

## Roll Call Report

Here's how Observer & Eccentric area lawmakers were recorded on major roll call votes in the week ending Feb. 7.

### HOUSE

**TO PROBE HOUSE POST OFFICE** — By a vote of 254 for and 160 against, the House approved a Democratic request that the Administration committee probe charges of misconduct at the House Post Office such as illegal drug sales, embezzlement and check kiting. Separately, the U.S. attorney is conducting a criminal investigation of the facility.

The measure (H Res 249) was supported by Democrats, who as the majority party control the Administration Committee and have responsibility for the House Post Office.

It was opposed by Republicans, who favored a probe by an independent counsel and a select House committee not dominated by Democrats.

A yes vote supported the Democratic plan for investigating trouble at the House Post Office.

Michigan Congressmen voting yes were: Rep. Dennis Hertel, D-Harper Woods, Rep. William Ford, D-Taylor and Rep. Sander Levin, D-Southfield.

Area representatives voting no were: Rep. Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth and Rep. William Broomfield, D-Birmingham.

**'OCTOBER SURPRISE'** — The House voted 217-192 to probe charges that, in 1980, Ronald Reagan's presidential campaign managed to delay Iran's release of American hostages until after his election over incumbent Jimmy Carter. The "October Surprise" allegation also holds that Iran received arms in return for its electoral favor.

A yes vote supported the "October Surprise" probe.

Area representatives voting yes were: Hertel, Ford and Levin. Voting no were: Pursell and Broomfield.

**A REQUEST FOR LENIENCY** — By a vote of 249 for and 160 against, the House blocked a proposed investigation of an influential committee aide's request that a federal judge go easy on a man convicted of illegal arms sales.

The vote killed H Res 342, which

sought to probe an official request that Spencer Oliver, counsel of the Foreign Affairs Committee, placed last month with U.S. District Judge Jack Weinstein. Oliver asked, and the judge granted, sentencing leniency for Dirk Stiefberg, who had helped committee Democrats conduct their "October Surprise" inquiry (see preceding vote).

A yes vote was to kill the request investigation.

Area representatives voting yes were: Hertel, Ford and Levin.

Voting no were: Pursell and Broomfield.

**MORE JOBLESS BENEFITS** — By a vote of 404 for and eight against, the House sent the Senate a bill (HR 4095) providing 13 extra weeks of unemployment checks for many of the jobless. Backers said the \$2.7 billion cost would be offset by tapping surplus accounts and bookkeeping efficiencies such as prompter tax collections.

Recipients will be up to two million jobless in all states who have used up their initial 26 weeks of benefits by July 4, 1992, and who have also exhausted the extended benefits approved by Congress in late 1991.

A yes vote was to pass the bill. Area representatives voting yes were: Pursell, Hertel, Ford, Levin and Broomfield.

### SENATE

**TO PASS JOBLESS BILL** — By a vote of 94 for and two against, the Senate sent the White House the bill (HR 4095) providing 13 additional weeks of unemployment checks at a projected onetime cost of \$2.7 billion.

A yes vote supported the added jobless benefits.

Michigan Democratic Senators Carl Levin and Donald Riegle each voted yes.

**ENERGY ISSUE** — By a vote of 57 for and 39 against, the Senate tabled (killed) an amendment using the regulatory approach to increase domestic production of motor vehicle fuel including "alternative" fuels such as methanol.

The amendment was proposed to a pending energy bill (S 1220). It set regulations to lessen dependence on foreign oil, including safeguards against OPEC pricing tactics that

undercut America's development of gasoline alternatives. The measure drew flak from the domestic oil industry, which argued it got in the way of free market solutions.

Bennett Johnston, D-La., denounced the amendment as "the stuff of lawsuits and the stuff of bureaucratic regulations."

Sponsor James Jeffords, R-Vt., termed it "critical that we get ourselves in the position where we are not dominated by OPEC."

A yes vote was to kill the amendment.

Sens. Levin and Riegle voted yes.

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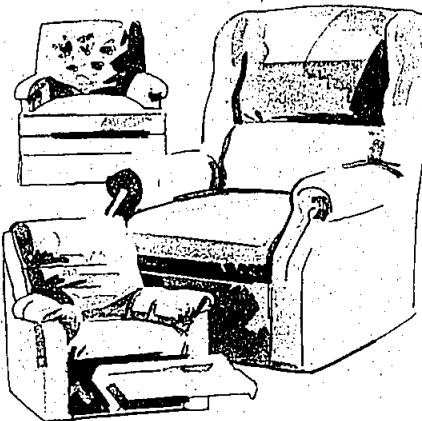
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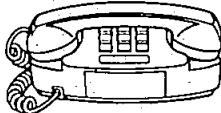
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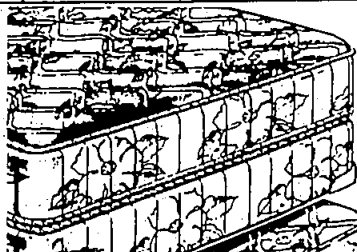
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YOU MAY HAVE noticed that the moon was officially at full phase at 3:04 a.m. on Feb. 18.

Native Americans had various names for the February Full Moon — Snow Moon, Hunger Moon, and Wolf Moon to name a few. (How about 'Frigid Moon'?)

Venus and Mars are within one degree of each other on the morning of Feb. 20.

The moon is nearing the star Spica (SPY ka) on the morning of Feb. 21. On the following morning it has passed that star.

Spica is the brightest star in the constellation of Virgo. It may be possible to glimpse Mercury, 30 minutes after sunset, on Feb. 23. Mercury will be nearly midway between the west and west-southwest compass points, only a few degrees above the horizon. Using binoculars will help you spot it. Mercury will get higher in the sky and be easier to spot during the next few weeks.

Last quarter moon is at 2:56 a.m. on Feb. 25. You will find it located near the bright star Antares (an TAI res) in Scorpius. It is beginning the last quarter of its orbit around the earth.

Saturn enters the act on the morning of the Feb. 26. Locate Venus in the east-southeast. Three degrees to the left of Venus is Saturn, while three degrees to the right of Venus is Mars. The Abrams Planetarium Sky Calendar describes the scene as 'a brilliant diamond between two lesser gems.'

Venus is 0.6 degree from Saturn on Feb. 28. Just to the right of Saturn. On Feb. 29 Venus is 0.5 degree to the left of Saturn. Their next conjunction, in the evening sky, occurs at the end of this year.

An excellent aid for learning constellations and keeping up to date with the sky is the monthly 'Sky Calendar.' A one-year subscription is \$6 and is available from the Abrams Planetarium, Michigan State University, East Lansing, 48824.

Raymond Bullock is former coordinator of the planetarium and observatory at the Cranbrook Institute of Science, Bloomfield Hills. He now works for a Troy firm which specializes in laser displays and effects.

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