

Will S'craft Residents Pay Tax Twice?

By KATHY MORAN

Whether property owners in the Schoolcraft College district will end up paying taxes for the support of both Schoolcraft and Wayne County Community College is stirring great concern among local residents, school officials, and politicians.

The source of concern is Public Act 139 which allocates the 15 mills collected by Wayne County among townships, cities, the county and school districts.

Before the act was passed, the Legislature agreed to divert some of the money collected by Wayne County for support of WCCC, since voters have repeatedly refused millage requests for the college.

THE WORDING OF the act makes it uncertain whether one-quarter mill of the 15 mill county assessment from all Wayne County property owners will go for support of WCCC.

If it does, residents of Livonia, Clareenceville, Plymouth, Garden City and Northville will, in effect, be contributing to the support of two community colleges. They are currently assessed 1.77 mills for support of Schoolcraft.

Another possibility is that the quarter - mill will be subtracted from the 8.9 mills that the county tax allocation board returns to school districts for their operations. If that happens, the school districts will be pinched by the lower appropriation than they currently get from the county.

THE WORDING OF Act 139 sounds as though a quarter - mill will be taken from the 15 mills paid only by residents of the WCCC district, which includes Redford Township. But in that case, residents of the Schoolcraft district would pay a quarter - mill more for county operations than are residents of say Redford Township because they would still have to pay the full 15 mills.

And this would violate the principles of uniform taxation and equal protection of the law, State Rep. Marvin Stempien (D-Livonia) said. Schoolcraft College's attorney has already said that in his opinion, Schoolcraft would not be entitled to collect that quarter - mill from the district's residents for its own operation.

Residents of the Highland

Park and Henry Ford Community College Districts are also involved in the uncertainty.

AFTER DISCUSSING the problem at its last meeting, Schoolcraft trustees voted to authorize the college administration to work with its member school districts to "take appropriate action" to investigate implications of Public Act 139.

All the school districts except Livonia have expressed their concerns about the act in writing to

Schoolcraft President C. Nelson Grote. Livonia is expected to follow suit. The districts have indicated they will share the costs of legal advice.

STEMPIEN said the problem is still in the "embryo" stage and will come to a head in April or May when the Tax Allocation Board will interpret the wording of the act.

He said that when the bill which became Public Act 139 came over to the House from the Senate, he recognized the

possibility of some residents in Wayne County being assessed for support of two community colleges.

Stempien, who is House majority leader, insisted that the wording assures that the quarter - mill would not be assessed for WCCC's support from property owners already supporting a community college.

He was assured that the wording would prevent double taxation, but said that now school officials are afraid that the tax allocation board will assess the quarter - mill

county - wide. The seven - member board has two school representatives who could be out - voted by the five other members representing cities and townships.

STATE SEN. Carl Pursell (R-Plymouth) said that he is working with senators and representatives to come up with a bill that will clarify the act.

"I am considering one bill to rectify that problem eliminating the one - quarter mill from the law," he said. "I am meeting with Wayne County Community College

officials and with members of the House to determine an alternative method of financing the college."

Voters from WCCC district have repeatedly turned down millage to support the college. Pursell emphasized that he would not settle for "one without the other." He said it would be irresponsible to cut out the quarter - mill for support of WCCC without providing an alternative method for financing the college, saying that "the present law is inequitable and unfair."

Theatre Is Getting New Look

Mounting a theater production has always called for a lot of behind - the - scenes work and a lot of unsung heroes, but even more than usual has been going on this year as the Livonia - Redford Theatre Guild prepares for its production of "The Lion in Winter" this month.

Guild members figure a couple of angels or gift horses might help the "Lion," but promise in spite of everything the theater will be "presentable" by opening night Feb. 11.

SO THE GUILD members decided that they should take a look at what they had.

What they had was a cluttered, dingy building on Beech-Daly, a block south of Five Mile Road in Redford Township.

Could something be done with it? Member Warren Reinecker decided that it could, especially when he heard from a friend who had a friend who had a sister who lived in Owosso that an old barn was for sale.

Reinecker bought the barn and with a crew of his friends tore it down. Early one October morning Bill Lynas, Ross Hulet, Don Warren, Mary O'Connell and Marion Tournaud drove up to Owosso with a U-Haul trailer to bring back the barn (wood). Mrs. O'Connell and Mrs. Tournaud went along to take out all the nails, and the Jack Piersons made a spaghetti supper for the crew.

SINCE THEN, guild members have been pulling up barnwood whenever and almost wherever possible (working from Reinecker's scale model of a whole new look for the building).

Whenever possible so far has involved working around the guild's November production of "Babes in Arms," weekly actors workshop classes, rehearsals for "The Lion in Winter" and, within the last two weeks, tryouts for the annual children's show to be held in March, plus a benefit show and competition in a contest in Detroit in March.

The guild also felt the freeze literally and economically when the furnace had to be repaired early in January at a cost of \$100. This means that some of the renovating (possibly the chandeliers) will have to wait.

But they do have the new stage finished and will have lots of barnwood nailed into place by the opening night.

MEANWHILE ANY contractors or electricians who would like to contribute their talents (or would wait for their pay) may contact Mrs. O'Connell or Mrs. Tournaud. They are promised plenty of free advertising in the guild's publications.

One problem will have to be tackled before spring. The back door of the theater will have to be raised and the back built up or an awful lot of barnwood may get washed away in spring floods.

Mrs. O'Connell, the president, has promised that if attendance at "Lion" is good, the guild will have comfortable seats in time for the next production "Plaza Suite."

Meanwhile there will be much to be seen opening night. Pages will escort guests from the city parking lot across the street and floodlights will light

up the theater. The (new) red carpet will be down and the inside will look a lot different.

The new theater will hold 100 persons, and so reser-

vations (even for ticket-holders) must be made for this performance by calling Mrs. Daniel Borovik, 3948 Grove, Livonia, or Mrs. Jack Pierson,

15383 Sussex, Livonia. Performances will be Fridays and Saturdays, Feb. 11, 12, 13, 19, 25 and 26. An 8:30 curtain will be observed for all six.



THE GUILD'S first "really big show" in its own building will star such regulars as (from left) J. Craig Collicott, Moya Taormina, Russ

Vogel and Warren Reinecker. Moya plays Queen Eleanor, and the other three play her sons, Richard, John and Geoffrey. (Evert photos)



KATI BEDDOW of Franklin is in a pensive mood as she rehearses for the role of the young French princess Alais in the guild production.



THE THEATRE GUILD of Livonia-Redford is getting a new look, as members work hard to remodel the building on Beech-Daly, Redford Township, before the play "The Lion in Winter" opens Feb. 11.

Retirement Age Splits 4 Senators

LANSING
Observerland's senators split on a bill that would lower the retirement age for Michigan lawmakers from 60 to 55.

Republican Sen. Carl Pursell of Plymouth voted against it while Democratic Sens. Daniel Cooper of Oak Park and David Flawicki of Dearborn Heights voted for it. Sen. William Faust (D-Westland) was absent.

Without debate, the Senate passed the bill 22-6 and referred it to the House.

Legislators are eligible for 26 per cent of their \$17,500 annual salary when they retire if they have served eight years in office. For every year beyond eight, they can collect an additional three per cent, not to exceed 50 per cent of their salary.



HOWARD EGAN plays King Henry II in the guild's version of "The Lion in Winter." He's shown with Hamilton Aldridge Jr. (left) who plays the part of Philip, the young king of France.

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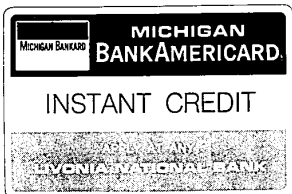
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