

editorial opinion

Homeowners' amendments could backfire on public

The Farmington Hills Council of Homeowners Association's suggestions on amending the charter, and reasoning behind the amendments, reveals a paradox of Hills' life. While the motives behind the proposals are to broaden political power, the logic could backfire. At their base, the proposed amendments seek of power politics.

The first proposal would require voter approval of city expenditures of \$100,000 or more, if they were previously unbudgeted.

Such a proposal, if adopted, would cause near anarchy in city government affairs. With operating costs spiraling monthly, the city would find itself conducting special elections continually. Not only would this be a waste of taxpayers' backs, it would introduce utter chaos into the decision making process.

There comes a point in representative government when residents must learn to trust their elected officials. It is the responsibility of the electorate to monitor public officials' performance.

It's very plain. If you don't like what a guy is doing, throw the bum out.

Unfortunately, many residents have misconstrued their role in the democratic process. It's ridiculous to think a government could run on the basis of asking for an election for every issue.

Besides, if the amendment was tagged onto the charter, the same old game would start all over again, leaving out those who are without representation now.

A political skirmish would occur every time an expenditure was placed on the ballot, with power blocks forming to garner support. The poor guy with a \$1.50 in his pocket would still be left out in the cold.

THE SECOND AMENDMENT would limit council members to two consecutive terms.

On the face of it, the proposal seems all right. It's a disease of local government that the same old drones get elected over and over again, but limiting terms hardly is the solution.

Crackerbarrel DEBATE

By STEVE BARNABY



The power blocks would once again go to work setting up machinery to elect more of their own people. Notice the proposal states "two consecutive" terms. We know how guys like George Wallace get around this type of stipulation.

This isn't to say that anybody around here would have the gall to run their wife for political office, but putting up a friend to fill in certainly is believable.

A more efficient proposal would be to limit council members to two terms, period.

The last proposal would allow only the voters to amend or repeal ordinance or charter amendments adopted through initiative or referendum.

Presently, the council may repeal ordinance amendments a year after they are implemented.

Again, this is taking power out of political leaders' hands that should be under their authority. What if an amendment proves unworkable? Very simply another election would have to be called to do away with it.

There comes a point when voters just get plain tired of running to the ballot box every couple of months. This was one of the initial lessons learned when the founding fathers wrote the constitution.

Under the British system, voters are continually going to the ballot box

to vote their confidence in political leaders. After a time it loses its effectiveness. Voters stop going to the polls and we're back to minority rule.

It's bad enough that so few persons take the time to vote, as it is.

ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN Joseph Alkateeb says government should keep its hands out of taxpayers' pockets for such things as drainage and expansion of a park system. His group believes that by limiting council power this could be accomplished.

That is all well and good for the guys who have their streets paved, drainage installed and a nice copy, park in their subdivision. But what about the guy that doesn't have all of this?

Although there are many persons in the Hills who would like to believe that everyone living here is affluent, it's just not true.

Not everyone lives in a subdivision equipped with its own park.

We all can't afford to fish out the dough to pay for installation of drains and street paving on our own. The wealth has got to be spread around so everyone benefits from services. Across the board assessments are the most equitable way.

It is heartening to see the interest the Homeowners Association is taking in the city. But they should examine their proposals more closely before pressing on.

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Jackie Klein writes

A permanent vacation

At my age, the only thing that goes out much anymore is my back.

I read somewhere that half of all American families today report they spend most of their free time at home. While not giving up vacations, they consider them luxuries.

My husband is different. Whenever I complain that I just must get away from this mad, mad rat race before I go bananas, he insists I just get back—from a vacation, that is.

He also claims we're real "live turkeys," as the kids call it, and we're jet set swingers who dine and dance and hit all the hot spots. My husband is a reasonable man, but he tends to have memory lapses.

While I agree the good life appears to be a casualty of the recent recession, neither wind, nor rain, nor dark of night, nor an advanced case of double pneumonia will keep me from my weekly charted course to the beauty parlor.

IN THE unlikely event we do take a brief vacation, like the one my hubby says I just got back from, or we do go out on the town, I believe, like all good Girl Scouts, in being prepared.

When my hair looks lousy, I feel like a battered pair of Red Cross oxfords in a world of sexy black Old Cassini originals.

My beauty operator is an Italian prima dona who insists he's the Rembrandt of the coiffeur set of America. Everytime he goes to Europe to study under another prima dona, his price goes up \$1.

He hasn't been to Europe in two years, and he just upped his prices again last week. His double-digit costs were posted on his mirror and ended on a sentimental note, "Loving is paying."

When I complained, he retorted in his Italian accent—with a flair for the dramatic—"I put my heart in my work." With my usual quick wit, I responded, "Your heart isn't worth \$11 for a set and \$12 for a haircut."

ALSO POSTED ON the mirror is a picture of a girl in the new, short, stick hairdo with nary a curl in the coiffure. The model looks like Fu Manchu without a moustache.

"That's the 'in' look, Jacques," announced my high priced expert. "But you just gave me a permanent for \$25 two weeks ago." I growled, "You said everyone was getting permanents and curly was the 'in' look."

He glared at me in disgust and shrieked, "I do not do what everyone else does. I am original, creative, talented"—the only adjective he left out was "expensive."

"I have given you your last permanent," he threatened. "The curly look, she is definitely out, finished, passe. I am the artist. I will make you beautiful."

Is that an offer you can afford to refuse? "YES," my husband said emphatically when I told him "loving is paying." That's when he really socked it to me.

"IF YOU'D SKIP a few visits to the hair factory, we could go on an African safari to Nairobi, drive through the Great Rift Valley to Kericho, visit the famous Nakuru Bird Sanctuary, board a minibus to the Masai Amboseli Game Reserve and see the majestic slopes of snow-capped Mt. Kilimanjaro."

"If you don't dig lions, buffaloes, elephants, leopards, rhinos or Masai Warriors, how about a holiday in Rome or a week in Acapulco?"

I knew he was winding down when he mentioned a weekend in Chicago, Cleveland or Toledo and finished by suggesting an overnight stay in Troy.

My husband is no fool and neither is my beauty operator. They both know, though I long to travel, I wouldn't give up my weekly standing appointment for any trip in the world.

Next week, I expect to be sitting home watching TV with my new Fu Manchu haircut and thinking about all the money I'm saving on permanents.

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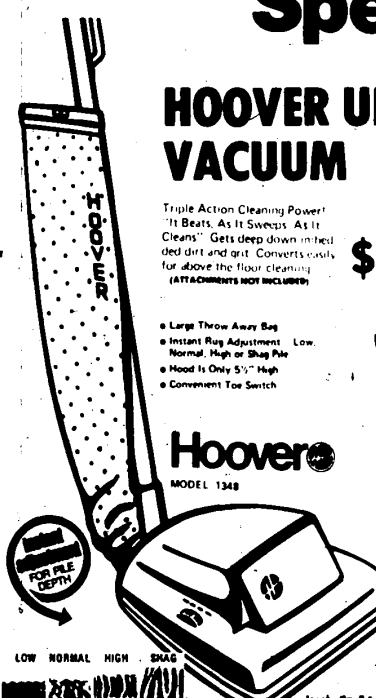
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