

editorial opinion

Recall: board has support

The ending of a drive to recall four members of the Southfield board of education demonstrates important facts about the school community situation in Southfield.

First, the fact that the Committee for Excellence in Education (CEE) gathered about 6,000 signatures on recall petitions shows that many residents are concerned about how the board is operating.

However, the fact that not enough signatures were gathered for a recall election shows an overwhelming majority of school district residents still support the board, at least tacitly.

The Southfield community no longer is as unified in its ideas on education as it once was. Some school officials feel the recall attempt was a "last gasp" attempt by residents who built the school system to retain control over it.

The issues raised by the CEE are genuine, though. Residents should continue to

question actions by the board to make sure it represents the best interests of the community as a whole rather than a special segment. However, that must be required of every public body, not only the Southfield school board.

The failure of the drive also points to a weakness of the recall method in settling differences in philosophy. Southfield school district voters elected the four members under attack knowing fully their philosophies.

Local government in this nation is not designed along parliamentary lines, where a vote of confidence can topple a government. Unless board members were guilty of crimes or serious violations of general rules of conduct, they should not be recalled.

If the philosophy of the community changes, they can be defeated at the next regular election.

Tax election should be delayed

The Farmington school board should consider carefully the issues involved before it formally sets a special election for a school tax millage increase.

The school board seems to be skeptical about the chances of a tax increase winning the support of voters. District voters have rejected millage requests to the point where the Farmington system has a program visibly less varied and tailored for individual students than those of surrounding school systems.

Board members, especially Vice President William Corliss, are questioning residents' concern for the education of their own children.

A special election, however, seems almost designed with the idea that voters will reject a tax increase.

In the Farmington School District situation, such a rejection would mean very serious consequences. Many facets of community life, from Boy Scouts to church activities to leadership, will be hurt by financial troubles in the school district.

If insufficient funds are available, none of the alternatives available will be acceptable to either trustees or many, many residents.

Therefore, the school board should plan as if residents will support their schools, even though recent evidence shows they may not.

The board should delay a tax vote until the regular June election, then ask for enough money to operate the schools in a fashion equal to surrounding communities.

If voters reject that plea, there still will be enough time to schedule a special election before the fall.

Holding a millage election until June has problems. The uncertain situation will continue until then, with teachers notified of possible layoffs and other painful actions required. At a board election, the millage issue could become tied to candidates and their campaigns.

However, the benefits of waiting outweigh the problems.



by H. H. HOGGAN

To relieve the stress on people who are not working, the federal and state governments have three different kinds of programs to make sure that the American people have at least some food on their tables and a roof over their heads.

For older, retired people, there is social security.

For those people who are temporarily not working, there is unemployment compensation.

For those who have not worked for an extended period of time, there is the welfare system.

Because some are federal and some are state programs there is little coordination between the three.

OF THE THREE programs, the one which receives the most criticism is welfare, because Social Security is a contributory program and unemployment compensation is policed somewhat by the employer, who has to pay the tab through unemployment taxes.

As part of the welfare program, the federal government instituted selling food stamps, which allowed people with very low incomes to purchase, at a discount, stamps with a set face value. The amount of stamps was based on a market-basket concept of what a family needed to eat for a month.

The discount from the face amount of the stamps was based on how low a person's net income was after paying for housing costs.



by PHILIP H. POWER

Martha Griffiths served so many of these suburban communities as their representative in Congress in so many ways and for so many years, that it's a little difficult to bend the mind around the fact that she retired at the end of last year.

To steal a line, she's alive and well and living in Farmington, keeping active with speaking engagements and visiting old friends. Rumor has it that she will soon join the faculty of a well-known educational institution, which would be great for her students and good for this area.

And the good works she accomplished as a member of Congress keep on rolling along. Of particular interest in these days of recession and unemployment is the three-year study of our nation's welfare system which Mrs. Griffiths chaired.

The subcommittee's recommendations were released some time ago, coupled with last week's news of Gov. Milliken's intention to do something about Michigan's own problem of welfare abuse, they constitute an important item for any agenda of politics for the coming year.

TODAY, the subcommittee concluded, our welfare system is so complicated, so enmeshed in red tape, and so overlain with contradictory rules and programs that only a thorough—even radical—review is in order. Some interesting directions are suggested in the report.

The present welfare program discourages recipients from going to work. Taking a job

Students deprive needy

THE PROBLEM with the food stamp program today is that the law is written so that students who are putting themselves through college are, because of their low incomes, entitled to food stamps.

As a matter of fact, in counties where large universities reside, the college students amount to more than half of the people receiving food stamps.

Obviously, the plan was not designed to relieve the burden of parents sending their children to college. Because the food stamp plan is based on what a person earns and the gifts a student receives from his parents are not usually reported, this is a direct subsidy to college students living outside of dormitories, at the expense of the families who are without work and in desperate need of food.

THERE ARE ONLY so many dollars available for welfare.

Every dollar misspent for people who are fraudulently receiving it or receiving it unnecessarily means that there is less for the really needy.

The college students who are receiving food stamps are doing it legally because of the way the law is worded.

Congress should very promptly amend the law so the benefits for the poor and needy are not diluted by the non-needy.



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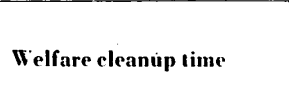
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Welfare cleanup time

means losing all benefits and ending up with lower income. Under the new proposal, all aid would not stop when people on welfare take a job. Payments would be cut 50 cents for each dollar earned on the job, and a series of limits would be set up for families of various sizes. The objective is to encourage people to earn their way out of welfare dependency.

Currently, welfare payments vary widely from state to state, causing enormous migrations of poor families from low welfare states to higher ones. The subcommittee's proposal would set national standards for welfare benefits.

Today's Aid To Dependent Children program discriminates against poor families headed by a male householder, and thereby encourages men to leave home and break up their families. The proposal would end this discrimination.

MRS. GRIFFITHS' Subcommittee concluded that these proposals were realistic and reasonable, that their adoption would save countless billions of dollars in administrative cost, and that the result of their implementation would be much improved support for people in need.

I agree. Our welfare system is a mess today, expensive for the taxpayers and inadequate for the people in need. Congress could do us all a service by getting down to brass tacks on welfare reform before it's too late.

And when it does, it will be just one more example of how our Martha helped us all during her distinguished career.

From our readers

Extensive layoffs

Editor: I considered the article regarding salaries personnel layoffs in the Jan 30 issue very interesting. However, because it was based on only three interviews, it was rather incomplete. For example, the article left the impression that only employees with less than two years service with Ford were involved in salaried personnel layoffs.

As a salaried employee with almost 20 years service who was laid off at the end of December, I am somewhat sensitive to this particular impression that your newspaper conveys.

IN MY DISCUSSIONS with Ford representatives, I was shocked by the magnitude of layoffs of salaried personnel with longer service than mine. Ford's public relations staff should be credited with a major coup. In October, it announced a five per cent layoff of salaried employees — 3,000 of approximately 60,000. The major portion of layoffs have of course resulted from the drastic deterioration in economic conditions since that time.

Nevertheless, both the Detroit and national media, even now report Ford salaried layoffs at the level announced in October.

ROBERT V. COLEMAN
Bloomfield Hills



DIVISION OF SUBURBAN COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION

Successful program

Editor: The Birmingham Senior Program, operating under the Department of Parks and Recreation, is now in its fourth month of activities. Retirees meet every Wednesday from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the Birmingham Ice Sports Arena on East Lincoln.

As program chairman, I wish to express my appreciation to the staff and volunteers who make this program so enjoyable. The program is well organized and provides a great opportunity for social interaction and recreation for our seniors.

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Opposes closings

Editor: We have been residents of the Adams school district for 14 years and are opposed to closing the school. In our opinion not enough thought has been given to the following:

1. Economics of mothballing rooms instead of a whole school.
2. Potential added gasoline costs for busing from vacated school areas.
3. Devaluation of property (tax assessments when neighborhoods are in a busing instead of walking situation).
4. Labor costs (85 per cent of budget for salaries vs 15 per cent for balance and it also affects potential administrative salaries).
5. Administrative costs can be reduced such as one principal for two partially mothballed schools.
6. Future population trends can change requiring changes in school facilities.
7. The most salable property owned by the school system is the downtown administration (office) building in spite of the administration objections.

Finally, the Adams area has historically been a walking neighborhood school for about 50 years. It is healthy and good exercise for the kids.

See you at the polls next election.
AMOS AND MARILYN WINSAND
Birmingham

Crime does pay

Editor: Rev. Strong expressed the need for controlling handguns in order to reduce murders and violence. This is the suggestion regulation of all pens because of the alarming increase in misspelled words.

Guns do not kill people anymore than pens misspell words. People kill people utilizing many inanimate objects from knives to pillows to guns. To establish any dictatorship it is vital for the conspirators to remove all guns from the populace as the citizens of Nazi Germany, Communist Poland, Hungary, China and Czechoslovakia can attest.

MRS. HOLLIS P. HALL ADAY
Birmingham

Crime does pay

The insiders who are masterminding the planned destruction of this country are using the strategy of criminal activity as the basis of convincing the American people of the need to regulate guns. Their argument goes on to the people through countless duped reporters in the press, puppet and elsewhere, that by imposing more restrictions on the right to own guns, crime and violence will then diminish.

It is of course, a phony argument, but with enough fanfare it can be made plausible to gullibles who are exposed to only one set of "facts."

TODAY, THERE ARE some 20,000 laws governing the sale and possession of firearms. Last year there were some 1,000 new proposals made by our legislators. In the past 10 years, gun control has been the object of more laws than any other issue.

Has crime increased or decreased during this time? Despite all the laws, crime has increased tremendously as could be readily predicted. The numerous gun laws focus heat on the wrong item. People commit crimes. And when the Supreme Court, among a very great number of pre-criminal verdicts, says that criminals are exempt from having to register their "rights" under the 5th amendment, it doesn't take the criminal long to figure it out. He's got it made and crime does pay.

The worst hoodlums, revolutionaries and criminals enjoy abundant legal protection (provided at taxpayer expense, of course) and liberal parole privileges not to mention country club prisons. Crime does pay.

The answer to crime and violence is swift and sure punishment. Restore the death penalty for first degree murder. Bring back the public hanging. Make it mandatory that any crime committed with any lethal weapon be given a 10 year, no parole, hard labor sentence for first offenses. And double the sentence with each subsequent crime.

After all, the criminal is threatening to destroy a life and once a life is lost that term is forever.

R. H. SMITH JR.
Birmingham