

We Need County Home Rule

Since the ratification of the state's new Constitution, we have heard a lot about "County Home Rule," but very few people understand the principle or comprehend its possible effect on the state and, more particularly, on Oakland County.

At present the county operates under provisions of the state constitution as implemented by state statute.

All counties in the state operate under the same basic ground rules.

Of course, all counties in the state do not have the same problems. Contrast, say, Wayne County and a county in the Upper Peninsula.

THE COUNTY HOME rule provision of the new Constitution allows each county to set up a commission and work out a charter which would give the county the type of government it needs.

It is based on the same theory of City Home Rule. An unincorporated area such as a township can only do what the Constitution and state statutes say it can do. A city can adopt a charter which would allow the hiring of a city manager, such as Birmingham, or allow the mayor to be the full-time executive officer, such as Detroit. It can also adopt measures which, on a local level, would allow the city to provide the services that particular community needed, and discard those powers it doesn't need.

After the County Home Rule charter commission has met and drawn up a document for a county, it would then be submitted to the people for approval.

A COMMON QUESTION asked is, "How will this help Oakland County?"

To answer this we must first look at our county setup.

We supposedly have the three governmental departments inherent in a democracy. We have the legislative body, which is called the county board of supervisors. We have the judicial, which is the Oakland County Circuit Court. We have an executive, which is the board of auditors.

Where we fall down is the selection of the board of supervisors and the board of auditors.

IN OAKLAND COUNTY we have 85 members on the board of supervisors.

Each township is entitled to one supervisor under the present Constitution, and each city is entitled to representation according to its population. Thus, Bloomfield Township with some 22,000 people has one representative and Birmingham with 27,000 people has four representatives.

The township representative under the constitution is the elected township supervisor. The city's representatives are selected by the local governing body, which in Birmingham is the city commission.

Because the city representation on the county board amounts to two-thirds of its 85 members, only one-third of the board members are elected by the people, and they are elected indirectly.

TO COMPOUND the problem, the board of auditors—or the executive of the county—is selected by the board of supervisors which is virtually an unelected body.

What has happened in Oakland County is that the board of supervisors has become supreme. And an 85-member board is too big and cumbersome to consistently do a good job as an executive.

Here, then, is what County Home Rule can do for Oakland County:

- (1) It can give the county a single executive, like a city manager.
 - (2) It can make the legislative body smaller and more workable, and more representative by making it subject to election by the people.
 - (3) IT CAN GIVE the county adequate taxing power so that it doesn't have to continually run to the state for more money for local projects.
 - (4) It could give the county power to consolidate services that are presently expensively duplicated by every individual community, such as water, sewer, fire and police service.
 - (5) It could more clearly define lines of authority among county departments so that the county is working in one direction instead of in several different directions. This includes a post-audit and review procedure.
- AS LAID OUT you can readily see a conflict—more power to the county means less power in the cities. But let's face it, something must be done to cut the total cost of government.
- County Home Rule means dollars and cents to Oakland County. It must be understood to be effective.
- It may be opposed by those whose domains will be threatened.
- But it is—in reality—a step forward.

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

You Must EARN Respect; Can't Teach It to Children

To the Editor:

"Trouble today is the kids have little respect for authority in the home and elsewhere." (City Beat, Page 1-B, Oct. 3 issue of Eccentric.)

That's it! Yes Sir, that's the whole trouble—our kids need to be taught respect!

I suppose I have been a victim of an ancient superstition, but I have always clung to the old-fashioned belief that "respect" is never given freely; nor can it be demanded, but rather, that respect must be earned.

Evidently, I have been laboring under delusions. I have, however, seen the error of my ways and I realize that children should be taught to respect the authority of their elders.

NOW, I HAVE a question: "How do we go about it?" How do we teach our children to respect the authority of the kind of people to whom they must look as examples, leaders, parents and teachers?

How do we teach them to respect us with our ulcers and premature heart attacks, our awful divorce rate, our practically non-existent moral standards and our everlasting hypocrisy?

How can a child possibly ad-

mirate a teacher who can no longer write a paragraph correctly and is at a total loss when the conversation turns to (pardon the expression) cultural subjects; the teacher who steals his pupils' class time by having them correct one another's examinations and homework papers (if any) rather than spend his "free hour" out of a six-hour day doing it himself; the teacher whose sole aim is to turn the child into an integrated member of a democratic society, and who is dedicated to the proposition that "education is learning to adjust to one's environment"; the teacher who has forgotten what it means to teach?

YOU SAY, "This type of 'educator' is part of a small minority." Look around you, friend. There are far too many!

How can we expect a child to revere the mother who can't take time away from her bridge games, touch-ups at the hairdresser's, women's club meetings, charity bazaars, country club and gossip sessions to cook anything besides frozen dinners; the mother who is careful to school her 13-year-old daughter in the use of lipstick and mascara, and then presents her with a neat, little booklet from which she can discern the "facts of

life"; the mother who displays a total lack of manners in private if not in public and who fills her children's lives with status symbols in the firm belief that nothing is too good for them except a little of herself; the mother whose conversation is limited to nagging, scolding, sputtering and reproaching, with never an intelligent word on her carefully made up lips and never an idea in the empty head; the mother who is so worried that her child will not be like all the other kids and, therefore, socially unaccepted that she deprives him of every bit of imagination or individuality he might ever have possessed?

Anyone for good, old-fashioned Mom?

HOW CAN we possibly hope that a youngster will honor his father; the father who comes wearily home with his eternal briefcase from a "hard day at the office" and flops down with a martini to stare at the "idiot box" all evening; the father who carries a burden of world affairs on the shoulders of his expensive suit and couldn't tell you if you asked him what time his car was broken down, or even where he was, for that matter; (See RESPECT, 1-B)

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

Everyone's at Fault In Negro Situation

To the Editor:

Little seems to be said in this paper about the plight of the Negro to our country today.

I feel so strongly that we all are at terrible fault to have allowed such an unjust situation to continue.

It is hard for me to believe that some people can think it is right to group people together, judge them better or worse, from the very beginning of their lives, entirely on the basis of the color of their skin—over which no one of us has any control.

As individuals, people do right and wrong, and should be dealt with accordingly. But, how is it possible that people are judged on their appearance?

MOST AMERICANS must know in their hearts, how wrong this is. I think many of us here are too complacent, too comfortable; our lives are too busy and pat. We don't want to really think about it. It may interfere and be uncomfortable and disrupt our lives.

But, I can't keep out of my head the thought of what it would be like if I were a Negro, raising my children in this world, and trying to explain away and answer their questions.

We are all human beings and none better or worse because of the color of our skin. However, our way of life doesn't seem to bear this out.

I WISH people everywhere—people here in Birmingham—could really speak out; could do some things tangible—could invite and welcome other people, no matter what color, into our community.

Maybe we could help make amends more quickly. Maybe we could start the ball rolling more fairly. It seems worth the disruption and effort.

MARY LOUISE GREENSON
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More People's Column Letters on Page 5-B

Yesteryear Happenings

50 YEARS AGO
OCT. 10, 1913

Fifty years ago, the Blue and Grey had a big fight for supremacy and the Blue won out. During the fight, three weeks right here in Birmingham, there has been a big fight in the Baptist church, between the Blue and the Red. The fight was to raise money for the pastor's salary and to apply on the building fund. The Blues raised \$95 and the Reds raised \$78. Next week as a penalty the blushing Reds have to furnish a supper for the Blues—and wait on the table besides.

Wait until our sewers are installed, Woodward avenue is paved, our telephone service is improved and at least fifty new homes are built in Birmingham. Then we will be IT. And in the meantime you should as well get ready for that happy time, for it's bound to come within a year. Hear our noise?

The Birmingham City Band, 18 members, under the leadership and instruction of Mr. E. E. Cowan, gave our citizens their first and delightful out-door brass band concert, Tuesday evening, the best we ever listened to in Birmingham. They play fine, and a larger crowd never before in Birmingham enjoyed it. (See HAPPENINGS, 4-B)

Eccentricities

By HANK HOGAN

They say the twist is dead. This would not be a sad passing for many who sit on the sidelines at dances while one or two couples perform for the crowd.

It would not be a sad passing for reducing studios who have suffered a setback during the twist craze, because more people were getting exercise and holding their weight down.

It might be a sad passing for the medical men who specialize in putting people's muscles back together.

I SHARED the view of the experts that the twist was on the wane until I visited a combined bowling alley and cocktail lounge at the fringe of our circulation area last week.

Six nights a week this establishment employs a five-man band, banging, blaring and blowing away, while hundreds of savages perform what looks like an old Indian ritual, more commonly known as a war dance.

In the old days a twist was described as a gyrating motion of body and hands which looked like one was drying his back with a big bath towel, while moving one's foot at the same time as if you were putting out a cigarette.

THE NEW TWIST defies description. It might be likened to a strip-tease where people leave their clothes on.

It is performed at double the old twist beat, and looks something like the old-time silent movies, fast and jerky. You don't really have partners, although you walk on the dance floor and off again at the end of the session with the same person.

Because it is a means of self-expression, I suppose in our cultural community you could compare it with abstract painting.

THIS EMPORIUM of fine arts is not the type of establishment that should be frequented by those with weak hearts or good hearing.

You have noticed that I have not said that the band plays music.

Between breaks the band conjures up a sound which is best described as a fire siren blown to the rhythm of a machine gun. The band members wear their hair long, not because they want to look "cool" but because their eardrums need some sort of insulation from the tune that they are beating to death.

It is an experience to behold. And tremendous entertainment—for a physically fit person.

There's good news tonight for the osteopaths, because if the twist is dying, it's going to have one heck of an energetic last illness.

City Beat

By KEN WEAVER



If parents want their children's respect, they have to earn it. They must set an example for their children to follow.

In effect, that is what the writer of the boxed "People's Column" letter at the top of this page is saying.

I agree. Parents can teach their children to respect them by setting a proper example.

In this column last week I contended that a drag strip is not the answer to "Woodwarding." The only solution to stop the speeding and racing on Woodward and other streets is to let the drivers know it won't be tolerated.

They must learn to respect authority, in and out of the home.

I can't see that giving them something else to do to keep them from doing what they shouldn't be doing is teaching the children any sense of responsibility.

A DRAG strip has its uses, yes. It affords a young driver an opportunity to learn the mechanics of an auto and how to handle a vehicle at high speeds.

But we should not have to give the kids a dragstrip or anything else to keep them off Woodward.

This is one of the faults of our thinking today. We give our young people too much in the effort to keep them from going bad.

It's time we gave them to understand, once and for all, that there are some things they just can't have and can't do—money or no money.

WHY DON'T we do this? Oh, there are status symbols and social factors that are involved. We live in a busy time of rapid developments and find it difficult to keep up with them and still find time for the youngsters.

But the real reason, I think, is fear. Fear of ruining our children's lives. Fear of creating an emotional or mental disturbance, through a single drastic action or through repetitive action, that may affect their entire adulthood.

We hesitate to discipline our children, to be very severe with them or to deprive them of something for fear this might cause a traumatic experience.

IT'S NO WONDER we develop this fear when we consider all of the psychological melodrama portrayed on television and in the papers every day.

Criticized since its very beginnings for too much crime and violence, the TV industry has now turned to dramas dealing with mental and emotional problems.

Some of the studies of social conditions are to be commended. It is well for us to realize that there are reasons behind our social problems.

But, we should also remember that a little knowledge can sometimes be dangerous.

OVER AND over again, the psycho-dramas drum home the point that mental disturbances often can be traced back to some parental action.

Parents, remember that the parent's. It's dad's fault. It's mom's fault. Mom and dad didn't get along. There was too much quarreling and confusion in the home. Mom was frigid. Pop was drunk. Parents. Parents. Blame the parents.

(See CITY BEAT, 8-B)

Support Torch Drive

Again, The Birmingham Eccentric prides with the number of Birmingham-Bloomfield area citizens taking an active part in leading the Torch Drive.

Each year, more and more of our civic-minded residents offer their time and talents in the leadership of this vital campaign to raise the necessary funds to carry on the many valuable services provided by the numerous Torch Drive agencies.

In this paper last week, it was announced that 27 local citizens are in top leadership posts in the 1963 fund drive. Pictures were printed of 18 of these.

WE BELIEVE their voluntary service testifies to the interest in, enthusiasm for and dedication to the United Foundation programs that has characterized this area for past several years.

Our residents are so proud of this fact, we are sure, that they will surpass the \$173,076 goal assigned to the Birmingham-Bloomfield-Franklin region.

This is another instance in which a substantial portion of money contributed on the local level will be used on the local level. Money raised in this region will go toward meeting the quota of \$323,075 for Oakland County.

For the entire metropolitan area there is a quota of \$19,750,000 to be raised by Nov. 7.

IT IS OUR firm conviction that our residents will show their appreciation for efforts expended by their fellow citizens and will again generously contribute to the Torch Drive.

This is the kind of people we have living in our area.

A Free, Responsible and Aggressive Press is Democracy's First Line of Defense

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There She Goes Again

