

Michigan Dateline, Obituaries and Michigan's Most Wanted are on Page 10A.



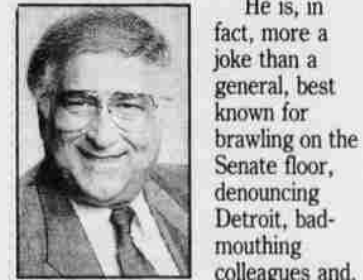
HUGH MCDIARMID
Politics

Clownish DiNello bangs death drum

Once again, civilized souls in Michigan should heave a sigh of relief.

That's because this election year's demagogic death penalty ritual — like 1990's — is being led by the clown prince of the Legislature, Sen. Gilbert DiNello.

In fact, if the broad assortment of humanitarians, do-gooders and civic-minded progressives who bathe, shave, eat with forks, believe in the improbability (or even perfectibility) of humankind and who are anti-capital punishment had to choose an opposing general... well, DiNello would likely be their general-of-choice.



Gilbert DiNello

He is, in fact, more a joke than a general, best known for brawling on the Senate floor, denouncing Detroit, bad-mouthing colleagues and, most recently, for his all-out legislative attack — followed by hasty retreat — on high-powered squirt guns.

On squirt guns? Correct.

But when it comes to more cosmic stuff such as capital punishment, especially in an election year when anything can happen... well, the anti-death penalty crowd is always thankful for small favors.

Michigan, as is widely known, was the first government in the English-speaking world to ban the death penalty. That was by statute back in 1846. And the ban, which became constitutional in 1964, has survived periodic attempts to remove it, most notably those led by then-Oakland County Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson in the 1970s and 1980s.

DiNello, the conservative political hermaphrodite (he votes Republican, calls himself a Democrat) from Macomb County, got in on the act in 1990.

He kicked off a petition drive that January to put the issue on the November ballot, conceding that the death penalty probably wouldn't deter crime but justifying it on grounds of "retribution," i.e., revenge.

But a few months later, after soaking up maximum exposure as head of "Michigan Citizens for Capital Punishment," he called it quits, saying it was too difficult to collect the required number of signatures in the time allotted.

Nobody was overly surprised. This year's effort — off to a late start because it was announced only last week — is aimed not at a petition drive but at convincing the Legislature to put a constitutional amendment on the November ballot. And DiNello justifies it this time around on the simplistic grounds that "Michigan is becoming a killing field" (no mention of deterrence, retribution, etc.).

Normally, we'd note that time is awkwardly short because the Legislature is about to bail out for summer recess and both houses must approve the proposal (by two-thirds majorities) by Sept. 4 in order to make the ballot. And we'd laugh it off as just another DiNello gambit.

But we won't.

DiNello boasts 19 Senate co-sponsors, including some who know better. And polls continue to indicate big voter majorities favoring the death penalty. And, in a volatile election year... well, who knows?

Anyway, common sense continues to tell us the effort will fail. But, still, it's a comfort to know that DiNello's heading it.

In brief

ALICE GILBERT, the ex-Oakland County circuit judge, fired off the congressional season's first big attack ad Monday — a 60-second radio spot assailing one of her GOP primary opponents, state Sen. David Honigman of West Bloomfield Township, for "spending more time running for office than anybody else in Michigan" and for being "wishy-washy" on issues. The response from Phil Ginotti of the Honigman campaign was that "she's a nice lady but this is desperation tactics."

The ad, airing on six or seven Detroit area stations, does not mention the third GOP candidate, ex-Oakland GOP Chairman Joe Knollenberg.

Townships battle over trucks

Van Buren doesn't want Canton's trash on its roads

BY AMBER ARELLANO
Free Press Staff Writer

Six years ago, longtime Madison Heights resident Sandra Todd moved to Van Buren Township, looking for a quieter place to call home.

She found it. But she's afraid she'll lose it next spring.

That's when a Canton Township landfill, which closed the same year Todd moved in, is scheduled to reopen after expansion. The new landfill entrance will stare straight across Van Born Road — Canton's boundary with Van Buren — directly at Todd's house.

Todd and her neighbors are fuming over the expected parade of about 100 garbage trucks a day through their peaceful neighborhood.

Although the landfill is located in the southeastern corner of Canton, garbage trucks will be instructed to drive through the Van Buren Town-

ship neighborhood rather than enter the facility at its north end in Canton, said Mike Miller, vice president of Wayne Disposal-Canton, which operates the landfill.

Trucks will be told to exit I-275 at Michigan Avenue. From there, instead of heading west on Michigan to the old entrance, they will proceed south on Haggerty Road, then west on Van Born Road, to the landfill's entrance at Lilley and Van Born, Miller said.

Construction of the new entrance will begin soon, Miller said.

Canton and landfill officials say Van Buren's newer roads are better equipped to handle the heavy truck traffic than the older Michigan Avenue could.

But some Van Buren residents feel Canton is dumping its traffic and noise on its southern neighbors.

"Canton Township is worried

about traffic," said Todd, 47. "We're worried about people. We're worried about getting up our mail and smelly garbage flying up in our faces when trucks go by."

Loren Bennett, Canton Township clerk, said: "It's not something we should be concerned about... We're talking about public roads that any person has a right to travel on."

But Van Buren residents are concerned. Todd said she and about 70 neighbors plan to show up for tonight's 7:30 Van Buren Township Board meeting to ask local officials to help them change Canton's mind. David Jakes, Van Buren Township supervisor, said he is meeting with Canton and landfill officials today to ask them to reconsider the location of the landfill's entrance.

But that seems unlikely, said Michael Farrantino, Wayne Disposal-Canton director. With so much plan-



CATHY MORRIS/Detroit Free Press

Poverty consumes more kids in state

Study shows numbers increased in 1980s

BY KAREN SCHNEIDER
AND LORI MATHEWS
Free Press Staff Writers

WASHINGTON — The number of children living in poverty in Michigan increased dramatically in the 1980s, according to a report to be released today by the Children's Defense Fund.

In 1979, 13.3 percent of Michigan children lived below the poverty line. By 1989, that figure rose to 18.2 percent, the report says.

Local health care experts said Monday they were not surprised by the numbers because of the conditions many Michigan families face — unemployment, loss of benefits, welfare cuts and a changing economy.

"It doesn't surprise me for a number of reasons. And I don't see anybody doing anything to change these trends," said Joan Abbey, a University of Michigan sociologist.

The Children's Defense Fund, a child advocacy group based in Washington, compiled the data from census figures. It is to present the state-by-state count of poor children at a news conference today.

Michigan was one of 33 states where the number of poor children increased in the 1980s. In rankings of best-to-worst states, Michigan was 33rd in 1989; in 1979, it was 20th.

Overall, the number of poor children in America grew by 1.1 million — an increase of 11 percent — in the 1980s.

"I am deeply saddened but certainly not shocked by this study," said former state representative Teola Hunter. "We need to come together. We need to do something about this situation now."

Hunter, a longtime advocate of child welfare programs, said Michigan residents have to wake up and look outside their windows "and deal with what is happening around us."

Hunter has served as Wayne County's deputy director for health and community services since January.

"Our numbers of homeless are increasing at an alarming rate," Hunter said. "People scoff and say they're hobos or vagrants and don't deserve our help — well, they're not. The faces we are seeing are those of children, of families."

DSS plans on closing youth center

BY JACK KRESNAK
Free Press Staff Writer

The state Department of Social Services will close the Huron Center for seriously disturbed and violent juveniles at the W.J. Maxey Boys Training School as part of an effort to shrink the school by at least 12 percent.

DSS officials say the downsizing of Maxey, which houses delinquent youths from throughout southeast Michigan, is part of an effort to shift treatment and education to cheaper, local day programs.

But the plan is being watched closely by juvenile court officials who as recently as three months ago were struggling with overcrowded local youth homes and detention centers.

"I would think it would be a mistake, personally," said Frank Marella, director of program services at Macomb County Juvenile Court. "I hate to see young people sitting in our youth home for four or five months waiting to get into Maxey. That's a waste of time and taxpayer dollars."

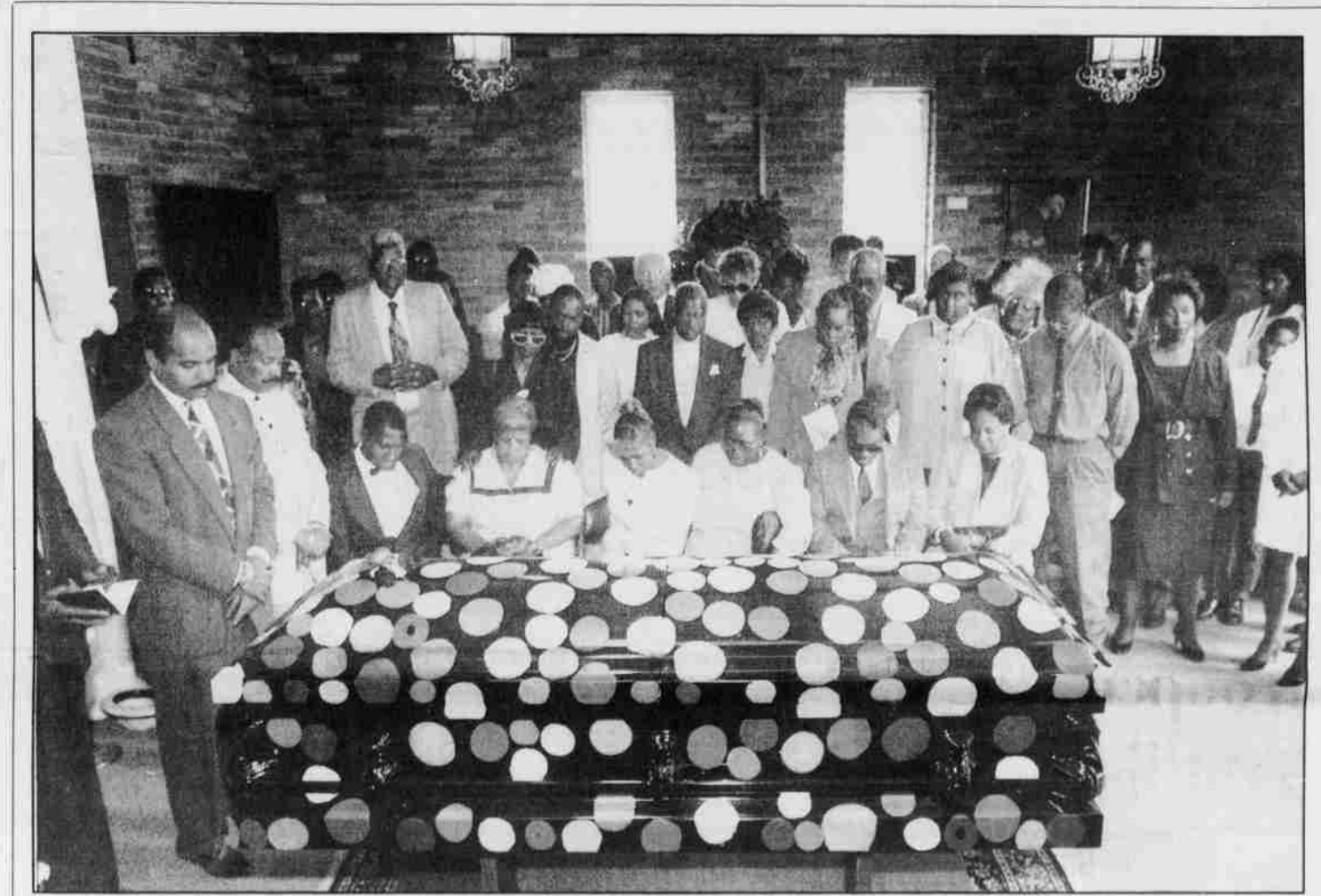
The Maxey campus population will be reduced by Sept. 30 from 435 juveniles to 380, according to DSS documents obtained by the Free Press.

Oakland County Probate Judge Sandra Silver said she is concerned that Maxey also will downgrade psychiatric services when its Huron Center building is closed.

"They're warehousing kids and the public has a right to be alarmed," Silver said.

Youths at the Huron Center include

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ARTIST PAYS FINAL TRIBUTE TO GRANDFATHER

Above: Family and friends gather around the casket of Sam Mackey, the grandfather of Detroit artist Tyree Guyton, on Monday at Trinity Cemetery in Detroit. Guyton, whose urban art has attracted national attention, painted the casket in polka dots as a final tribute. Mackey, 94, was a well-known Detroit portrait artist who helped Guyton decorate houses on Heidelberg Avenue.

Right: The funeral procession drives past Guyton's work on Heidelberg.

WILLIAM DEKAY/Detroit Free Press



Jailed nun says protests for peace are her ministry

BY ROBIN FORNOFF
Free Press Staff Writer

Peace activist Sister Elizabeth LaForest carried a Bible and a deck of cards with her Monday to help pass the next 21 days in the Macomb County Jail.

"I figure I'll get in lots of solitaire," said the 77-year-old Roman Catholic nun, who with two other women was convicted of trespassing during an April 1990 protest at Wurtsmith Air Force Base near Oscoda.

Royal Oak grandmother Luella Bassett, 72, will serve 60 days in the jail and Frances Bond, 48, of Grand Rapids was sentenced to 45 days.

Each woman clutched a red rose while walking toward the front door of the jail Monday afternoon. They were immediately encircled by a crowd of

"I figure I'll get in lots of solitaire."

SISTER ELIZABETH LAFOREST, who carried a Bible and a deck of cards as she entered jail Monday

about 35 supporters singing "We Shall Overcome." Prisoners inside tapped on the shatterproof jail windows to show support.

"I have children and grandchildren," said Bassett, "and when it comes to their futures, the policies of my government aren't headed in the right direction."

The three were among some 200 people who in August 1990 pushed over a temporary fence outside Wurtsmith to present the base commander with peace symbols.

It is LaForest's second time in jail, and she doesn't expect it to be the last. The tiny, soft-spoken nun said peace and reducing the military arms buildup in the United States "are my minis-

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Southwest Detroiters attempt to provide alternatives to gangs

BY STEPHEN JONES
Free Press Staff Writer

A coalition of southwest Detroit residents is aiming to combat gang violence by arming itself and neighborhood youths — with alternatives.

"We've got 15-, 16-, 17-year-old kids who are into gang activity because we don't give them other options," coalition member Patrick Thompson said at a Monday evening meeting that drew more than 70 people to Holy Redeemer Church.

"We're not here to figure out what we can do to the gangs," said Thompson, who is president of the Scotten-Palms Club. "We're here to figure out what to do to solve the problem that causes gangs."

The two-hour gathering of the Council Against Gang-Related Violence included brainstorming sessions on such issues as education, church and community agencies, job creation, recreation and police relations.

Each session focused on building partnerships among community institutions to discourage gang activity. Last week, federal agents began

arresting suspected street gang members and their associates, capping an investigation that produced gun- and drug-trafficking charges against more than 55 people. Most are reputed members of the Latin Counts, the area's most notorious gang.

On Monday evening, one committee laid plans for a job-training fair, tentatively scheduled for August, while another group discussed proposals for changes in public school policy. A third committee debated ways to eliminate party stores to pledge help in eliminating liquor and tobacco sales to minors.

A coalition spokesman, Armando Rivas Jr., said the group needs programs that go beyond the short-term responses of summer jobs programs.

"We have to be there year round, 100 percent of the time," said Rivas, who is executive director of La Sed, a community development group.

Anyone interested in joining the coalition should call Bill O'Brien or the Rev. John Morton at Holy Redeemer Church, 842-3450, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.