

Student deserves praise for taking a stand

Democracy is meant to be used — not abused. In the last three weeks we've seen two cases of abuse and only one of use.

On June 1, North Farmington students ran wild on campus, leaving behind more than \$3,000 of vandalism in their trail. On June 9, only 805 registered voters — 1.6 percent — showed up to cast ballots in the school board election.

On June 11, North Farmington graduating senior Tom Steuber delivered a speech chastising the educational system and lifestyle in suburban America. Yet, it was Steuber who was the recipient of boss and criticism from peers and adults.

We believe it is Steuber who should be lauded for his conduct. He has shown a spirit which is import-

ant to the preservation of our democratic system.

We strongly disagree with Assistant Superintendent Lynn Nutter who labeled Steuber's conduct as "a sad state of affairs that one individual uses the public arena for that type of speech."

For too many years, graduation speeches have been something over which to yawn.

Steuber used his right to free speech to make an important point. He cared enough to challenge the system with the knowledge that he would be criticized.

FAR TOO MANY persons are misguided in the belief that once they move to the suburbs their problems have ended. But Farmington/Farmington

Hills does have its problems. The educational system is far from perfect, and residents do need to dedicate more time to their community.

Residents should heed Steuber's words. "Here we are in 1980 sitting in our suburban houses worrying about ourselves, caught up with material possessions. We still have people starving, people living in the streets."

But it's little wonder that Steuber is the exception, rather than the norm among young persons.

Youth are prone to imitate adult actions, even though at times in the extreme. But we hardly can hold youth accountable when we haven't given them a palatable model to follow.

Apathy runs rampant in this community. In elec-

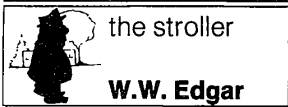
tion after election percentages of participating voters hit new lows. Everybody has an excuse — too busy, my vote doesn't count, the politicians are crooks — you name it and residents have an excuse.

But when you get right down to the nitty-gritty, many residents just don't give a damn.

That's one of the reasons that the Farmington School District will fork over \$40,000 for vandalism throughout the school district this year and little will be said.

We can only hope that in the future more youths will follow Steuber's example rather than the students who tore apart their schools and the more than 40,000 residents who neglected to vote.

Steve Barnaby



the stroller

W.W. Edgar

Lowly garage now up front

In this dizzy whirl of life, little attention has been paid to the fact that the location of the family garage has played a leading role in our lifestyles.

Once shunted to the rear of the family plot and oftentimes bordering on an alley between the old-time barns and the garbage cans, it now has moved up front and has become a factor in the appearance of our modern homes.

If you chance to drive through any of our modern subdivisions, you will note that the garage is the first thing you notice when looking at the newer homes. And it has taken the play away from the front entrance to the most expensive residences. It wasn't always that way.

AT ONE TIME — and not too long ago — the garage not only was shunted to the back of the family plot, but it became a catch-all for all the discarded things in the home, and oftentimes when peering inside one would have thought it had been struck by a bolt of lightning.

This was only natural as the garage had taken the place of the barn when horses were still in style. Then, with the coming of the automobile — Henry Ford's old "Tin Lizzie" — the horses gave way to the new-fangled contraption used for transportation.

That was the start of the great switch. It soon became apparent that when the automobile was sheltered in the garage, it faced an alley and there seldom was sufficient room to make a turn when headed into the traffic lane.

So something had to be done. The alleys couldn't be widened and the garage couldn't be placed nearer to the back of the house. There still wouldn't be sufficient room to make a turn without crossing the neighbor's lot line.

There was only one move. Just reverse the order of things and place the garage up front. It sounded rather odd when first conceived. But the move was made. And it is safer for people arriving home late at night.

THE GARAGE was given a prominent place on the main street. What's more, it was given a new dress for appearance and even the interior was given a new look.

Now instead of being a horrible looking catch-all, it became an important part of the residence. It was just about this time that peg board came on the market and it became a useful item in changing the appearance of the garage's interior.

Take a look at the modern garage and you'll find a great use of peg board, with its hangers row on row. On these rows are hung the garden tools, and other things that in the old days were thrown into a corner.

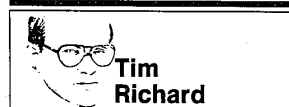
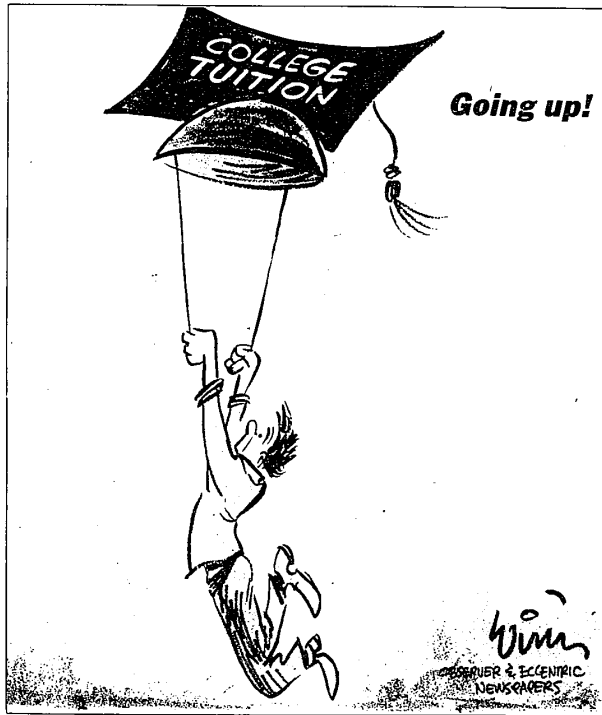
As an integral part of the home, the garage now ranks high on the list when plans are made for a new residence. Sometimes living quarters are built above them.

AND SPEAKING of the part a garage plays in our home life today, The Stroller can't help recalling an experience he had when he and his bride moved out to what was then called "the country."

Came her birthday and he surprised her with a new Oldsmobile. She was thrilled until we arrived home. Then, to our amazement, the new car was too long for the garage and it had to stand outside.

The problem was solved by building an addition on the garage and now it is almost as large as our home.

So the garage really has played a prominent part in our changing lifestyle. Moving from the alley to the main street was quite a jump.



Tim Richard

An amazing mental tool

Here in suburbia, the land that Henry Ford made possible with the first practical automobile, we are acutely conscious of technological invention.

We know about internal combustion engines, air conditioning, computers, plastics and the rest.

Now think about the great intellectual inventions — just plain ideas which changed the course of civilization.

The 26-letter alphabet will be one of the first nominees. It's based on picture writing, of course, but is so far advanced from picture writing that the alphabet ranks as an immense intellectual tool. The inventor's name is lost in history's mists.

THE INVENTOR of the decimal system of counting is some kind of intellectual champion. Imagine what it would be like to write out the stresses on the Mackinac Straits Bridge or the Detroit Plaza in Roman numerals, where it might take three or four characters to form a single digit.

In the same league are some great intellectual discoveries.

Only in the last few centuries, for example, have we known that blood is pumped by the heart, circulates throughout the body and comes back.

The law of gravity. The notion that the earth revolves around the sun and is not the center of the universe. The atomic system of chemistry. These discoveries are of such recent vintage that we know the men responsible — Isaac Newton, Nicholas Copernicus, John Dalton.

They have revolutionized the way we look at the universe and expanded our understanding of it many times.

FOR MY OWN candidate for a great intellectual invention, you need look no further than the "help wanted" section of the classified ads.

But you'll never guess, so I'll tell you. It's the double-entry system of bookkeeping — the basis of modern accounting.

Accounting is so boring and such an everyday thing that you may not think of it as a stunning intellectual invention. I have checked encyclopedia entries on the subject and found no name of an inventor. Somewhere I heard that it was concocted by Italian merchants during the Renaissance, but that tale is unverified. Accounting texts never get into history, but treat the subject like Topsy — fully grown and never born.

Without double entry bookkeeping, a business would be reduced to looking at the cash drawer at the end of the day and counting to see if there is more or less than at dawn.

ACCOUNTING gives us two kinds of charts — income (profit-loss) statements and position (assets-equities) statements.

Every transaction is entered twice. A sale is chalked up as "revenue" and as an addition to "cash" or whatever the merchant accepts in trade.

There is a method of adjusting income downward as equipment wears out. It's known as "depreciation." It's not just a tax deduction but a useful tool for telling a business that its equipment is wearing out and the cost must be recovered.

Modern business, modern government, modern foundations, modern unions — even many modern households — use the double-entry system of bookkeeping.

A reactionary who really wanted to cripple government would ask not just for tax slashes but for abolition of double-entry accounting. Civilization would collapse without it.

A philosopher once said we are all pygmies standing on the shoulders of giants. I wonder if accountants themselves, as they prepare long gray charts on cash flows and receivables, ever stop to think about what an incredible intellectual tool they are using.

In search of the perfect car

OK, so I went ahead and did it — bought a car, that is.

Regular readers will remember that for the last two years I've been contemplating the purchase of the perfect auto — not an easy task these days.

Occasionally, I would dash off a column chronicling this minor saga which, I found more often than not, would get me in trouble with one group or another.

Americans have strong emotional ties to their automobiles and, these days, to everyone else's. Purchasing a car has become something of a patriotic dilemma.

Once I mentioned that I seriously was thinking of buying a big, American gas guzzler. Everybody but George Romney called to remind me that such a purchase was out of line with this country's policy of energy independence.

For a time I was swayed.

A small, fuel efficient foreign job would be nice, I mused.

Forget it, I was told.

"You've got to buy an American car, Barnaby. Thousands of Americans are being put out of work because of clods like you who buy foreign cars."

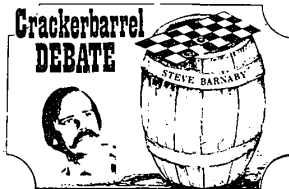
I was less than enthused to inform this faction that the only two cars I ever owned were a Toyota and a Volkswagen.

AT ANOTHER POINT, I was hooked on the feell-sorry-for-Chrysler kick. It seemed like the only patriotic thing to do.

How about a Challenger, I thought? It's small, fuel efficient and sold by the financially mangled car company.

No good, I curtly was informed.

Challengers are really a foreign-made auto. I would have to do better than that.



Curses.

While lamenting Chrysler's fate, I noted that its future was dependent on the development of its front-wheel drive car which had yet to appear on the market.

Boy, did I take it on that one. Of course, I meant the K cars, Reliant and Aries, which Chrysler Chairman Lee Iacocca has been talking about for some time.

Countless readers were quick to inform me that Chrysler already marketed a front-wheel drive auto — Omni/ Horizon.

What a joy to feel stupid.

It just goes to show you that a journalist doesn't always say what he means. In short, I misquoted myself.

AT ANY RATE a few weeks back I cast in my lot with an ever-dwindling number of consumers and plunked down the cash for an auto.

I had little choice in the matter. My six-year-old Toyota informed me it had retired.

What kind did I buy? Forget it. I want a little peace of mind to enjoy my purchase.