

METRO/STATE

SUNDAY MAY 17 1992 PAGE A-3

Don't answer calling card con

Telephone officials warn of scam aimed at obtaining customers' numbers, selling them

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DETROIT — Telephone company officials are warning customers not to give out calling card numbers over the phone or risk becoming the next victim of a scam operat-

ing in Michigan.

The caller identifies himself as an employee of AT&T or GTE and says he's calling to verify a customer's personal identification number, which provides access to an account from any pay phone.

"At the phone company, we know what your calling card number is," said Steve Van Dyke, customer billing center manager for GTE. "If somebody calls you and says, 'I'm verifying your calling card

number,' we don't do that."

The con artists sell the calling card numbers to computerized bulletin board services, which sell the numbers to people who want to make long-distance calls without paying for them.

"Your calling card number can go to thousands of people in a very short period of time," Van Dyke said. "A lot of international calling is involved."

One Muskegon-area victim of the scam had \$96,000 in calls

charged to his account in five days last week, Van Dyke said. The theft was detected by the phone company's computer, he said.

"It triggered a threshold," he said. "The calls were coming in so fast and furious there was no way humanly possible to be making all those calls."

Victims of telephone fraud don't have to pay for the stolen calls, Van Dyke said. Customers who suspect they're

victims of the con should call the phone company, he said.

"Contact them immediately and they will suspend the number," he said. "It's just a telephone call away. Another card will be issued."

Telephone fraud is a federal crime, but Van Dyke said tracing the caller is virtually impossible.

"They come into an area, hit 10 to 15 accounts and then they move on," he said.

TIM SKUBICK



Just a little truth in campaigning would be nice ...

The rich and famous Oakland County politician with no socks running for Congress says it is time for a change. There is an original thought.

It is also time for a tad more candor in his campaign commercials, too.

State Sen. David Honigman, R-Ambition, wants to replace soon-to-be ex-Rep. William Broomfield. Honigman could literally buy his way into Washington with his raft of campaign spots.

The one running right now is either election year hyperbole at best or a deliberate distortion of reality at worst.

Get a load of this. If Honigman is elected, he claims to have a plan, not a promise, to make "America more competitive," launch a "real war on crime," provide "affordable health care, balance the budget and make a real commitment to education."

Geez, if he can do all that, we ought to run him for God. The candidate says these are not hollow promises.

Problem is, he would be one vote among a total of 435. Detailed position papers notwithstanding, that one vote is not a majority to do diddly-squat.

Just listening to the commercial blare on, the unsuspecting citizen might conclude Honigman can succeed where countless others have failed.

Wouldn't it be refreshing to hear a different message?

Hi, I'm Dave Honigman. I'm not making a bunch of election year pledges that you and I both know I can't fulfill. I can't eliminate the deficit or single-handedly make your children smarter. But I can speak for you in the nation's capitol. So if my opponents promise you the moon, send them there. Send me to Washington instead.

Now that is an original and honest pitch. One you will never hear.

House Republicans continue their much publicized and ballyhooed boycott of new and restored offices in the state Capitol.

The refurbished digs are too lavish, too expensive, and way too controversial to occupy during an election year, they contend. So the GOP's not moving in and taking aim at Democrats who are.

You know the line. They are lavish spenders. We, poor cloth-coat Republicans, aren't.

It is a nifty little strategy orchestrated by House GOP leader Paul Hillemonds and his chums who eagerly hope it will rack up some brownie points with the voters back home and result in GOP control of the House.

But Hillemonds has a problem ... Rep. Carl Gnodtke.

Gnodtke is a Republican and, oh my gosh, he is in one of those suites on the first floor of the Capitol.

"I got the opportunity to move back (into the Capitol) and I grabbed it," he glibly explains.

So much for a unified front on the office symbolism.

He knew that snotty reporters would pounce on this break in ranks and take some of the political edge off the big spender attack.

He's right.

In fairness, Gnodtke does have a bad knee, and the new location means less walking. If that was the only reason for moving in, Hillemonds et al. would be safe.

Now the "office" issue is neutralized. How can Republicans beat up the Democrats for using offices that are also occupied by one of their own?

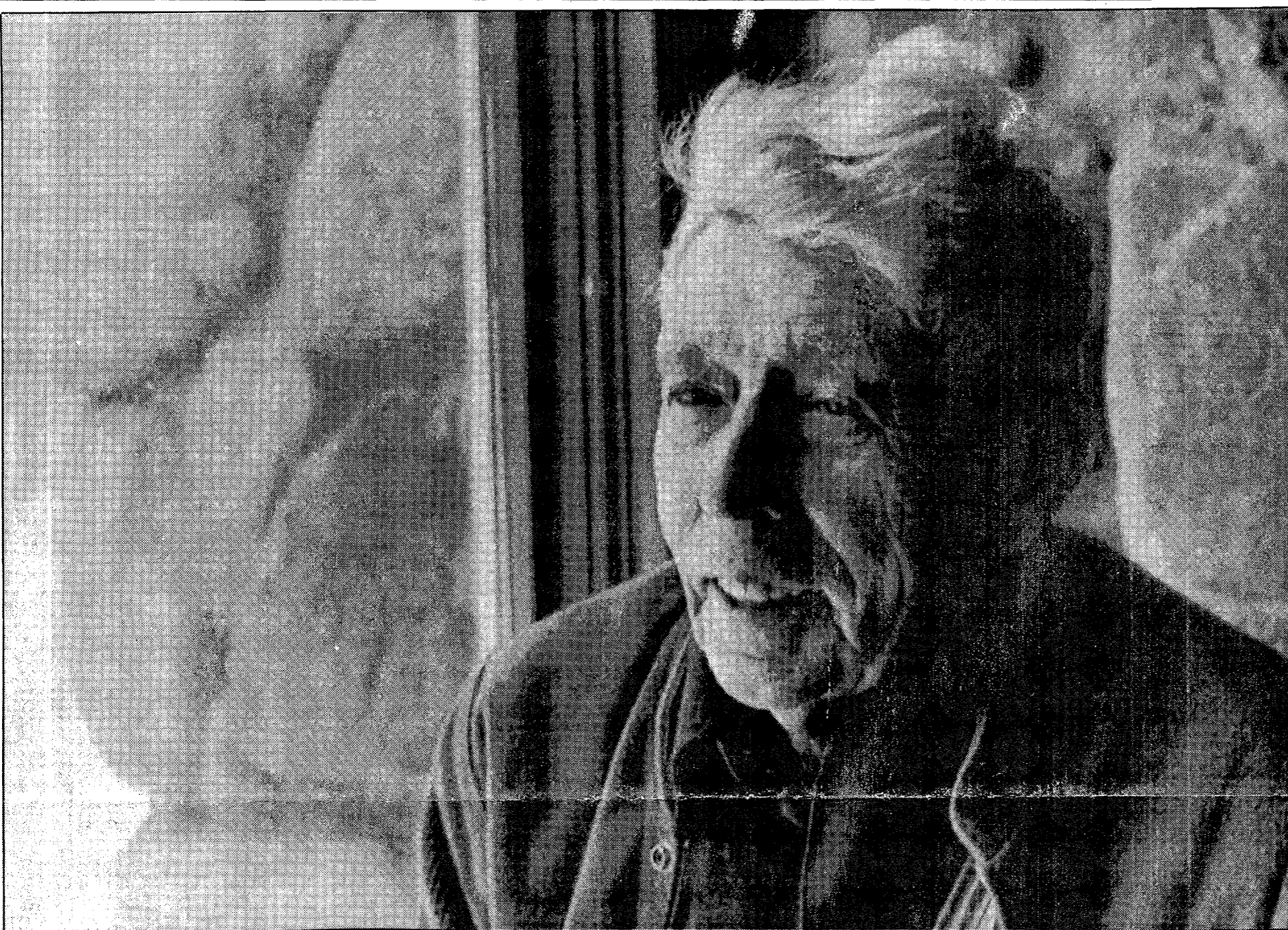
(Tim Skubick has covered Michigan politics and the state Legislature since 1969. He is capital correspondent for several television and radio stations. His column appears in The Oakland Press on Sunday.)

ROAD WATCH

If you have something to say about our roads — whether good, bad or just a suggestion on how to make them better — we want to hear from you. If you have a touch-tone phone, you can contact Road Watch seven days a week, 24 hours a day, by dialing 332-8181, Ext. 571. If you're calling from a rotary phone, you must call between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

CORRECTION

It is the policy of The Oakland Press to correct or clarify stories. We urge readers to call our news desk at (313) 332-8181, Ext. 305, should they have personal knowledge of errors.



The Associated Press

Historian George Secord, 82, sits in his East Jordan home and talks about Michigan railroads and how his life was touched by them

Railroads part of this man's personal history

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

History, thanks to the ever-curious like George Secord, lives on.

The bookshelves of his East Jordan home are jammed tight, and its walls are covered with photos of steam locomotives, train schedules and men with buck-saws standing in the drifts of snow, dwarfed by King pine.

"I'm a railroad fiend as you can see from looking at these volumes," Secord says as he hops up to find a book to illustrate a point he's making.

He pulled down one thick book after another and rattled off names of locomotives like they're family — The 2490 to Toledo, Ann Arbor No. 5, EJ & S No. 8 — and he knows the old

rail lines like they're roots of his family tree.

"In 1900 the Chicago & West Michigan, the Flint & Pere Marquette, and the Detroit, Lansing & Northern all joined together and became the Pere Marquette," he said of his favorite line, one that used to bring resorters in and take lumber out of Northern Michigan.

"Everybody made fun of the Pere Marquette, but everybody loved her," he said.

He leafed through the pages and then pointed his slender finger at a photo of the Pere's caboose. The little car rises at a 45-degree angle from the end of the train, balancing on the frame of the Grand Haven drawbridge.

"Here is the Pere Marquette in all her glory," Secord said with a laugh. "They didn't get

the doggone bridge closed and they just pushed it right up the girder!"

Secord, who went to a one-room school behind his family's East Jordan farm, was born in 1907 in a long-gone mill town known as Deward.

"My father was the head millwright when they built the mill, and was foreman of it until it closed in March, 1912."

Secord went to Western Michigan University but returned home shortly after his father died in 1928.

The Depression came, and jobs were hard to come by. But Secord kept busy with various jobs, including running a canoe livery. Also, like his mother, he was a correspondent for The Associated Press, covering professional sports teams that came north for exhibition games.

"In some ways, the Depression was nice time, because everyone was in the same boat," he said.

It was a dry boat, since Prohibition was the law of the land. But it was a law Secord said cops merely winked at. He recalls driving the back roads, and said, "On those warm, heady, humid nights you could drive a damn car on all the fumes. You could just smell it all over, the moonshine."

"Of course, in 1932 Roosevelt got in. And the first thing he did, he brought back beer. So you could get a bottle of beer for a nickel. Imagine trying to get anything for a nickel today."

Roosevelt also brought in federal recovery programs — programs Secord said led to

good times for his hometown, thanks to its ironworks.

"They were putting in sewer lines and water mains all over the country — and that's just what the East Jordan Iron Works was making," he said.

Secord served in the Army during World War II, and spent the war years on trains and ships. After the war, Secord got a job in the stock room of Lear-Siegler in Grand Rapids, but frequently came north for visits. He came home for good when he retired in 1965.

"When I went into Lears ... it was coming to the end of the big passenger trains," he said and moved to another bookshelf. "But I'm not sure that in another 15 years we won't be right back on trains again."

"Now, that East Jordan album has got to be someplace around here..."

Tourist goes airborne on his way to Lansing

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PORT HURON — A strange thing happened on the way to Lansing.

William C. Lunt was driving to the state capital — his last stop on a tour of all 50 — when a wrong turn Friday evening led him off an unfinished overpass at the Blue Water Bridge.

Lunt, who was coming from Canada where he also was touring Canadian provincial capitals, was uninjured except for a few scratches on his arm.

"I pulled right out of U.S. Customs with no problem and headed on the overpass. All of sudden I looked out and I didn't see any road up ahead," said the 74-year-old resident of Kansas City, Mo.

"I put my brakes on, but it was too late. I didn't see any barricades, because there were none."

Lunt's Ford Taurus landed upside down. He said it was his first car accident in nearly six decades of driving.

"That was something else," said Lunt after firefighters helped him from his flattened car.

"Is this the way Port Huron treats all of its visitors?" he joked.

A new overpass over Pine Grove Avenue is being built as part of the \$41 million U.S. Customs plaza project. Traffic coming from Canada is usually diverted by barricades onto Elmwood Street.

"We just had moved the barricades," said Phil Davis, a construction foreman for Dan's Excavating of Utica.

"The guy who was going to put the barricades back in place was down below talking."

"He was on his way back up when — it wasn't even a half a minute — when the car came down and went over."

Firefighters spent less than 15 minutes freeing Lunt from his car.

"Thank God I had my seatbelt on," he said.

David Jamison saw Lunt's car drive off the bridge plaza and land upside down in a pile of sand.

"I stopped to watch the construction and then all of a sudden this car came over and a did a 360-degree turn in the air," said the 16-year-old Port Huron resident.

Lunt caught a ride with Port Huron police to Detroit Metropolitan Airport, and a flight back to Kansas City.

Childhood fantasies flourish in MSU's children's garden

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EAST LANSING — "Peter Rabbit," "Alice in Wonderland" and "Jack and the Beanstalk" are among the fairy tale themes popping up in a new children's garden at Michigan State University.

About 30 mini-gardens featuring those and other storybook characters are being cultivated by collegiate horticulturists on a half-acre campus tract.

The fantasy garden is sponsored by Michigan 4-H, which is tilling the soil as part of a 7½-acre MSU project scheduled to open in August 1993.

Organizers said the idea is to help youngsters learn about horticulture by touching,

smelling, and tasting what's grown in gardens with childhood themes.

The mini-gardens will include a pizza garden of pie favorites such as tomatoes, peppers and onions, and a cereal garden of breakfast-table grains. There also will be a beanstalk for Jack to climb, an Alice in Wonderland maze leading to a secret garden, and a carrot patch encircled by Peter Rabbit's paw prints.

"It's going to be an imagination garden. It will teach children we use plants every day in our lives," curator Jane Taylor said as work began on the gardens.

About 100,000 visitors are expected to tour the gardens, which are being paid for by \$2.4 million in private donations, Taylor said.

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EDITORIAL

Will legislators accept overdue personal, institutional reforms?

Talk about politics and naturally the subject of ethics, or lack of same, comes up.

To that end the Republican members of the Michigan House have come up with a revealing set of proposed behavioral reforms for legislators.

Some will be seen as partisan — self-serving and anti-Democrat — but for the most part the suggestions should strike both sides of the aisle as unobjectionable.

Many Democrats, though, surely don't like the idea that campaign contributions from political action committees be limited to no more than double the amount raised from individuals.

On its face, it sounds reasonable, and is. But some Democrats get almost all their money from labor union PACs and might find it onerous to have to pass the hat among the citizenry.

Another ethics proposal, like most, seems as though it shouldn't have to be mentioned — no more face-to-face, hand-to-hand delivery of campaign contributions under the Capitol dome or by lobbyists.

School children on tours shouldn't have to see such things.

More substantive is the recommendation that the so-called officeholder expense funds be done away with. Those are made up of leftover campaign contributions legislators now are able to spend on just about anything they please, including the rent.

The money is treated as undeclared, untaxed, personal income, for all practical purposes. The House GOP would have legislators hew to the rules of the Internal Revenue Service so that any bills paid from campaign money would meet the legitimate business expense test, which they obviously

don't now.

Also on the ethics agenda is a proposal that would bar lawmakers or their aides from taking up lobbying until a year after leaving state employment.

As it is, the walk across the street is immediate. For the prominent and the shrewd, lawmaking is a mere prelude to big money and influence on behalf of the special interests.

All of the above, though, is relatively minor compared with the recommended crackdown on bad habits within the Legislature itself.

Chief among them is spending money with no real legislative consideration, usually without general knowledge, and with no written description of what it is for, or why.

That tends to happen when the powerbrokers on the appropriations committees quietly slip pet projects between the pages unbeknownst to 99 percent of those who later vote on the spending bills.

The House GOP would, among other things, have "purposes, goals and objectives" defined before money can be appropriated.

An innocent citizen would have assumed that had been the case all along.

Of course it is the Democrats in the majority who control the shenanigans now. One wonders whether the GOP would be so reform-minded if it were in the driver's seat.

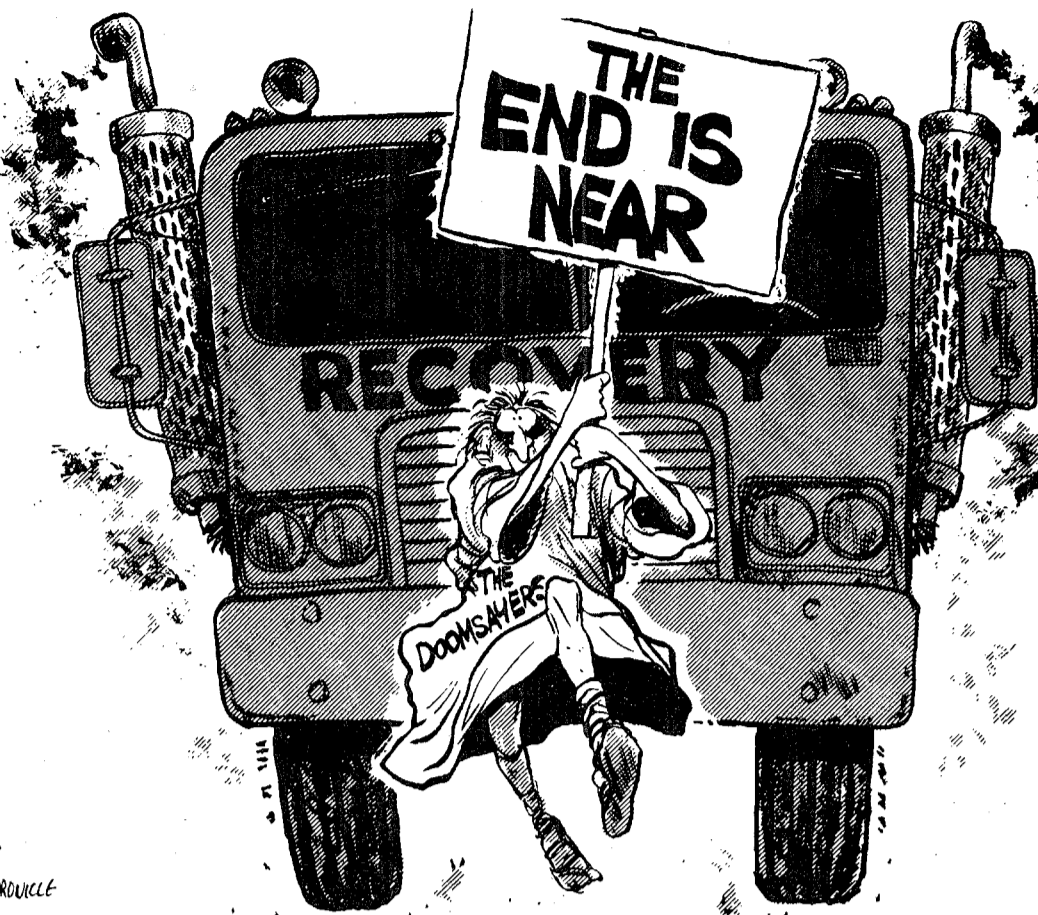
In any event, the proposed changes make sufficient sense that a majority of Democrats ought to go along.

NEIL MUNRO

GOOD MORNING

Suspicions confirmed: It was a full moon last night.

N.M.



WAVE
RE-PIGUSTA CHRONICLE

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

We welcome your comments. To verify authorship, we ask for your full name, signature, full address and telephone number. Published letters will carry only your name and town of residence or job title. All letters addressed to an editor or Voice of the People will be considered for publication unless the author states otherwise. Authors' names will be omitted only in special circumstances. The Press may edit or reject any letter. Please limit your remarks to 250 words. Readers must wait 30 days between letter submissions. The address for Voice of the People is Box 436009, Pontiac 48343.

Civilized people don't get the aid

I would like to thank the people of Detroit and Pontiac for handling the Rodney King tragedy in a dignified and upstanding way.

It is too bad these people can't be rewarded with the same food bags and rebuilding materials as the looters, killers and mobsters. Is violence the only way to get the much-needed help to survive?

I hope philanthropist Percy Ross and big business, General Motors Corp., Chrysler Corp., Ford Motor Co. etc., take notice and open up jobs and help for these people — the good ones.

Donna Martin
Clarkston

We cannot let this happen again

In regard to the recent Rodney King verdict, I find it deplorable that the legal system in the United States found the four officers accused (not guilty) of the beating charges. The jury must have been blind, as the videotape clearly showed the extreme use of excessive force.

You can't tell me that many law enforcement officers couldn't have restrained Mr. King in a more civilized manner. They were having a field day with the poor guy as other officers stood by and watched. This display of force shows the officers charged having a good time exercising their authority.

Look at all the heartache and destruction it caused across the country. I do not support the way the people handled their anger. That was clearly out of control,

too. But when angered a lot of people resort to violence — which should not be the way, but it happens. As Rodney King said, "Can't we all live together? This has got to stop."

I think it is time to re-evaluate our legal system and sew up some of these loopholes before everything we have worked so hard to accomplish is destroyed.

My sympathy goes out to all those who suffered losses due to this outbreak, and I hope our government will open its eyes and ears before it is too late. We the people cannot let people like this run our laws and lives.

David H. Vandervent
Auburn Hills

Milk really does do a body good

Milk is the whole, sweet, clean lacteal secretion obtained from the milking of one or more cows — properly fed and kept, excluding that 15 days before and five days after calving — and must test 3.5 percent butterfat. This was the state definition of milk taught at Michigan State University in 1939, and I think it still holds.

Now about this "Vitamin D" addition. It is actually just a sales

"gimmick" dreamed up by the dairies. They pasteurize the milk and then homogenize it. This kills all germs and fixes it so the cream won't rise.

Don't quit reading. We are now at the important part.

Real butter, sour cream and half and half bring a real good price. Skim milk (we fed it to our pigs) is also sold. Some of it is dumped back into the milk vat to lower the fat content. This is called "standardizing." When it is done, the "total solids not fat" content of the milk is raised and so the dairies write "vitamin D added" on your milk carton. It is true, but what they really are doing is making Jersey and Guernsey milk into Holstein milk and in the process making money.

As for a "health hazard," no way you get the same thing if you drank some whole milk and then drank a half glass of skim milk.

Unless your kids are "weird," milk is good for them. It is the closest thing to a "perfect" food. Try it. You'll like it. If you want proof, go to a dairy farm and ask to see a "veal calf." They only drink milk. He will be real sick-looking and a lot bigger than his brothers and sisters of the same age.

Leslie Howard Marsac
Waterford Township

Superintendent is responsible

The Pontiac Board of Education can subtract schools, divide the people of its district, add to school employees' salaries, multiply the school debt and to sum it all up, then can't calculate.

It is time to stop passing the buck. The superintendent advises the Board of Education. The Board of Education acts on that advice. We are in debt again?

There's also a rumor going around town that the school district of Pontiac has a \$450,000 phone bill that hasn't been paid. Is it true?

Where is the savings from closing Kennedy and the other elementary school?

There should be at least nine areas in which to evaluate a superintendent:

1. Instructional management
2. School/organizational climate
3. School/organizational improvement
4. Personnel management
5. Administration
6. Fiscal/facilities management
7. Student management
8. School/community relations
9. Professional growth and development

If anyone out there cares about your children or grandchildren, sign the petitions that are being circulated to recall the Pontiac Board of Education administration. In order for a city to survive, it needs its schools to be top-rate. If you allow the present administration to continue, your school district will be bankrupt by next year for sure.

Juan R. Quiroga
Pontiac

YOUR TURN

Unlimited medical coverage for auto accident victims isn't ridiculous

By GARY FRALICK

The Press' recent editorial on the no-fault auto insurance reform issue titled, "Auto insurance reform another victim of political posturing," was right in its assertion that politics was playing an overriding role in the auto insurance debate. Unfortunately, it was Gov. John Engler and his veto pen that were playing politics, not the Republican and Democratic legislators who passed the reform bill.

The vetoed bill offered consumers real rate relief. It was not a bill that totally pleased any of the interest groups in Lansing (the Michigan Trial Lawyers Association certainly did not support the

benefit cuts and tort reform it contained), but it without question offered consumers relief from rising auto insurance premiums. Just as significant for consumers, the bill also contained important provisions requiring insurance companies to include their investment income in their rate-making formulas and to ensure that no area of the state was subsidizing another.

What's more, the two reforms that the Press called for in its editorial, a limit on medical benefits and making it more difficult to file lawsuits, were both forcefully addressed in the bill that Engler vetoed. The previous full coverage for medical bills was capped at \$3 million, with options up to \$5 million. And judicial review of all jury awards was mandated,

along with other tort reforms.

I'd also like to point out that your paper's assertion that the present unlimited medical coverage for auto accident victims is "ridiculous" is ridiculous in itself. "Unlimited" coverage merely means full coverage for medical care as a result of an auto accident. Anything less, and you and your family are left with less than full coverage. What if you or a family member are catastrophically injured in an auto accident, and you've purchased a policy with a \$3 million cap or with the \$250,000 cap that the governor wants? What happens if your bills exceed the cap?

When Engler vetoed the bill, your readers lost significant and long-term

rate reduction. Your readers also will lose much more should Engler and the insurance companies ever obtain the benefit cuts and so-called consumer "choice" plans they are pursuing.

Please think about it for a moment. Would you really purchase one of the governor's policies, with a \$250,000 limit on medical coverage, no liability coverage to protect your assets, and almost no rights left to hold drunken or negligent drivers responsible for the horrid injuries or deaths they cause?

Certainly not. You'd want to protect your home, your life savings and your other assets by carrying the same liability coverage you carry now. You'd also want to carry as much medical coverage

as possible to cover any medical bills you or a family member might incur as a result of an auto accident — because if you don't have enough insurance, the bills will have to be paid out of your own pocket, even if you were not at fault in the accident. And you also want to be able to hold the drunken or negligent driver who hurt you and your family responsible.

(Gary Fralick is director of communications for the Michigan Trial Lawyers Association. "Your turn" is a column for readers and civic leaders to share their views on issues in the north Oakland County community. If you would like to take "Your turn," contact Managing Editor John Cusumano. His telephone number is 332-8181, Ext. 356.)

COUNTY LINES

WASHINGTON TRENDS

GOP spokesman Vander Jagt nearly dumped by the home folk

As Michigan Rep. Guy Vander Jagt delved into his duties to elect more of his GOP colleagues to Congress, Republican Party members back home were plotting a similar feat.

Their challenge was a bit different, though, as they defied a longtime party rule to never challenge a sitting Republican.

In this case, the victim of anti-incumbency fever would be Vander Jagt himself.

Upset that he wasn't spending time or energy on his western Michigan lakeside district, a group of local officials had built a grass-roots case against him and anointed a formidable opponent, a popular, bright Republican state senator.

On its face, last month's attempt seemed ironic. It didn't make sense for an extremely conservative district to



Lisa Zagaroli

want to turn on someone who devoted most of his 26-year congressional career to furthering Republican values.

Vander Jagt has been chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee since 1976. And though the number of Republicans who serve in Congress hasn't improved much during

his reign, he has been lauded as a spell-binding orator and with transforming the organization into an effective fundraiser.

"I expected the criticism to come from the Democrats, I did not expect it to come from the Republicans," he said. "And of course when it comes from the Republicans, that makes it 10 times bigger news."

But the constituents had their reasons. "He comes here and makes a speech once in a while, but really he's not a hardworking fellow," said Samuel E. Greydanus Jr., a former teacher from Saugatuck. "The thinking people (believe) he really hasn't done anything."

But Vander Jagt wriggled out of a worst-case scenario — the anointed state senator decided against running.

Vander Jagt says his main problem wasn't working too hard for the party,

but that he didn't toot his own horn loudly enough when he was home.

This Congress, he has introduced 28 bills and one has become law so far. In the 1989-90 session, none of his 34 measures was enacted, according to the House Legislative Information Service.

Among the people who asked state Sen. William Van Regenmorter not to challenge the incumbent were former President Gerald R. Ford, Republican National Committee Chairman Richard Bond and Rep. Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., the senator said.

Van Regenmorter "would do an excellent job in Congress. But we don't want to throw out somebody else who's much more powerful in Washington," said Republican National Committeeman Chuck Yob of Grand Rapids.

(Lisa Zagaroli covers Michigan issues in Washington, D.C., for The Associated Press.)



THINGS MUST BE GETTING BETTER HERE IN MICHIGAN, EVEN GEORGE BUSH WAS HERE A FEW WEEKS AGO, LOOKING FOR WORK.