

editorial opinion



Caveat emptor, ladies

The lazy evening conversation around our kitchen table is often about men. When my daughter's friends gather, they like to discuss the men they're dating—what they like about them and what they don't.

Many of their friends are getting married and this often leads to talk that is enlightening. One of their prime concerns is for friends who expect to bring about changes in their future spouses. Too many times these young women at the table have heard my old truism "never marry with the idea of changing someone."

I USUALLY FOLLOW this with another classic cliché, "what you see is what you get," and then shut up and listen.

Sure, some behavioral modifications take place after marriage. But, radical changes? Don't bet on it.

Alcoholics don't suddenly and permanently climb on the wagon, complainers don't turn into long-suffering angels and indolents seldom become overnight eager beavers. Marriage is neither a cure-all for mental or physical ills nor a road to reformation. It is a day-to-day, living situation with a mixed bag of goods.

If you don't like the way he slurps his coffee and burps before marriage, you'll like it a whole lot less when exposed to it seven days a week, year after year.

The man who has a vague suspicion he is marrying a woman who doesn't have the same respect for a dollar that he does, should square off before, not after the wedding.

Last semester one of the projects in Nancy Anti-

del's English composition classes at the OCC Orchard Ridge campus, was to write marriage contracts. A good idea, because it helps clarify expectations.

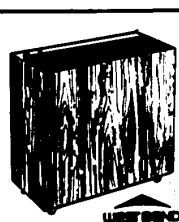
If it sounds too businesslike, then consider that marriage is, in truth, a business partnership with the prospect of some wonderful bonuses: if approached with care and adequate preparation.

In other centuries, marital duties and obligations were clear and readily understood by everyone. They varied some from culture to culture, but within each, there were rules. The man was the head of the household and the breadwinner. He made the decisions. The wife was responsible for the home and the care of the children. Most of us know these. Few things were written down except financial arrangements when there was a dowry involved.

IN CERTAIN Middle East cultures, for instance, the bride was expected to take her husband's faith. If their religious backgrounds differed. No problem. It was an accepted fact. If he was Roman Catholic and he was Orthodox, she converted.

Not so simple anymore. Today's young people are not forced by society to accept such dictates. They have freedom of choice. From the marital partner to the kind of home atmosphere they intend to create.

And facetious as it may sound, a few things understood before the ceremony from table manners to who spends the money, could help create the partnership that can become the rewards of a lasting partnership.



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"Around the edge" by Jackie Klein

The truth about Ma Bell

Martha Mitchell would have a field day in Southfield where the hand that rocks the cradle belongs to Ma Bell who caters to gabbers in record numbers.

Did you know Southfield, population 69,285, has 129 phones for every 100 residents and the city ranks third among 1,400 major cities in 171 countries phonetically speaking? Before you get carried away, let me remind you that in January 1973, it was reported Southfield, with 84,592 yakking instruments, gained the distinction of being one of only two cities in the world with more telephones than people.

That was the year I vowed not to install the 84,593rd despite our teenager demanding, "Why don't you get your own telephone so you won't have to wait for me to finish talking?"

I waited while Lisa called "Dial a Smile," "Dial a Prayer," and time or

weather service when she ran out of kids "Dial a Smile's" line was usually busy, which was just as well when they gave you knee-slappers like, "Knock, knock. Who's there? Pocket. Pocket who? Pocket in the pocket. Pocket."

THERE WERE times I even tried "Dial a Prayer" to see if some heavenly being could show me the way to cure Lisa of telephonic. But there was no answer.

I can forget about using the phone between 7:15 and 7:40 in the morning. That's when Lisa calls time service 25 times because she refuses to wear a watch and every clock in the house does its own thing.

Lisa used to dial a number and get a recording called "Goldiggers Barn." A sexy voice would purr, "We have girls size 46. We're all out of 44s. You all come down now." Thankfully

that service has been phased out. With my luck, if I got an obscene phone call, mine would be the wrong number.

I remember back in 1973 when our grandson was eight months old and lived in Ypsilanti, it cost us about \$80 a month so doing Aunt Lisa could inform us Dylan said something that sounded like "ga ga" on the phone.

Ma Bell tells us many affluent homes in Southfield have more than one phone—maybe two, three or even four. Kids in this city may not be born with silver spoons in their mouths, but I'm convinced they came into this world with receivers attached to their ears and over-sized dialing fingers.

JUST TURN to any page in the phone book. You'll see "Lisa Smith," and just underneath, "Karen, Keith, Kathy, Kevin and Kelly," or simply, "children's telephone."

I wonder what happens when Karen is doing homework over the phone with her girlfriends and Kelly, Keith, Kathy and Kevin are all waiting to make calls. Maybe they each have a telephone of their own.

I'm not being critical, you understand. I must admit we finally succumbed to Lisa's telephonic and her name now appears under my husband's in the phone book.

I haven't helped matters that much because my spouse, who claims to hate that "instrument of torture," makes an average of 15 business calls a night. I've thought of sending out smoke signals when I want to reach a friend who complains she never hears from me.

The only time I get to use the phone is when a long-winded talker calls at exactly 6 p.m. and coo, "I do hope I'm not disturbing your dinner." That kind doesn't give you a chance to say the soup is boiling over.

Another one I love is the 7 a.m. caller with a voice that purrs, "Would you care to donate blood for our organization?"

"No thank you," I yawn, "but I could use a withdrawal at this hour of the morning."

All in all, Ma Bell may be the mother of the nation to Martha Mitchell and 89,285 residents of Southfield. But to me, the powerful monarch of the yak, yak society is nothing but a phoney drageeing.

READERS FORUM

Northwestern only practical answer

Editor:

Though disagreeing with those opposing the completion of the long planned and necessary continuation of Northwestern Highway, I do have real respect for the forthright way in which they are registering their objections. Indeed, it is citizen involvement such as this that makes the American system work as well as it does.

However, as part of the undoubted majority of silent opinion on this important local question, I have rather depended upon others to champion the cause of ultimate construction. But now it appears timely to voice our majority opinion to give renewed support to those who must make the ultimate decision.

Those traveling beyond the present dead-end terminus of Northwestern Highway KNOW that something MUST be done. In view of existing legal, fiscal and environmental considerations, no real practical alternatives have been suggested to alleviate the acknowledged congestion.

Doing nothing, though least expensive, is intolerable.

Widening existing main roads requires removal of numerous roadside trees and 100 per cent financing by state and local taxpayers—an impossible burden.

The extension, while understandably objectionable to those who acquired property influenced by the well-established developing thoroughfare, is the only practical answer. It WILL fulfill existing legal contract obligations. It IS eligible for financing by return of federal funds. It CAN be implemented in the reasonable future.

A well-defined high volume, high speed artery to the rapidly developing northwesterly portion of Oakland County is an obvious necessity. And, until a viable alternate is proposed, the long time well considered extension of Northwestern Highway appears to be the least objectionable of the limited alternatives available.

DAVID A. BRADBURY
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