

OBSERVATION POINT

Holiday Season Brings Mixed Bag Of Events

By Philip H. Power
Publisher

Random thoughts, as our globe spins its way into the holiday season:

The Goodfellows were all over the place this past weekend, selling special editions of newspapers for charity.

It's a little offputting to be approached by a policeman, when you've stopped quietly for a red light. "Oh, my gosh, what have I done wrong now?" you think.

But instead it's a friendly "Hello," and a quick sales pitch before the traffic moves on.

More than a thousand people have volunteered their efforts in the Goodfellow drives in this area over the past couple of weeks. From what I understand, the take was good, especially with the good weather last Saturday.

The money will go toward

food, toys, and clothing for poor families and kids in need.

The guys who volunteer their time - firemen, policemen, local businessmen, and just plain folks -- don't get anything out of it, except for the priceless sense of the spirit of Christmas: charity.

They deserve a lot of praise and thanks.

WHAT WITH no snow around, the Christmas tree lots aren't doing very well at all.

Most people find it tough to go out and buy a Christmas tree when it's sunny out and the main thing covering the cold ground is mud. It doesn't help when the big weather news of the past week was a wind storm with severe thunderstorm warnings. In December!

I suspect this year the weathermen are cooking up a big

conspiracy against the holiday spirit.

One Southfield family, however, has solved the problem. They got an artificial Christmas tree; put it up; trimmed it. But something was missing.

Dad suddenly got an inspiration, dashed out into the car. Returned a few minutes later with a can of spray. Christmas tree scent.

"Can't tell it from the real thing."

Hmmm.

A DISTORTED version of the holiday spirit seems to have crept into the Wayne County Commission, a group which ought to know better.

Last week, the commission voted to increase each commissioner's expense money by \$100. This comes in the face of a state

law preventing lawmakers from granting themselves raises during the term in which they are serving.

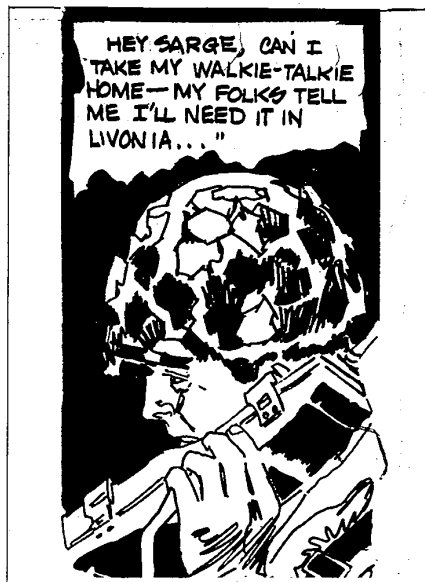
The state law was put on the books to force lawmakers to answer to the public before a raise went into effect. Expense money, however, can be collected immediately.

It might be argued that the present \$10,000 annual salary is not adequate. True, if commissioners worked full time; but many hold other jobs.

The Christmas season ought to be one of generosity.

But this does not include a clear attempt to sneak around existing state law.

The Wayne County board should reconsider and reverse its Ways and Means Committee action. The public can't play Santa Claus forever.



A Walkie - Talkie Brigade At Work

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following column, by Jeaneane Havstad of Livonia, was written in response to a pair of editorials by R.T. Thompson on the traffic problems created by construction of I-96 and other roads in the Observerland area.)

I share with you a letter:

Dear Aunt Mirabelle:
I'm so glad to hear that you've decided to visit with us over the coming holiday.

Don't expect the usual landmarks to guide you into Livonia. They've been covered with sand. However, as soon as you see road construction equipment, you'll know you've reached our city limits.

Coming from the city limits into our subdivision will be more difficult. Sometime next week, you should receive a package in the mail. It's a walkie-talkie, one of two dozen I keep in my basement for prospective visitors.

The master unit has been permanently affixed to the wall in my kitchen. Just switch yours on as you approach the road crews, but be sure and ask for me. When the walkie-talkie salesperson found out what I was going to use them for, he hired a Fuller Brush-style sales crew, and they've been in every neighborhood in Livonia. Indeed, the store has set up 10 franchises in our city alone, and so many salespeople have been hired that our unemployment rate has dropped a full two per cent.

DISSENT

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If I'm not at home when you try to get me, just ask for one of the "Castle Garden Alternates." That's what we call our subdivision's emergency walkie-talkie brigade.

When you see the helicopters coming and going from the construction sites, don't get discouraged. They have to get their workers in before dark somehow.

Plus, the workers are really quite friendly. Just this morning, as I attempted to turn into Newburgh, one of the two roads left open into our subdivision, I found it blocked, and this man with a red flag was waving me on to the neighboring city of Plymouth.

I forgot my upbringing for a moment and angrily threatened him with my fist and screamed a few choice words. He smiled and laughed right back.

I must close for now; it's time for a report on this hour's road closings. Someone's coming to dinner and I have to be able to guide him in.

Love, Jeaneane

Emory Daniels writes

Village Can Die Preserving Self

In years past the hypodermic needle was used to make persons well but today, in the youth culture, it is used as a killer.

The rope tied to a noose also can kill, but used as a lasso it can rescue. Pills, likewise, can heal or destroy. The effects and uses made of these implements are often dependent upon the understanding of the consumer.

THE COUNCIL of the Village of Quakertown has a tool it hopes will preserve. Instead, it could destroy. Preservation is the vision but destruction may be the tool's real craft.

The village, located in the center of Farmington Township, has asked the State Boundary Commission to exclude it from a pending cityhood election for the township and allow Quakertown to become a fifth-class city.

A brief description of the village might be in order for outsiders (those living outside Quakertown). The village incorporated to protect its residential zoning and, for more than a decade, has been a parasite on the surrounding township.

The villagers have wells, septic tanks and dirt roads which they maintain. Private contractors pick up the folks' garbage, but the township must supply police and fire protection. The role of the village council is basically limited to "protecting zoning" and acting as a lobby to

prevent a sanitary sewer arm from being located through the village.

GEOGRAPHICALLY, the village is divided by the Rouge River and I-696 expressway with rolling hills and trees gracing both sides of the Rouge. Residents live on large "country estate" lots with beautiful homes creatively sprinkled up and down the ravines. This beautiful scenery has also served as a shield screening the residents from the more austere plains of the township.

In 1971, many villagers feel their dream is being threatened by the proposed incorporation. Why should Quakertown become part of a community of 50,000? How can zoning be preserved when the village's population of 1,100 is wed with 50,000?

Having envisioned an erosion of the hills, the village council decided the best implement of survival was to ask exclusion (a village way of life) to become a city on its own. But, unfortunately, councilmen picked up a rope not knowing whether it was a noose or lasso.

IF THE GOAL is to limit immigration to Quakertown only to those earning \$30,000 a year or more, then its best step would be to join the proposed City of Farmington Hills (see Farmington Township). Exclusion will not work because the one thing from

which the village cannot exclude itself is the courts.

The City of Quakertown would be legally separated and judged strictly by what lies within its borders. Courts have consistently struck down zoning ordinances which provide only for single-family homes. The courts, HUD and U.S. Justice Department are now glancing long and hard upon cities which do not have a mixture of housing types and lot sizes.

As a city, Quakertown may find it very difficult to defend its zoning in court. And there is enough vacant land remaining in the village to invite lawsuits, especially since the unplatted vacant land is now all zoned residential.

Add to the difficulty of defending "snob zoning" the high per capita expense, for the 1,100 inhabitants to finance legal steps to beat the rap.

THE VILLAGERS' salvation lies in becoming part of the larger community.

City attorneys sued by a

developer could then point with pride to the area's low-income neighborhoods and demonstrate to the courts that the community does have a mixture of residential housing types and lot sizes, as well as commercial and industrial uses.

Also, it is less of a burden to finance a lawsuit when the tax contributions of the poor are pooled with the rich.

A telling argument was made at the recent State Boundary Commission public hearing by Noel Kurth of the Farmington Jaycees. He stated that neighborhoods lose their identity and character only when their residents fail to participate in government. The form of government, he stressed, can neither preserve nor destroy an area's character.

Before concluding, the outsider should be informed that this Valley of Dolls has not been created to isolate dwellers from the blacks. That would be an unfair charge and not deserving of the villagers' liberal character. The villagers are not influenced negatively by race, color or creed. They simply don't like poor folk of any kind.

Tim Richard writes

A Dogpatch Vote For Kelley

Frank J. Kelley, virtually announced he is itching for higher office, most likely the U.S. Senate, with one of his attorney general's opinions last week.

Kelley ruled that an 18-year-old may serve on the school board in the district where he is attending school. The opinion is calculated to win him votes with the younger set.

But the curly-haired attorney general's latest pronouncement, which has the force of law until a court rules otherwise, seems curiously at odds with an opinion he issued two years ago.

IN THAT MATTER, Kelley ruled that a candidate for a post-graduate degree was prevented from serving on the board of trustees of the state university where he was seeking that degree.

Got it? An 18-year-old high school student can serve on the

local school board, but a fellow with a B.A. pursuing an advanced degree can't serve on his university's board.

Perhaps the state's chief lawyer has all sorts of legalistic machinations to square away those two opinions even though, taken on their face, they constitute a weird way to run our governments.

Speaking of that opinion on the graduate student no ordinary, literate mortal will ever guess how Kelley arrived at his decision, so we'll fill you in.

A TRUSTEE of a state university is a state officer. State officers are prohibited by the state constitution from having any direct interest in a contract with the state or one of its political subdivisions which would put them in a substantial "conflict of interest."

A person enrolled in a college

and seeking a degree has made a contract with the college. In earning terms, a degree is very valuable. Hence, the student has a direct interest in a contract with the college and may not, therefore, serve on its board of trustees.

How far out can one get with that kind of legal reasoning?

KELLEY'S RULING in that university matter said nothing, unfortunately, about the conflict of interest that would arise when the student-trustee helps to write codes of conduct.

Kelley's ruling said nothing about the conflict that the student-trustee would find when setting his own tuition rate.

He said nothing about the conflict of interest that could occur when the student-trustee had a chance to seek revenge on a hard-nosed administrator.

Kelley said nothing about the

conflict the student-trustee could be in when he handled student activities funds.

In short, in that 1970 case Kelley ignored all the important reasons for finding a conflict of interest situation and hung his legal hat on the contractual phase of the relationship.

AND NOW Kelley is in the curious position of finding nothing in the constitution to bar a high school student from serving on the local board of education, but enough to bar a post-graduate student from serving as a university trustee.

In Al Capp's comic strip, the Dogpatchers keep sending Sen. Jack S. Phogbound ("good ol' Jack S.") to Washington to get him out of town.

Michigan's Atty. Gen. Frank J. Kelley seems to want the Dogpatch treatment.

Editorial & Opinion

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