

DISSENT

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By G.S. VASILAST
Redford Township

The headline started out at me in your Dec. 2 edition and asked "Why No Fan Support?" After reading the article, I too began to ponder this perplexing situation. Athletics are as American as the flag. After all, nowadays it seems that the only time people sing the National Anthem is at athletic events. Besides that, even President Nixon enjoys sports.

I AM an ex-Thurston student, from the last graduating class, and I just can't understand what has happened to the spirit in my alma mater. I can remember the excitement that used to be created by the athletics in the school.

Before the big game, there always used to be big pep rallies. Classes were shortened so the assemblies could be held during school hours, and as the time of the event drew closer, you could just feel the excitement in the air.

When the announcement, "Would the pom pon girls, cheerleaders, and members of the band please report to the gym" came over the loudspeakers, you could see disappointment in the eyes of all of the people who weren't members of the pom pon girls, cheerleaders, or the band. But people still anxiously awaited the assembly. The spirit was strong.

As for the assemblies themselves, it's hard to explain how glorious they were. Everybody went to them. They were mandatory, of course, but who wouldn't want to go to one? The gym was always packed when I would walk in, the band would be playing the school song, and some 10 cheerleaders or so would be standing up front clapping and jumping and yelling.

Finding a good seat in the bleachers was always a problem because they were always packed.

EVEN THOUGH I wasn't a part of the teams, I still felt that it was my duty to look like a supporter. Blue and white were the only colors of clothes that I would wear before the big game and I can't conceive of a reason why everyone didn't do the same.

The yelling and screaming was always a lot of fun, and I think the whole emotional climax of the event came when the team came streaming out of the locker room in a single line. They always looked confident that they would smash the other team, and I guess the reason that we were in the stands was to bolster them to victory by our shouts and screams. Why else would we be packed in the gym like sardines?

The only thing that I can think of as a cause of the lack of fan support in the schools deals with the selfishness of some students. The artists, the writers, the musicians -- perhaps they feel slighted by the emphasis in the schools on athletics. Kids that spend hours working on a canvas, or students that have blisters on their fingers from practicing on guitars -- they probably feel that they don't get enough attention.

There is always one art show for a couple days every year, and bands can sometimes perform in the gym during lunch if they beg -- I mean, ask -- the administration. The writers can submit their work to the school's newspaper or literary publication for printing -- that is, if the administration likes it.

THOSE UNGRATEFUL students should be taught a thing or two about dedication. Just think about how hard the teams work! Those other students may work for hours on their painting or writing or whatever, but big deal.

Who ever saw a work of art as exciting as a touchdown?

If You've Got The Research, You Gain Political Power

By Philip H. Power
Publisher

Conservatives used to say it during the Roosevelt-Truman era. Liberals said it during the last campaign. And it's true.

The executive branch of government is growing more powerful. The legislative branch, which is supposed to be a co-equal, is getting relatively weaker. Government at most levels has Big Brother problems.

There's nothing clandestine about it. It's just that knowledge is power, big bureaucracies have lots of information at their fingertips, and so they are at a relative advantage when dealing with a legislature or the public.

THAT POINT was driven home to me rather emphatically when, as a congressional staff man a few years ago, I worked on a project to get the Defense Dept. to give up Fort Custer to the state so that its miles of woods, fields, river and lakes could become a state park.

DOD, as it's known in Washington jargon, is nothing if not a gigantic bureaucracy. It had all kinds of figures on the land's value for defense purposes, its potential value in the year X plus 12, the value of its aging buildings, the value of its half-track trails and the like.

Many of these prices, we

suspected, were cockeyed -- but how was anyone going to argue with DOD's computers?

Well, the truth of the matter is that the military simply had no further use for much of the property, and today it's an attraction in the park system serving a good-sized chunk of southern Michigan. But it was a darned tough battle against DOD's power of knowledge.

WHAT BROUGHT that tale to mind was the recent comment of State Sen. Carl Pursell, of Plymouth. Pursell is a Republican and politically is extremely close to Gov. Milliken, so what the senator had to say about executive power is all the more important:

"Michigan's Legislature, like those in many other states in recent years, has permitted the executive branch to assume important legislative functions ... Even though the authority for adopting the budget lies with the Legislature, there is a serious imbalance between the governor's ability to use an expert staff to prepare his budget and the lack of comparable legislative staff to work on a comprehensive look at spending policies."

"The governor's office," Pursell went on, "has assigned to

it a substantial Bureau of Programs and Budget, with numerous subdivisions geared up with financial experts, economists and budget examiners.

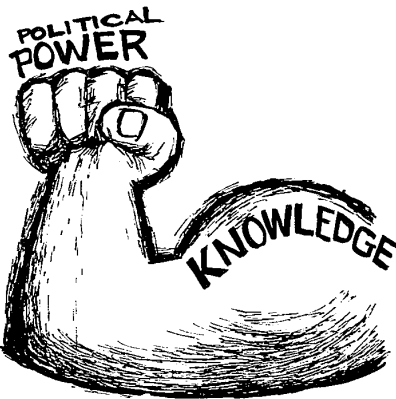
"In contrast, Michigan's Legislature is not primed to carry out its ultimate responsibility in this field, even though we do have a competent but limited fiscal agency assigned to us."

THEN PURSELL really strikes home:

"It is uncomfortable to admit, but we in the Legislature have been reduced essentially to a nitpicking operation that carries with it the inevitable pork-barreling and, in desperation, across-the-board budget cutting instead of responsible budget-building procedures."

"We usually wind up rather docilely taking the creation of the Bureau of Programs and Budget, making minor changes and dutifully putting our label on it."

The same story could, I suppose, be repeated at the local level, in colleges and school districts. To paraphrase an outdated axiom: It's not who you know; it's what you know, what you can find out in a hurry, and whether you can analyze it more competently. That's the source of power.



The True Motive\$ On 'For \$ale' Signs

Aside from the school busing issue, nothing gets suburbanites more uptight than integrated housing patterns, open housing laws and potential loss of property values.

What it boils down to is money rather than social policies. Groups on opposite sides of an issue usually have the dollar sign in mind when they take out their positions.

A good example is last week's action to ban "For Sale" signs in front of single-family houses in Southfield unless the potential seller gets permission from the zoning board of appeals.

AS IN ANY conflict, there are two diametrically opposing viewpoints.

On one side is the real estate establishment which feels that such a ban on "For Sale" signs may inhibit its freedom to advertise.

A city hall figure argues that such a ban may be in violation of the U.S. Constitution's rights to free speech. But real estate men and others involved in the controversy usually put constitutional rights aside when there is money at stake.

Supporting the city council's action banning "For Sale" signs is a homeowners' association which feels that an over-abundance of signs in any neighborhood may affect property values.

A point well taken. There are other suburban cities nearby where there are four or five such signs in a single block. This situation is a buyer's market instead of a seller's market. That isn't so bad if you are the buyer.

BUT THE homeowners' group and the realtors -- though on opposite sides -- still have the same economic interests at heart.

A homeowner, when it comes time to sell, obviously wants to move it quickly at the highest price possible.

The realtor certainly wants the homeowner to achieve that goal so that he can get the commission and pay a few bills this month.

The homeowners' association also wants to ban "For Sale" signs to avoid potential "block-busting" tactics and a quick turnover of occupants in the neighborhood.

Reading between the lines, this could mean that the present homeowners want as much notice as possible before the "neighborhood changes" so they can quickly make their sale of their own houses and move further north and west.

THE CURRENT ban on "For Sale" signs, for all the heat generated by public debate, probably won't have much impact on the Southfield real estate market.

Persons looking for a house in a given neighborhood can go to the nearest real estate office which maintains a weekly computerized listing maintained by numerous firms working together, or check the "houses for sale" columns in any newspaper.

In addition, "For Sale" signs for offices and plants usually have no impact on the movement of the property and buildings. That kind of advertising is usually confined to trade magazines or realtors who specialize in that kind of market.

But whatever the arguments homeowners and realtors have about the new Southfield ban on "For Sale" signs, the old-fashioned American dollar bill is the basis for their viewpoints.

-R.T. Thompson

Snow Fools Drivers

"I don't care if it snows or freezes I am safe in the hands of ..."

That appears to be the feeling of those drivers who disregard the safety of others and zoom past car after car in these days of slippery, icy highways in the morning and evening rush hours.

While others inch their way along the roads and hope and pray that they'll get home safely to put on slippers and thank their lucky stars they can watch the "tube" without fear, there are always those who seem to think they are blessed with guardian angels watching over and protecting them from accidents.

It is always this way after the first heavy snow of the season...the one that dumps about three inches of the white stuff that looks so beautiful but brings all sorts of traffic problems.

It is the first time drivers have encountered slippery going since the final storm late last winter and they are careful, much more so than they are after getting adjusted to winter travel.

BUT THERE ARE always

those wild ones who believe they can drive just as well on ice as on dry highways. They're the ones that splash slush over your car as they flash by and cause you to make some remarks concerning their parental background.

They're the ones that suddenly come to a rude awakening when they speed up to a busy intersection. Find the traffic light turning red and the road skid underneath. They're the ones that skid into cars, in a frantic effort to stop, and wind up in hospitals -- they and the persons in the car or cars they hit.

Why are we mentioning these things? It's rather simple; we ran into some of these nutty drivers just about a week ago during the first heavy snowfall of the season.

We were going west on Schoolcraft, a road everyone knows is difficult to drive considering that the State Highway Dept. is constantly changing routes from the temporary service lanes to the permanent and then back again, during the storm.

THEN AS WE NEARED the intersection at Farmington Road, a car roared by in the right lane, westbound, just after the light changed to red.

Fortunately for all, traffic had not started to move and the youthful motorist, who had no thoughts of safety, skidded through the intersection, swerved from side to side and then sped on. One wondered what would have happened had he tried to apply the brakes ... our car was alongside at the time.

In the late spring and summer, we read stories from traffic officers warning drivers to be careful because the youngsters are getting out of school and often forget about traffic. It appears that in early winter, we should be reading stories stressing safety and the high cost of hospital care ... before some of the wild drivers wind up in a hospital bed and take others with them.

Dog Lobbyists Work In Florida

Whether one likes it or not -- and we don't one bit -- word from Lansing is that the House will approve the controversial dog racing bill before the end of the week.

If that happens, then Gov. William Milliken will have to decide whether to sign or veto the bill which already has the approval of the Senate.

During the past 10 days, some members of the House have received unfavorable publicity for junkets to Florida paid with state funds. Would you believe that no less than six attended the dog races late last week with the tab reportedly picked up by a lobbyist for the dog racing interests from Michigan?

Remember, it wasn't too many weeks ago that this same lobbyist

was said to have handed cash to several House members, who accepted.

If the dog racing bill is passed after such blatant incidents, then one wonders what the voting public can expect of legislators in the future.

The state pays the expenses of a trip to Florida. A known lobbyist picks up the dinner check for legislators at a dog racing track, and then voters are supposed to be so gullible as to believe that voting on a bill is for the best interests of the state ... or, should we put it, for the best interests of a rich, selfish group.

It will be interesting to follow developments in the State Capitol during the next few days.

Editorial & Opinion

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