, he rents a vacant gas station or condemned building for the campaign. If the candidate doesn't have any money, he runs the campaign out of his basement or spare bedroom.

**SUPPORT FROM SENIOR CITIZENS:** This means that the candidate's parents have agreed to vote for him.

**TEENS FOR CANDIDATE SMITH CLUB:** This is the candidate's two teenage youngsters and some of their classmates who did not go out of town on vacation and didn't have anything else to do.

**I STAND ON MY RECORD OF EXPERIENCE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** The candidate here has nothing new to propose if he is re-elected to another two or four-year term. His "record" is geared mainly to the fact that he didn't get arrested for taking bribes, attacking a meter maid or stealing from public funds.

I'M NOT A TOOL OF ANY

**SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS:** This is usually uttered by a candidate who tried to get campaign funds and formal endorsements from those special interest groups (namely, organized labor and the party structure) and was flatly rejected.

**I INTEND TO REPRESENT EVERYONE IN MY DISTRICT:** How a single person can find out how 100,000 persons feel about a variety of important issues has not yet been determined but the candidate promises to do so anyway.

**THE CAMPAIGN IS STARTING TO PEAK:** The candidate finally got out his first newsletter mailing — six weeks late.

**I INTEND TO MAKE MYSELF AVAILABLE, DAY OR NIGHT, TO ANSWER CITIZENS' COMPLAINTS:** If this candidate wins, he immediately changes his telephone number and gets an unlisted phone. "If they can't reach me, then it's not my fault," the candidate later says.

**"THE PRESS IS BIASED.":** This is always uttered when a local newspaper points out a conflict of statements of facts made earlier by the candidate.

**"THE PRESS IS FAIR.":** This means that the local paper printed the candidate's press releases without changes.

### R.T. Thompson writes

## Mayor Has Valid Complaint

Livonia Mayor Edward McNamara is more than a bit miffed by the announcement that Michigan Racing Commissioner Leo Shirley is thinking seriously about increasing the racing dates for both runners and standardbreds.

The proposal is to give the Detroit Race Course an additional 25 days next year and to boost the allotment to Wolverine Harness Raceway, which operates at the DRC, at the same time.

There isn't any question that the commissioner's plans will meet with the approval of the race tracks, the horsemen and those who like to follow the bang-tails and switchtails for the betterment of the breed.

But Mayor McNamara isn't one bit happy with the additional days and nights of racing. It isn't that he's against more racing. Far from it, but he is bitterly opposed to additional dates with no more cash from the state to finance the costs of police protection, traffic control, replacement of the roads when they wear down and other items in the same category.

MC NAMARA went on re-

cord during his recent successful campaign for the mayor's post as being opposed to more racing dates unless the state boosted the allotment to the City of Livonia.

Some 20 years ago, the State Legislature voted to allow all municipalities, in which a track was located, a total of 20 percent of the state's share of the pari-mutuel handle up to a total of \$500,000.

Back in 1950 that \$500,000 was a regular gold mine for the new city, representing something like 97 percent of the budget.

In the allotment to the municipalities, the Legislature also decreed that the city should use the funds for police protection, traffic control and upkeep of the roads in the vicinity of the track.

Thus, cities like Livonia and Hazel Park were in the position that the monies were used for hiring of special police and other personnel used in keeping things in order and the balance went into the general fund.

That was fine and dandy for a few years. Then the interest in the thoroughbreds and the pacers and trotters began to grow and with the growth came larger crowds and additional problems

for the cities in maintaining the proper policing staffs.

During that same period the nation was hit by inflation and spiraling costs and the \$500,000 that represented 97 percent of the Livonia budget shrank to the point where it was less than 7 percent a year ago. Seems like it actually was less than that, for policing costs spiraled to the point where the general fund was receiving little from the once bonanza.

ONE WOULD have to say that the Livonia city government was a bit lax during the past several years in not pressing the Legislature to boost the allotment.

Most certainly during the 20 years the sum of \$500,000 has depreciated in value to the point that the City of Livonia would need something like a million to do the same things today that it did then.

A year ago Livonia, through the efforts of its representatives in the Legislature, succeeded in having the allotment boosted to \$600,000. But Mayor McNamara feels that's like tossing a small bone to a big hungry dog.

"There isn't any question that the municipalities in which the race tracks are located should receive a much larger allotment," he says. "The mutual handle in the past 20 years has climbed from a daily average of \$50,000 for the running races to almost a million.

"On that basis alone, we should be receiving twice as much as we did 20 years ago. The crowds are larger, there are many more cars to take care of, the traffic situation is about four times as great as in 1950 and yet we are still receiving only \$500,000.

"Livonia isn't alone in this problem, the city of Hazel Park is facing the same troubles. It is our feeling that the Legislature should boost our allotment."

"Now the racing commissioner reportedly plans to increase the number of days to both the runners and trotters. All that will do is boost our costs.

"I'm not against more days but I am against lengthening the season without consideration for the city in which the track is located. We're going to fight this every way we can and hope the Legislature sees things our way."

### Tim Richard writes

## Will Ecology Movement Fade?

ST. IGNACE The air of the Upper Peninsula is bracing. The meat of the northern pike is white and tasty. You can stand neck-deep in the water of Lake Michigan here and see your toes, which you can't do in the same lake further south.

And you wonder if this, too, will be spoiled. Will the natural paradise be desecrated before we can seriously regain control of our environment?

Is the ecology movement that began in 1970 another fad that will die, like the dreams of the United Nations and racial integration?

I DON'T think the ecology movement will die. I think it's here to stay. And I think it's one of the most important ideas in mankind's dappled history.

Just a few hundred years ago, man thought of himself as the center of the universe, the made-from-scratch creation of God, a rational being governed by his thoughts, the master of his domain. Then several deflating ideas were hatched.

professor of canon law whose Latinized name was Copernicus, and whose avocation was astronomy, decided that the earth was not, indeed, the center of the universe but was only one of several planets revolving around the sun. Man was no longer at the center of the universe.

A century ago, an English biologist named Charles Darwin, studying the fauna of some Pacific isles, decided that man, too, was a product of evolution and had descended from some extinct species. Man was no longer the unique creation of God, at least in a physical sense.

At the end of the last century, a Viennese neurosurgeon named Sigmund Freud learned, and then taught others, that man's mind, like the proverbial iceberg, was only partly above the surface; that mental activity was unconscious; and that much of man's behavior was influenced by the unconscious part of the mind. Man's rationality was challenged.

And now the ecologists come along.

THERE'S NO one leading authority like Copernicus or Darwin or Freud in the ecology movement, because things don't work that way any more, but the effect on man's ego has been just as devastating.

Man no longer owns the world. He no longer can manipulate nature to suit himself. The notion that man can "conquer a continent" is seen as absurd.

Man is no longer above nature. He is part of it. The ecology movement is teaching us that man is just another biological organism in the whole system, albeit a more destructive one. Man can no longer blast out seaways, toss around DDT, dump salt, breed uncontrollably, drive gas-guzzling steel dinosaurs and not expect to pay the consequences.

It's a startling idea—startling and humbling.

The idea that we are destroying our environment is too profound to be dismissed as another political fad. The ecology movement is here to stay.

## Editorial & Opinion

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