

# National

## Tax hike rejection may close schools

United Press International  
BATTLE CREEK, Mich. — Voters in a Michigan school district, unsure of their economic future, rejected a property tax hike — despite the threat of a shut-down of local schools.

In a record turnout Monday, Harper Creek voters refused by a 152 vote margin to approve a three-year, 26 percent property tax hike.

The Harper Creek proposal, calling for a nine-mill hike in the first year, eight in the second and seven in the third and final year, was rejected by a 2,532-2,380 vote. It would have raised enough new funds to eliminate a \$1.5 million deficit.

The owner of a \$50,000 home in the southwestern Michigan city, would have seen property taxes climb from \$861.75 to \$1,087, or \$226.25 annually, if the tax was approved.

Under state law, another election cannot be held for 30 days. By that time, officials said, the five-school district will be bankrupt

unless deep cuts are made immediately.

"Now we may have to close down," Harper Creek School Superintendent James A. Brouwer said. "We can't cut enough of our programs and still stay open for a full school year."

Brouwer said unless the drastic cuts were implemented by Nov. 9, the district will be forced to close in early December.

"Closing the school would be the least acceptable alternative," Brouwer said, "(but) there aren't many alternatives left to us. We can cut, but we're talking about 25 percent of the budget."

As an alternative to closing, Brouwer said, he planned to ask the board to consider a system-wide layoff of 19 teachers and 11 other school workers, elimination of all athletic, extracurricular programs and bus transportation.

In addition, food services will be cut at elementary and junior high schools and the school day will be shortened by one hour and 15 minutes.

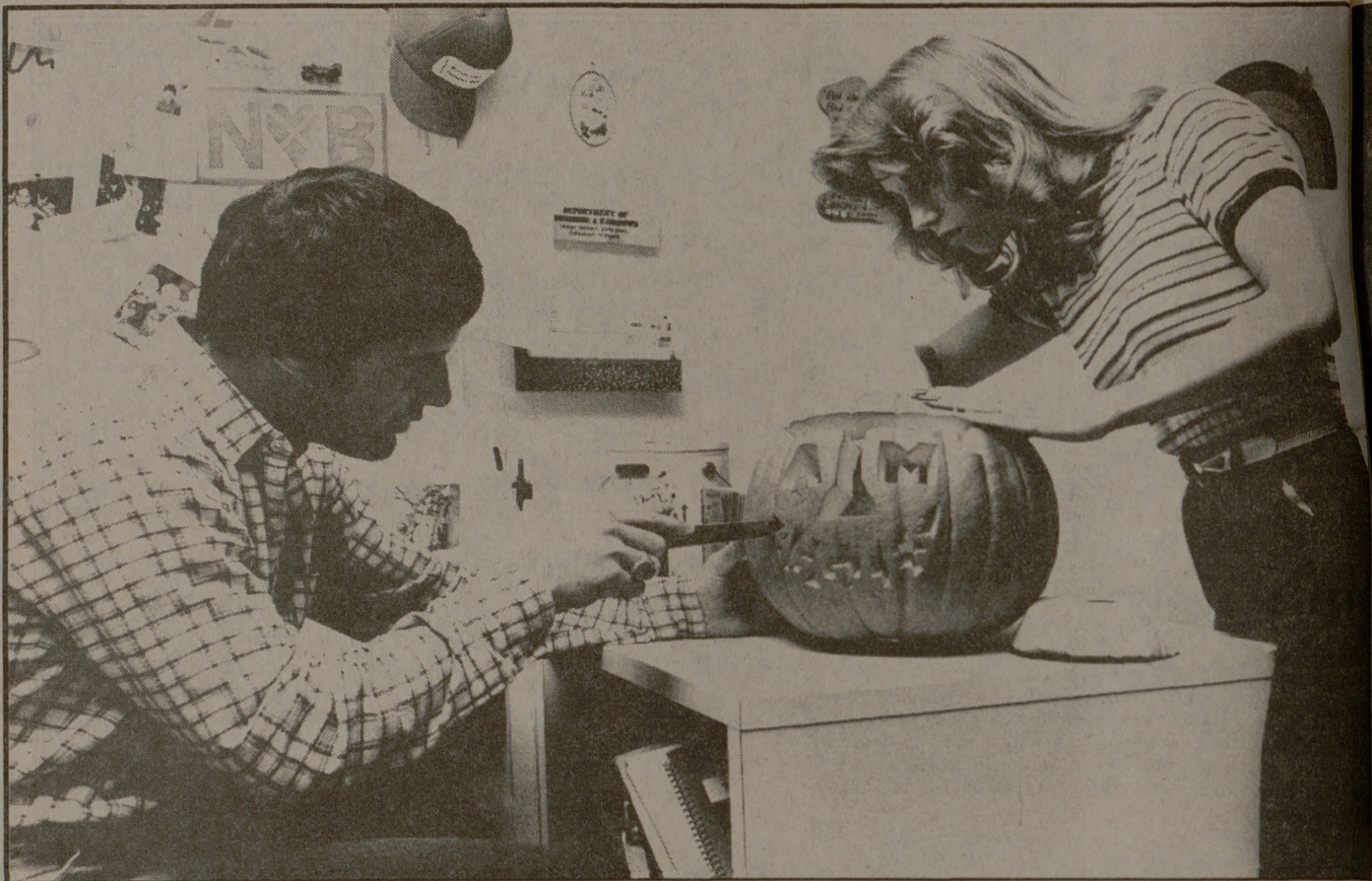
As Michigan's economy has worsened, the number of school districts in financial trouble has grown steadily. State officials say the state cannot bail out the local districts.

On Oct. 16, officials in Alpena in northeastern Lower Michigan closed classrooms for 6,800 students following rejection of a millage request. Another vote on the levy is set for Saturday.

Last week, voters in the Detroit suburb of Taylor rejected a 20.4-mill levy and schools for 15,900 students are to close Nov. 13. Officials, meanwhile, hoped to have another election in December.

Three other school districts — Pontiac, Lincoln Park and Romulus — need an infusion of new tax money to remain open. In Pontiac, voters have rejected the last eight millage requests, including renewals.

"No other state is having the kind of economic problems that Michigan has," Robert McKerr, associate state schools superintendent, said.



Staff photo by Dave Elm

### Aggie pumpkin

Michael Maddry, a sophomore accounting major from Denton, and Dee Ann Cobb, a sophomore management major from Roundrock, put the finishing touches on their Aggie jack-o'-lantern, which took four hours to carve.



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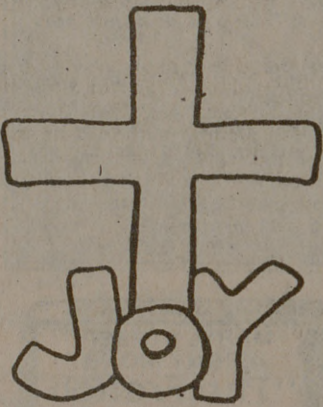
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## Bottle diggers strike loot from '57 payroll robbery

United Press International  
WINDSOR, Conn. — A couple digging for old bottles in a wooded area hit real paydirt and uncovered what police say was loot from a \$66,573 unsolved payroll robbery 24 years ago.

"It just seemed like it wasn't going to end," said Curtis Stoldt, 23, of Windsor, who made the find with his girlfriend. "I couldn't believe it. I thought I'd hit some money someone had hidden there instead of going to the bank."

Stoldt said he and his girlfriend, Andrea Golden, 22, of Hartford, alerted police Saturday after unearthing a pile of coins and then coming onto a "vein of money" more than a foot deep at a randomly picked spot where they

were digging for old bottles.

Police Detective Cmdr. John Riccio said Monday that a dug-up, rotted burlap bag contained thousands of dollars in decaying bills.

Riccio said payroll stubs provided positive proof that the money was the loot from the April 11, 1957, robbery at the former Hartford Machine Screw Co.

Riccio said police were unable to determine the exact amount of money found because the bills were in such lousy condition. It was turned over to the FBI, which will try to determine the amount and verify the source through serial numbers.

Terry Shumard, an FBI agent in New Haven, said authorities

were uncertain who could be the money.

"We've been asking ourselves the same question and we don't know," he said. "It's possible an insurance company might have paid a claim on the money at that case, they'd get it. We're investigating that possibility."

Police never solved the robbery but believe it was pulled by a Hartford man, Francis J. Kowski, 42, who died by a hand after he killed an FBI agent in a shootout with authorities last week after the robbery.

Police declined to give the specific location where the money was found in the wooded area, but treasure hunters may descend on the area looking for more money.

## 3 of 14 charges against Presley's doctor dropped

United Press International  
MEMPHIS, Tenn. — A judge has dismissed three of the 14 drug charges against Elvis Presley's former physician, a decision expected to bolster defense arguments that he did not overprescribe addictive medications to his patients.

Attorneys for Dr. George C. Nichopoulos were scheduled to open their defense Tuesday after the prosecution closed its case Monday and Criminal Court Judge Bernie Weinman directed a verdict of acquittal on the three charges.

"I'm excited about it," Nichopoulos said. "I think it will help us a lot. I know it will help me a lot."

Defense attorney James Neal, a former Watergate prosecutor, would say only that his first witness would be a doctor. He would not comment when asked if Nichopoulos would testify in his own defense.

Weinman granted the acquittal after determining the state had not presented enough evidence to substantiate charges that Nichopoulos illegally overprescribed medication for himself and a cancer patient, Robert Deason.

Nichopoulos still faces 11 counts of overprescribing addictive pills to Presley, singer Jerry Lee Lewis and seven others.

Neal requested the motion for a directed verdict of acquittal after the state rested its case, several days earlier than anticipated.

Prosecutors Jewett Miller and James Wilson cut their case short after talking with Neal and saying their next four doctor witnesses would testify in substantially the same manner that Dr. Alvin Cummins testified.

Cummins said Nichopoulos grossly exceeded the bounds of accepted medical practice in prescribing thousands of addictive pills to Presley. Cummins said the excessive practices were particu-

larly outrageous and dangerous since Nichopoulos knew the drugs were addictive.

Before the state rested, Neal told the jury drugs taken by Presley can make a person so psychologically dependent they "can make it through the day without the drug."

He likened the withdrawal process to pulling a crutch away from a patient.

The prosecution has produced evidence that Nichopoulos prescribed about 19,000 addictive pills for Presley during the last 18 months of his life.

Of narcotics in particular, which the rock 'n' roll king was addicted, Neal said, "Their abuse potential has been distinctly and clearly known since the first part of this century."

Heart disease was ruled as the cause of Presley's death on Aug. 16, 1977. However, a portion of the results of an autopsy show the superstar had 14 different drugs in his body tissues.

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