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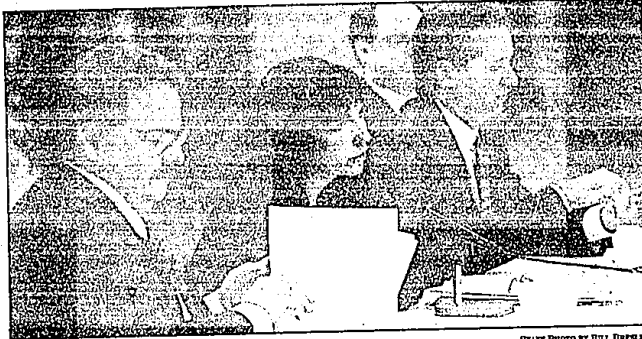
"I firmly believe any parent who wants quality education for their child, regardless of income, can get it — now," Stanton said. "But this would make it better, and easier" to do.

Glenn insisted that no public money would be required to fund the plan, which he said would lead to a greater surplus in the state education foundation (per pupil spending); heightened opportunity for all parents to send their children to a private school of choice; and sharpen the quality of public schools because of competition from private education.

"We believe this issue comes down to some very fundamental questions," Glenn summarized. "That is, who should decide what is best for a particular child, as opposed to a cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all approach that is based solely and arbitrarily on geography."

He elaborated by saying that if families aren't wealthy enough, they lose out on that choice. "If you have enough money, the choice is available to you. That's an elitist status quo and I think it's wrong."

Taking the polar opposite viewpoint was the ACLU's Wagenheim. "This is not about parents choosing the best school for their child," she said. "Gary (Glenn) admitted earlier this is not about sending your child to Cranbrook. Regardless of what he tells you,



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DRESLER

Discussion: Brian Whiston (from left), Wendy Wagenheim, moderator Steve Pope and Gary Glenn discuss tuition tax credits.

that this is going to benefit lower-income families, there's no way that it can benefit a lower-income child if money is drained from their school."

Glenn said the proposal would do the opposite. It would result "in a net increase in money spent on education at the K-12 level, because not only are you going to have an increase in the surplus left over at the state level, in public funds, but you're going to be providing a significant

tax incentive for the investment of private funds ... How can that be bad? How can getting more parents more freedom of choice be bad?"

"This can do nothing but hurt your public school," Wagenheim said. "The figures I have ... says in the first 10 years of this plan it will cost Michigan taxpayers \$3.2 billion. What was (she and Glenn) seem to be talking about is leaps and bounds away from each other. You need to find out

for yourselves."

Another issue is whether the UTTC would violate the constitutionally guaranteed separation of church and state; about 86 percent of Michigan private schools are linked to religious institutions, Wagenheim said.

Stay informed

Moderating the panel discussion, before about 100 audience members, was Steve Pope, vice president and general manager

of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. "The UTTC is a very important issue to all of you. And I ... congratulate you for seeking to be well-informed" about it.

Following the program, audience members commented on the extreme opposite viewpoints served up by Wagenheim and Glenn, the latter who fired a head-spinning stream of economic projections during his answers.

"This is a thinly veiled approach to having public dollars paying for private and religious education, it's just another term for vouchers," said Cathy Webb, president of the Farmington school board, following the discussion. Webb urged citizens to dig into the subject and do their homework.

Barbara DeMarco, a public education advocate in the West Bloomfield School District, said "on the front it sounds pretty sexy. Anything 'choice' is a hot topic, an attractive issue. And we've got our work cut out for us (in public education) to get behind the smoke and mirrors and really make certain that people understand what it is that they're voting for." DeMarco emphasized that she is not an opponent of private schools — but does oppose public tax dollars being funneled to private and parochial schools.

Not too soon

Carol Poesch, a parent in the Northville public school system, said the meeting helped her understand complexities of the issue. But she left wanting more information than she received.

"Some of the issues were not answered, (and) were completely ignored," said Poesch, a 1998 state Senate candidate.

"I think the presentation was excellent on both sides," countered Maryse Long of Farmington Hills. "It was well-reasoned and articulate ... but my bias is with (Wagenheim) because I am scared to death of tuition tax credits."

Milford resident Dave Stafford, who lives in the Huron Valley district, said he thought "it was very disingenuous" (for Glenn) to suggest that this is not a public subsidy for private schools.

Also attending were Saylor Gretchko and Bob Maxfield, superintendents for the West Bloomfield and Farmington public school districts, respectively. Both districts oppose tax credits and vouchers.

Maxfield said he didn't think it was too soon to hold such a forum, in light of the potential amendment not being voted on for another 18-19 months.

"The time to think about it is before you sign the first petition," Maxfield said. "And not when it's on the ballot and you're being bombarded by the media before the election."

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bond at \$5,000. Marijuana possession is a misdemeanor, which if convicted, carries up to a year in jail and/or a \$2,000 fine.

The misdemeanor charge was a drop in the bush of international attention the case received since March 3 when police found Yasa's body in a wooded area off Nine Mile.

Wade phoned authorities to inform them about the body.

Investigators learned Yasa and Wade carried on a relationship over the Internet, which culminated with her traveling from Paris to Toronto and through to Windsor.

She was smuggled over the

U.S.-Canadian border and spent a night with Wade in his apartment. After being rejected by him, she returned to his residence dependent two days later.

She threatened suicide and took over-the-counter sleeping pills. Wade drove her to the end of the apartment driveway where he gave her a bedsheet and watched as she walked into the woods, police said.

Wade's attorney said Yasa came with a return airline ticket but refused to leave. Cranmer declined to answer any reporters' questions as Wade was hustled off.

"Unfortunately when it came

time for her to return she didn't, wouldn't return to France," Cranmer said. "She wanted to have more of a relationship than Mr. Wade did. Unfortunately, no matter how many times he said 'no,' she wouldn't take no for an answer."

"It's a very, very tragic situation, but the reality is that Miss Yasa decided to take her own life."

Hill Police Chief Bill Dwyer said, "That's not true. Julio Yasa would still be alive if he came to her aid."

Wade's protrial on the marijuana charge is set for 9 a.m. Wednesday, May 12.

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sides, which prompted SWOCC to take the formal route.

In its request, SWOCC asked Time Warner to address aging public access equipment, channel selection and cable modem service.

The cable company has offered "about half" in its proposal of what was in the original franchise agreement 18 years ago.

SWOCC Chairman and Farmington City Council member Bill Hartsock called Time Warner's tactics an "insult" to the three communities.

For that reason, Hartsock and his Farmington council colleagues weren't about to cut Time Warner any slack.

"Everybody knows the rules," Hartsock said. "It's curious to me why they are doing this work at this late date that could have been done months ago, if not years ago."

A few miles north, Farmington Hills city council members expressed similar anger.

Time Warner officials should have asked for an extension when SWOCC gave them the request for a proposal, Hills City Manager Steve Brock said. Brock recommended council turn down Time Warner's request.

"We made no secret of the fact we were embarking on the formal process when it appeared obvious when informal negotiations weren't proceeding," said Brock, who also serves on SWOCC.

McCann said Time Warner wanted to "mirror" what SWOCC did in its proposal request, which included using consultants and focus groups.

As a courtesy, Councilman Jerry Ellis wanted to grant Time Warner more time.

"I'm not here to defend Time Warner in any way, shape or form," said Ellis, who is an attorney. "When you're preparing responses of this ... sometimes you have to ask the other side for some additional time."

"It's always been my policy

to do that. Even in the heat of battle you do that."

Ellis was in the minority. He and Councilwoman Nancy Bates cast dissenting votes in the denial, which was approved 4-2. Councilman Jon Grant was absent.

One councilwoman said the cable process has been a one-way street.

"We have given good faith time and time again by extending the contract and everything else," Councilwoman Vicki Barnett said. "We have not seen any good faith investment on the other side."

"All we get is increased cable rates and no response."

In denying an extension, cities will likely not face significant legal ramifications, city attorney John Donohue said.

"They are constantly delaying bringing matters to closure," Donohue said. At the Hills council meeting, McCann said both sides have only met a handful of times since 1984. Hartsock called the claim "nonsensical."

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