

editorial opinion



Hors d'oeuvres by Lynn Orr

Never can say goodbye

Nearly two years ago I began this column when I wrote about coming home, the first of 50 columns I would pen as a reporter for the Farmington Observer.

In that brief time span, I learned a lot about my hometown, most of which I hope to have successfully passed on to our readers. What's almost impossible to relate within a news story or single column is the overall flavor of this community—the distinctions that make Farmington more than an affluent suburb.

Like an uncertain adolescent, Farmington clings to the past while stretching for the future—an altogether unusual passage for a growing community. But it's important to preserve the best of what's behind us without landing in a pickle barrel.

The historic buildings, the quality educational system, and the community spirit require strong-armed protectors and continual reinforcement. But the outmoded isolationism of the suburbs, built on fear of minorities, needs to be discarded.

ADOLESCENTS look to peer groups in their struggle to cope with maturity. But the teenager who lacks security about his or her own self-worth becomes the adult who bends to pressures of employers, neighbors, and friends.

Mob thinking is the result—some of which we saw in both Farmington and Farmington Hills in the last few months when each city proposed senior citizen and low income housing.

We need to provide housing for both groups in the future. The tax rebellion will fail to solve the

Patricia LaCroix writes

She's growing old at 22

I have never felt so old in all my life. This is really pretty ironic, considering that I am all of 22 years old. People who are in their 50's and 60's will either stop reading this column right now or laugh all the way through it. But I'm not being funny; I'm serious, and I guess I'm even pretty depressed.

It's kind of scary. While people who are older than I may not understand these feelings now, I can't help but believe that once in their lives they felt as I do now. And I'm sure that many other people who have recently left the relative security of college life and entered the work world will agree.

Leaving college is what started all these feelings, anyway. Four years at Michigan State University was living away from home more than leaving home. It was always viewed as a temporary thing. At Thanksgiving and Christmas, during class breaks and long weekends, there was always someplace to go.

Mom still made chocolate chip cookies to take back up to school. There was still a place to store all of the worldly belongings that didn't fit in the college dorm room. There was still a roommate who was going through the same classes, the same work schedule, the same emotional changes. The roommate ended up more like a sister than anything else, and the feeling of home continued.

Off the Walls

Getting back to normalcy

By NANCY WALLS SMITH

There is one topic on which I have yet to find even a paragraph in the tons of literature child rearing. That is, once you have your house child-proofed for a few years how do you go about unchildproofing it? It has been more than four years since I have had anything on my end-table or coffee table. No knick-knacks or bric-a-brac. Not even an ash tray. It's all really quite bleak.

My main problem is that now that my kids have reached an age where I can trust them (sort of) not to make mayhem of my miniatures, I've completely forgotten what it was I once used to decorate my tables. It seems as if they've been barren ever since we bought them.

Somewhere in a neglected closet or atop a high shelf, there's probably a cheery centerpiece unrecognizable through layers of dust, or perhaps a lovely candy dish that I'm now using to store buttons, bangles or beads.

I'M ALSO beginning to wonder just when you take safety locks off cabinet doors. Those little children figured out the mechanics of those little protectors long ago. I'm the only one in the family who still has those doors and drawers. Of course, once the locks are taken off, I'll have to learn to open my cabinets unencumbered all over again. I know I'll be reaching for a latch that isn't there several months after the fact. I'm not too swift when it comes to adapting to change.

I suppose it's about time I started storing things in my cabinets under the sinks. The boys can practically scale bare walls, so there's really no reason to refrain from using the storage that's available

economic pressures for these groups. And unless Farmington wants to become a community strictly for the middle-age, middle to upper income families, the variety of individuals who make up this community will be forced by economic pressure to leave.

Obviously this alternative is sought by a small number of residents. They probably like meat and potatoes every night too. However most of our ancestors and some of us left other parts of the world because the homogeneous quality of many nations forced economic hardship and sterile governments on those who dissented.

THIS COLUMN may appear in future issues, but I'm moving to another paper in the company. I'll be reading the paper, talking to friends and relatives in Farmington, however, and keeping an eye and an ear out for what's happening here.

I hope to read that the board of education takes advantage of the new state law to come out of the dark ages and teach birth control. I hope to read that the new senior citizen project in Farmington is a huge success and the first of several public responses to the needs of senior citizens.

Most of all I hope to see Farmington become the kind of community where anyone, regardless of race or economic condition, can feel comfortable.

As a white, middle class adolescent, Farmington offered me a wonderful place to mature—to learn about the world. Hopefully this community will offer the same opportunity to other adolescents who may not be as lucky as I was.



"Around the edge

by Jackie Klein

The heavens hold panic

Where did you go on your summer vacation? Did you jet to Bermuda, Hawaii or the Greek Islands? I took a train to Chicago.

That in itself will never make travel history. What turns me on is that the wheels on my mode of transportation never left the ground.

It's not that I'm afraid of flying. It's the crashing that bothers me. In fact, I start throwing up while I'm packing for a plane trip.

Besides this, trains are usually on time. I have found planes to be much more unpredictable.

I'll never forget when we flew to Las Vegas. If I had gambled the plane wouldn't be on time. I could have made a killing before ever seeing the inside of a casino.

The 747 was scheduled to take off from Metropolitan Airport at 10:30 a.m. That meant waking up at 7 a.m. to reach the airport at 9 a.m. to discover the aircraft would be four hours late.

We learned our plane was fogged out in Delaware. Anyone who would go to Delaware deserves to be stuck there.

...to make amends at the terminal, the airlines treated passengers to cocktails. The idea was to get us all stoned so we could fly off the ground without the plane.

WHEN IT finally arrived, the plane had to be serviced. It took so long the big bird could have been completely redecorated. And nobody told us we'd be stopping in Chicago to pick up passengers.

Just when you need a cigarette the most, the "no smoking" sign flashes on and the cheerful stewardess welcomes you aboard. In the same patronizing voice she tells you, "In the unlikely event the cabin loses pres-

sure, apply the oxygen mask provided for you overhead, relax and breathe normally."

The plane wasn't even off the ground yet and already I wasn't breathing normally. In fact, I was turning blue.

Maybe I shouldn't have mixed Dramamine with vodka and tonic. Or it might have been the Valium.

In case you forget to bring a book, you can read about 100 simple ways to put on a life preserver, apply oxygen or use 17 dandy escape hatches in case of emergency.

If that doesn't relax you, your friendly captain will shake your Dramamine and make you swallow your chewing gum when he informs you of fascinating details.

"We are now flying at an altitude of 40,000 feet, our speed is 700 miles an hour and the air temperature is 47 degrees," he chants through the loudspeaker.

I'M FEELING like the temperature inside the plane is 110 degrees and my blood pressure is 200 over 300. I'm also wondering how the captain finds time to pilot the plane when he's so busy babbling over the loudspeaker.

"We'll be landing in Chicago just long enough to board passengers," he lies. He didn't mention picking up half the population of the Windy City.

In 10 minutes, the airlines can load four tons of luggage, 250 hot meals and 500 little bottles of booze. But they still haven't figured out how to get passengers on board.

After the stewardesses counted heads four times, which seems a bit superfluous considering there's not an empty seat on the plane, we're off and it's cocktail time again.

By the time we got our lunch, the plane was descending and getting ready to land. We were directed to fas-

ten our seat belts, put away our trays, push our seats forward, put out our cigarettes and look to the left to see Grand Canyon. But nobody told us what to do with our meals.

Just as I was regretting we blew our dough on an insurance policy at the airport, the stewardess chirped, "Please do not get up until all four engines have stopped." It was impossible to move with a lunch tray bobbing up and down. I figured it was better to starve than try to find the white bag.

STEWARDESSES are always too busy demonstrating the use of oxygen and telling you how to get out of the plane in case of emergency, they forget to explain what to do if you upchuck your frozen Salisbury steak. Next time I'll bring a plastic baggie or brown bag it.

We finally landed, but not before my stomach dropped. I couldn't understand why everyone was applauding when the plane was still racking down the runway. What if the brakes knocked out? Oh, how I needed a cigarette.

"Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of your captain and crew, we've enjoyed having you aboard," the stewardess cooed as the plane came to a screeching halt.

I felt we had been together so long, we were practically related to. But I didn't enjoy being aboard with a crew giving orders and a pilot who scared the life out of me everytime he opened his mouth.

To top it all off, my luggage was lost and I had to wear the same dress for three days.

As I waved goodbye to my money in Las Vegas, I vowed never to leave the ground again if I ever got home alive. That's why I took a train to Chicago this summer.



The Flip Side

by craig piechura

Is God in the bleachers?

Does God play favorites on the baseball diamond? We know He's stopped helping the Notre Dame football team.

Reggie Jackson, star outfielder and candy bar namesake, thinks the man upstairs is pulling for the prima donnas in pinstripes. He said so the other day on national TV just before the second game of the American League pennant race. (The Yankees led the game, incidentally.)

That pervasive, abrasive sports personality Howard Cosell decided to philosophically ponder with Reggie before the game itself. Howard asked Reggie a question about the bigger truth in baseball.

I asked Reggie if God was on the Yankees' side. The Yankees had won the first game handily and Howard saw that as a sign.

Reggie told Howard that the question was "a deep question with requires an answer of depth." Baseball players tend to talk that way.

So the born-again ballplayer repeated a profundity I've heard him utter before, namely that the New York Yankees are a spiritual metaphor of the scrappy, never-say-die City of New York.

New York City has a lot of problems, like the Yankees, that money hasn't been able to solve. It's big, unruly and unpleasant, says Reggie, and so are the Yanks. But, like the city, the Yankees are a proud and scrappy bunch that somehow always manages to prove its greatness to the world. (Oue the chorus).

Howard was so impressed with this athletic insight that he actually sat

his mouth for 1.3 seconds. Almost at a loss for words, Howard quickly recovered his Roget's Thesaurus and plunged forward into the fog.

ABOUT THAT TIME I decided to turn the sound off on the television set and turn on the radio to get the play-by-play from Ernie Harwell. The voice of the Tigers is announcing the championship games over national radio.

While I've already made it clear that I'm not wild about Howard Cosell, I should point out my unabashed affinity for Ernie Harwell.

I ask you, who can help but be impressed by a guy who instinctively knows the home town of every fan who ever caught a foul ball?

"A man from Mio, Mich. caught that souvenir baseball right in the bread basket."

If the New York Yankees are a metaphor for the Big Apple and are aided by divine intervention, does that mean God considers Detroit a fifth-ranked priority? Can Coleman Young's connections with Jimmy Carter improve this situation?

At one time the Tigers were one of the best metaphors going.

You know the name. The city of Detroit pulled itself up from the ashes of the '67 riot (or rebellion) in 1968 and black and white citizens united in rejoicing over the Tigers' victory.

The only problem is that the metaphor was short-lived. Blacks and whites stopped embracing and the Tigers started losing. At present, both the city and the team claim to be "rebuilding" for the future.

IN SPITE OF the overwhelming displeasure over the installation of plastic blue seats in Tiger Stadium, the fans should have a few occasions to cheer next year.

For one thing, we can feel better about the fact that Ralph Houk, ex-manager, will be catching trout next year instead of flak from the fans.

Unlike most of the bleacher bums, I didn't hate Mr. Houk. I just thought that he displayed overabundant confidence in his fellow man—especially his fellow pitchers.

The Tiger pitching staff must've had something on Ralph Houk. I think that every time Ralph trotted out to the mound in the seventh inning when young Dave Rozema was in trouble, the pitcher threatened to reveal some deep, dark secret of Houk's personal life. Houk would invariably leave Rozema in the game and the opposing team would clobber him all the way home to Belleville.

Ralph's other problem was that he didn't know how to argue with an umpire. Fans don't go for that kicking in the dirt. They want to see finger-shaking, cap-throwing and all-out temper tantrums. Hopefully, Les Moss, the new manager, will rant and rave like he means it.

There are those who say the Tigers need another center fielder to rotate with Ron LeFlore. There are those who say they need another reliable starting pitcher and a reliever to relieve John Hiller. They're wrong. What the Tigers need more than ever is a good, solid metaphor.

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