

Meadow Brook about to grab onto Brass Ring

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

Despite efforts to retain its urbane atmosphere, at least one amidty will likely be lost if Oakland University this week goes ahead with plans to privatize the financially strapped Meadow Brook Music Festival.

Assessment freeze works 2 ways

By Tim Richard
staff writer

That property tax assessment freeze works both ways: Your local assessor can't increase your property's value in 1992 if it's higher than the 1991 level. Your assessment won't be lowered, either.

"You can appeal to the board of review this year," said Sen. Nick Smith, R-Addison, author of PA 19 of 1991, the "freeze" law.

UNDER SOME limited circumstance, your '91 assessment can be changed this year, but they're very limited.

Older adults can explore their educational options

The Southeast Michigan Learner Committee will host a one-day conference from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 28 at Madonna University in Livonia.

"Moving Toward Tomorrow," will explore educational opportunities.

Mensa features Detroit history

Southeast Michigan Mensa will hold its public monthly meeting at p.m. Saturday in Southfield.

Dick Blair, a Detroit Edison historian, will conduct a pictorial presentation of the history of Detroit. The collection will include photographs dating from the Civil War to the present. He will also discuss proper preservation methods of photos and documents.

Admission is \$3 per person. This meeting is located at the Southfield Civic Center (on Evergreen Road, just south of 11 Mile) in the Parks and Recreation Building.

For further information please contact vice president Marlene Bufa at 342-2995.

MUFFY VANDERBEAR
for your VALENTINE

Muffy & Hoppy Vanderbear, two cute and cuddly animals for all ages. Stuff & Flakes animals.

Special gift ideas for Valentine's Day!

The Doll Hospital & Toy Soldier Shop
3547 W. 12 Mile • Bklyn • 543 3415

bring their own wine or alcoholic beverage to enjoy with the program. They'll have to buy it on the premises.

The OU Board of Trustees Wednesday was scheduled to consider — and possibly vote to accept — a proposal from Interim President John De Carlo to turn operation of the music festival over to Olympia

Holland C. (Andy) Andersen, acting administrator of the state Treasury's property tax division, lists the exceptions in bulletins sent to boards of review:

- "Additions" — Value can rise for new construction, physical additions, valuables not included on the 1991 assessment roll, or buildings that were incomplete as of 1991's tax day.
- "Losses" — Value can be decreased by removal or destruction of property.
- "Splits" — Land that has been platted, particularly when the new lots have been enhanced by access roads or utilities, can be raised.

PERSONAL property isn't covered by the "freeze" law. Some attorneys think this section is unconstitutional. They note the Michigan Constitution requires that all property be uniformly assessed at 50 percent of its true cash market value. So far, this section hasn't been challenged in court.

The local board of review may not reduce your value for depreciation. Nor may it raise the value of a commercial property where the rent has gone up in 1991 and the market value is higher.

Unless your property fits one of the exceptions, there's little the local board of review can do in 1992 when it meets in March.

But it might be worthwhile to appeal anyway. Andersen's instructions to boards of review are to "document and forward to the assessor information — for consideration by the assessor in 1993."

A followup law, PA 135 of 1991 (sponsored by Sen. David Honigman,

and the Palace of Auburn Hills, turning it over to Olympia "will lessen (OU's) financial liability and can begin to reduce a \$1.2 million debt incurred over the past several seasons," De Carlo said in the statement.

DETAILS OF THE agreement were not made public immediately.

- "Combinations" — Value can be adjusted where parcels have been combined.
- Errors — The assessor made a clerical mistake last year.
- Poverty exemptions — These must be considered by the board of review each year. If the 1991 board of review granted a poverty exemption, your assessment will rise this year unless you apply again.
- New owner — If you acquired the property after Jan. 1, 1991, you may appeal your 1992 assessment if you didn't appeal in 1991.

R-West Bloomfield, says, "The assessor shall consider this information in preparing the 1993 assessment."

DESPITE THE board of review's hands' being tied, one other avenue is open to you, according to a pamphlet of the now defunct Michigan Consumers Council:

"You may appeal further to the Michigan Tax Tribunal . . . in your own behalf or be represented by an attorney or other person of your choice.

"You cannot take your appeal before the tax tribunal unless you have first protested through the board of review appeal process."

Deadline is June 30 to appeal to the tax tribunal. The address is: Tax Tribunal, P.O. Box 30252, Lansing 48909. Telephone is 517/334521.

Sources for this article are state statutes and Treasury bulletins. This newspaper cannot give tax advice. Contact your local assessor's office first to confirm filing dates and procedures.

But it is believed that OU will get a fixed dollar amount and possibly a percentage of ticket sales.

The festival is on OU property southwest of the intersection of Adams Road and Wilson Boulevard. It has been the summer home of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra since 1964 and the site of popular concerts since 1970.

But attendance has dropped off in recent years — partly because of increased competition — and the festival piled up a deficit of more than \$1 million.

"It just makes sense to privatize the festival," trustee Andrea L. Fisher of Birmingham said Tuesday. "OU shouldn't be in the business of running a theater festival."

Trustee L. Brooks Patterson Tuesday said he basically agrees. "President De Carlo has been working on this for several months, and I agree with the concept.

"But I want to see specifics of the contract before I can say I approve (or disapprove) of the contract with Olympia. I just want the best deal for OU."

SEVERAL PROMOTERS were interested in running the music festival. But final negotiations involved two promoters — Olympia, operators of the Fox Theatre and Joe Louis Arena, and Arena Associates Inc., which runs the Palace of Auburn Hills and the New Pine Knob.

While some change is expected if the popular summer attraction is privatized, De Carlo insisted the music festival would remain "an integral part of OU," with the programming — and ambiance — suitable to a university setting.

"The Meadow Brook Music Festival has a unique place in the market," said James Lites, Olympia's executive vice president. "We definitely want to keep its relaxed setting."

Even so, the old practice of patrons bringing their own booze will be ended, he said.

For almost three decades, festival patrons have been allowed to bring their own food and beverage. The festival didn't necessarily encourage patrons to bring their own alcoholic beverage, said Gregg Bloomfield, festival spokesman. "But we had a policy of not inspecting the coolers or ice chests people brought with them."

The result was an understanding that patrons could bring their own, as long as they didn't abuse the privilege and it didn't lead to rowdiness.

"That was a workable policy," said Patterson, the former Oakland County prosecutor, "a nice amenity."

OLYMPIA DIDN'T necessarily want to end that policy. Lites said, even though the sale of liquor is expected to be a good source of revenue.

"But we do want to obtain a liquor license for the facility," he said. "And the rules applicable to a liquor license do not permit the consumption of unlicensed alcohol."

Theater patrons will still be able to bring chicken or other summertime favorites, he said. But if they want to wash it down with wine, a cooler or other alcoholic beverage, they'll have to buy it there.

PIANO SALE!
Now Thru February 17, 1992

Featuring: Wurlitzer, Samick, Zimmermann and Groutman

- ★ Big selection of new Grand Pianos starting at \$4,995
- ★ New Console Pianos starting at \$2,295
- ★ Used Yamaha Grand Pianos
- ★ New Wurlitzer organ with easy play features and great tone. Was \$2,995 Now \$1,995
- ★ New Yamaha electronic pianos starting at \$995

Featured Special: YAMAHA CLAVINOVA Model CV770 88 Keys, Rhythm, disk drive. Sounds just like a real piano. Touch Sensitive Keys. Was \$5,995 **NOW \$3,995**

WURLITZER CHURCH ORGANS Yamaha Organs & Clavinovas New & Used Organs in stock at Taylor location

Wurlitzer Music Centers
Taylor 287-4480 Southland Mall 23000 Livonia in key centers at Rochester Rd 311 E & Hwy 524-2626

Rent a piano from \$37 per month. Ask for details.

FINAL CLEARANCE

SAVE 50%-60%



SAVE ON SELECTED MERCHANDISE STOREWIDE. SALE ENDS MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17.

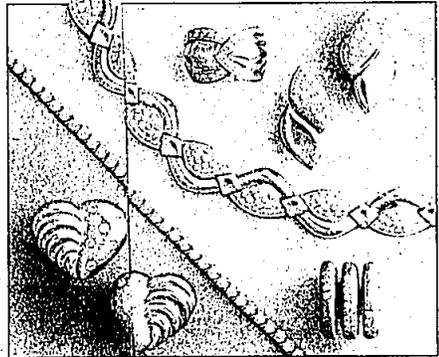
SAVE 50%
Men's suits, sportcoats, dress slacks, top coats, dress shirts, neckwear, shoes, sportswear

SAVE 50%-60%
Women's suits, jackets, skirts, dresses, coats, blouses, sweaters, activewear

Savings are off original prices. With savings this great, there is a nominal charge for alterations by our expert tailors.

GRAHAM & GUNN LTD.

Somerset Mall
2849 West Big Beaver Road, Troy
643-6700



Discover the quality and craftsmanship in Greenstone's outstanding collection of fine gold and diamonds.

CAPTURE HER HEART.

From classic to contemporary you will find the perfect gift for every occasion. Pictured designs are priced from \$750 to \$10,900.

GREENTONE'S
JEWELRY

528 North Woodward • Birmingham, MI • 4 Bks. North of Maple • 513-642-2650