



By Philip H. Power  
Publisher

## OBSERVATION POINT

# Value Added Tax Part Of Answer to \$\$\$ Crisis

South Redford School District was one of the hardest hit. They've given notices to 126 of their 385 teachers that they may not be rehired for fall. That's fully a third of the faculty.

Livonia was hardest hit in sheer numbers. It has given notices to 289 teachers, and it may not fill other vacancies that occur.

Farmington sent notices to 71, Southfield to 236, Birmingham to 160, Redford Union to 37, Wayne to 149.

If it's done, it will put a terrible crimp—perhaps even an intolerable one—in the teaching that's done in our suburban public schools.

**THE TWIN** problems are lagging state aid and the voters' reluctance to approve the kinds of property tax rates which the schools need. Not only are voters unwilling to vote new taxes, but in Livonia they wouldn't even renew 3.5 mills that they've been paying for some years.

"Crisis" is a word that's used so much that the public probably doesn't respond to it anymore. But "crisis" is what we've got on our hands.

Farmington and South Redford will be asking for millage increases. Wayne County in 1972 will probably ask a mill for a new jail which, as a matter of common humanity, we sorely need. The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, which runs a string of superb parks, will be on the ballot in a year or so for a quarter-mill. Wayne County Community College still doesn't have a cent of local tax money to run on.

It's depressing to contemplate.

**Loraine McClish writes**

## Difference In Talk

It was a different breed of sixth grader that adult workers for the Keep Southfield Beautiful committee heard this year when representatives from the city's public and parochial schools met for the annual spring luncheon.

Even two years ago, a workshop luncheon of this type would have brought ideas and suggestions for painting ash cans and planting tulip bulbs, but not now. The vanishing adolescent author Edgar Friedberg warned us about over a decade ago has indeed van-

ished, and with him such adolescent ideas.

**THESE KIDS** were talking about war. War, mind you, in a Keep Southfield Beautiful workshop. They talked about overpopulation and when the "world blows up." One child gave the distinct impression that between the war and pollution he was not really too sure he would ever reach age 18.

Those in the lower grades talked about cleaning up their schools, maybe taking a field trip for greater insight, but for

pay a greater proportion of his total income than the rich man.

And it could put Michigan-made autos and machine tools at a competitive disadvantage to products made in other states or countries.

**BUT THE QUESTION**, at this point, isn't whether the "value-added" tax is the best one in the world. The question rather is whether it's better than the property tax.

Clearly it is. It's related to economic production, which the property tax hasn't been since our subdivisions and shopping centers were corn land. It would take the burden off old folks, many of whom are scared stiff at the prospect of having to sell their homes.

The governor wants to phase out the property tax as the prime source of school funds. That's one of the more

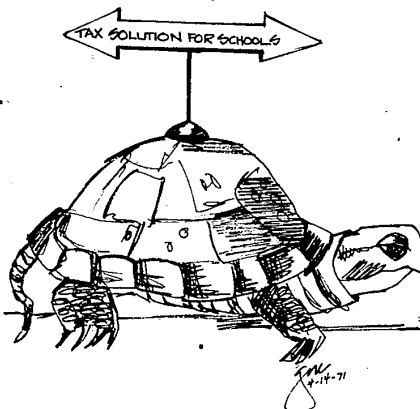
laudable notions ever advocated in western civilization. There's simply no relation in the world between the amount of taxable property in a school district and the needs of the kids in that district.

**SCHOOLS TODAY** take a lot of criticism, possibly because we sometimes talk as if we expect miracles of them. Yet the truth of the matter is that they're far better than they were even in my youth: students get better designed courses, more attention, better methods.

We would set our schools back at least two generations if we had to go through with the kinds of faculty and staff layoffs that our local boards of education are talking about.

"Value-added" taxation? Under these circumstances, I'll buy it.

**VERY UGLY AND VERY SLOW**



**Emory Daniels writes**

## Constitution On Block?

For those unaware of the fact, the U.S. Constitution was ratified more than 150 years ago and is still believed operative by most Americans.

But it might become necessary to make that salient fact a banner news story because it

is unknown by some Farmington residents.

There are some in Farmington who think parents ought to be given the opportunity to place the U.S. Constitution on the ballot for approval or rejection.

Then, if the Constitution is rejected, the Farmington Board of Education can follow the mandate of the populace and vote not to implement a curriculum program on minority understanding.

**OF COURSE**, those urging that the minority understanding program be placed on the ballot are not outwardly asking for a second ratification of the Constitution, but that is the request.

Because the minority understanding program asks only the following: recruitment of black teachers and other minorities; housing for minorities hired; the volunteer exchange for one month of white Farmington teachers with black Detroit instructors; student assemblies on minorities; and student clubs to foster minority understanding.

If the school board were to be so foolish and irresponsible to place the proposed curriculum on the ballot, residents voting against the program would also be voting against open housing, equal opportunity employment, freedom of speech and right of assembly.

If Farmington residents delivered a "mandate by ballot" instructing the board not to implement the minority understanding program, the board could proceed to implement the entire program.

**IF RESIDENTS** in the Farmington School District can get the other 30 states to join their "mandate," then the objectives of the minority understanding program can be killed.

Otherwise, a vote on the program is an exercise of futility and a game to be played by the ignorant whose knowledge of history only goes back about six months.

The suburbs may want to close their doors to blacks and other minorities. But the progress made over the past 200 years should not, and will not, be set aside to please a few but one lifetime.

## Sense And Nonsense

An outfit in Bloomfield Hills announces it has incorporated "to manufacture 'low-cost luxury homes.'" We can see the advertising now: "Spend 30 grand and save, save, save."

**Tim Richard writes**

## Proposes Taxes To Aid Environment

Income tax deadline day and Earth Week come a week apart on the calendar (April 15 and 24), but it's too bad they don't come simultaneously.

Nothing—especially preserving the space ship Earth—can be done without money, and it would be a good idea if those concerned about the environment would concentrate on our tax laws, figuring out ways to take the profit and fun out of harmful activities.

A simple example: Heavy taxes on strip mining and

gravel mining. These activities ruin landscape, remove oxygen producing plants, lead to erosion.

Got the idea? Then try these:

**OUR FEDERAL** income tax policy has been described by ecologists as "pro-natal" because it grants exemptions for each dependent child.

A "pro-environment" tax policy would allow exemptions for the first two children only.

You'd get no advantage by having more children.

And the Canadian system of paying child allotments, once advocated for the U. S. by Senate candidate Jerome Cavanagh (sire of eight), would be out of the question.

Indeed, one could carry the game to the local level and say that the first two children could be educated free in the schools, but the parents would be charged \$900 a year taxes for every child after the second, since it costs about that much to educate a child.

Even though a child doesn't start school until age five, the tax would start at birth, allowing the school district to set up a sinking fund to build new buildings for the excess population.

**GASOLINE FUMES** from the internal combustion engine are the source of 60 per cent of our air pollution, but we have a

flat rate tax on gasoline—11 cents a gallon whether you burn one gallon a year or 5,000.

So let's have a graduated rate tax on gasoline. The more miles you drive and the more powerful your car engine, the greater the tax, proportionately, you'd pay.

Since automobiles take up proportionately more space per passenger and cause more fumes than the various mass transit methods, our pro-environment tax policy would start using gasoline taxes to build mass transit systems.

(A few weeks ago, Gov. Milliken proposed raising the gasoline tax 1.3 cents a gallon, with part of it earmarked for mass transit. The road builders and the auto companies howled. I myself was dubious at first, but no longer. Milliken's right, and all pro-environmentalists will stand by him on this point.)

## How About A Lottery?

By FRED NUTTALL  
Garden City

As spring arrives, so do the homeowner's property taxes and the possibility of being asked to vote on new millage proposals, which most of us homeowners violently reject.

We homeowners must realize that good education is costly, but when will our lawmakers realize that property taxes are not the only source of financing our schools? This archaic system once was a reliable way to gauge a person's ability to pay, but not any more.

Our senior citizens who have worked 25-30 years: paying off their mortgages and coupled with inflation find the burden of property taxes are too much. Now they are forced either to sell their homes or live in a substandard mode of living.

This clearly points out the fact that our property tax system is not fair to people living on a fixed income.

There have been many suggestions as to how to improve this system, but it still

## DISSENT

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exists. Instead of raising taxes on property, gasoline, and other necessities of life, why don't our lawmakers pass a bill to start a state lottery?

Our current strange gambling laws prohibit this, but why is it that anyone can openly purchase a lottery ticket for the Irish Sweepstakes or any other out of state lottery? New York and other states have proven this method as a good system to raise money.

As a homeowner I would rather buy some lottery tickets than have my property taxes raised again.

Why don't our Michigan lawmakers realize this as a great potential for financing our school systems? Property taxes are not the only means to finance our schools.

## Editorial & Opinion

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