

Opinion

Steve Barnaby editor/477-5450

5A(F)

Board secrecy is unfairest cut of all

Somewhere packed away at the Farmington library — could even be under the stairway in a box — is the wisdom of Jonathan Swift.

Well, somebody ought to check out a copy of Gulliver's Travels and give a read to the Library Board of Trustees. The English satirist put it this way:

"Providence never intended to make the management of public affairs a mystery, to be comprehended only by a few persons of sublime genius, of which there are seldom three born in an age."

Well you oughta know, the library's "geniuses" want to keep what's going on over at the library a mystery.

THE GURUS of library policy-making have decided that the less the pub-

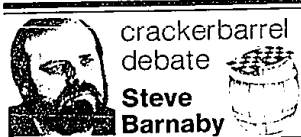
lic knows, the better. That's right. The library chieftains have decided you shouldn't know how your tax dollars are being spent or how your library is being administered.

Upon the advice of their attorney, they have refused to release the results of a secret conclave they conducted on Wednesday — despite the fact several legal experts quoted in today's front page story think the legality of withholding the results is questionable.

BUT KEEPING PUBLIC business, your business, a secret goes beyond interpretations of the law.

C'mon gang, what's the big secret?

Shrouding Gordon Lewis' sudden "vacation" — along with the accompanying library audit — in secrecy does



nothing to solve the problems at the library.

The public is left with only two conclusions: The trustees want to hush up the truth because they didn't know what was going on in their own back yard and are embarrassed or, even

worse, they did know something and want to cover it up.

Library Board president Ernest Sauter does nothing to lend an air of confidence to the situation. In a recent telephone interview, he said:

"IN THE years that Gordon (Lewis) has been here, he hasn't made any moves without calling on the board."

Well, maybe he has and maybe he hasn't. But keeping the investigation a secret will only lend itself to rumors and unfair impressions of the individuals involved.

By maintaining secrecy, the board is being unfair to itself, the public, the library staff and to library director Gordon Lewis.

Lewis deserves a fair and open hearing. Throughout his tenure as library director, he has been a staunch advocate of library needs. His advocacy has made him less than popular in political circles.

YOU SEE, when it comes to budget cutting, politicians will consistently go after library money over, say, police money. So library directors are continually in a financial rearguard action against the politicians.

As most library aficionados know, Lewis has done a fine job improving service in the Farmington system. This newspaper has supported his efforts a number of times in the past.

BUT NOW, the public has a right to know whether the rumors and allegations are true. While the issue of Lewis' administrative conduct still is important, equally important is the conduct of the library trustees.

Whether they like it or not, they are on trial in the court of public opinion.

She aims money message at women

She's blond, beautiful and she understands investments.

That's a description that doesn't fit too many of us, especially today when we've got IRS, IRA and all sorts of financial fuz on our minds.

On a day when many of us are rushing around trying to arrange the 11th hour IRA, get the tax bill paid, and make certain the checks that cover these items don't bounce, many of us wish that Ann Benson came to Southfield last month or at least last week.

On Wednesday, she'll lead a seminar designed to help every woman face tough money decisions on taxes, inflation and other items that seem to devour incomes these days.

Accustomed as she is to being on the road, Benson, an investment expert whose message is geared to women, has never been busier than today.

One reason is that her two children, Shellie, a sportswear designer, and Robby, yes the film actor, are out of the nest, successfully. Her husband, screen writer Jerry Segal, is so close to show biz that he understands Ann and her career.

BENSON herself studied drama in college, hosted a Texas TV show, and starred in productions such as "How to Succeed in Business," "Hello, Dolly," and "Mame."

Perhaps it was "How to Succeed —" but 10 years ago, Benson became a traveling rep for Merrill Lynch, bringing with her a background in finance and an interest in investing.

In recent years, as those things go, many may refer to her as "Robby Benson's mother" but she's quick to point out that her investment career has taken her all over the country, where for a decade, she's met the folks.



Shirlee Iden

"I've talked to thousands of people — young and old, married and single, divorced and widowed — about their money," she said.

Benson says they're all tuned into the same concerns: learning to minimize taxes, learning to use credit, and learning to keep their assets growing.

Women need to know when to invest, how much, who to get as a counselor, how to establish goals, and how to learn about investments before making the plunge and more.

EVEN though many of us are wiped out from paying the tax bill due at mid-night, Benson can tell us how to get it together for intelligent investments.

She'll be present at a 7 p.m. wine and cheese event and for the "Money Management for Women" seminar at the Michigan Inn.

If you're tax broke, don't worry. The seminar is free of charge and admission is by a tax-deductible \$10 contribution to the Arthritis Foundation.

This may be one way to find out the difference between stocks, bonds, Keoghs, debentures, and well, you know.

Meanwhile, don't be discouraged, late word has the Internal Revenue Service themselves all geared up with computer foul-ups. See, nobody's perfect.

from our readers

She's unhappy with article

To the editor:
I wish to correct an erroneous impression left by Julie Brown's article concerning the Farmington Community Library. My request for a leave of absence (a leave of absence, not a resignation) had nothing to do with Jill Locke's resignation.

Furthermore, this request for leave was not to have been announced for two months yet. Seeing it spread across the newspaper in this manner has caused me personal distress, public embarrassment and professional humiliation.

I can only wish that Brown and the Farmington Observer had granted me the courtesy of an interview to get the facts straight before using my name in their article.

Silvia Makowski,
children's librarian,
Farmington Community Library

Former chief is concerned

To the editor:

As the former director of the Farmington Community Library, I would be remiss in my professional responsibility if I did not speak out at this time.

I was shocked when a friend who is a patron of the Farmington Library called me and read the lead story you carried on the library. I was particularly appalled to hear of "wholesale resignations," an action unprecedented in my 35 years of library experience.

Underneath all this smoke is a lot of fire. To truly get at the whole problem, the library board must conduct a thorough investigation into management practices and staff morale.

Mary Mitchell
DeLand, Fla.

Arthritis Today
Joseph J. Weiss, M.D.
Rheumatology
20317 Farmington Road
Livonia, Michigan 48152
Phone: 478-7860



ARTHRALGIAS—JOINT PAINS WITH NO SWELLING

You may have seen your doctor because of joint pains you thought were "arthritis." Yet when mentioned "arthritis" but talked about "arthralgias."

There is a difference. If you have arthritis, you have reached a point where inflammation is causing swelling and loss of function and immobility of the joint. Having arthralgias indicates that the body's defenses are strained but have not broken down. You may feel a great deal of pain with arthralgias, but from a physician's point of view you have a better chance for future recovery than a person with less pain but frank arthritis. In fact, experience has shown that the longer you have arthralgias, but no arthritis, the better your chances of never developing joint swelling or immobility.

Therefore doctors are reluctant to treat your arthralgias with vigorous drug therapy or multiple injections. Since the underlying inflammation is under partial control, it is best to minimize intervention and allow the body to continue with its partially completed task of orchestrating recovery.



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