

editorial opinion

Great commoner needs insomniacs' support

Aw, c'mon guys, who do you think you're kidding?

I've about had it with television management pogues—national and local, alike.

This week's wrath goes out to the media bureaucrats at Channel 4 who have decided to drop Tom Snyder's early morning television show "Tomorrow." To create greater viewer interest, they plan on running (you guessed it) old movies instead.

How imaginative.

Now, like most Americans, I've become addicted to certain programs on the old boob tube. My problem is that just about the time I get hooked on one program or another, some one decides the program doesn't draw enough of an audience, so off it goes.

Admittedly, my taste isn't always melded in with the American norm. That goes without saying if I admit to watching Snyder, one of the stranger personalities gracing the tube.

Some of my old TV favorites are those of which you've probably never heard—"Slattery's People," "The Senator," and "Richard Boone's Repertoire Playhouse."

NOW REALLY, who counts how many persons are awake at 1 a.m. when Snyder creeps onto the tube?

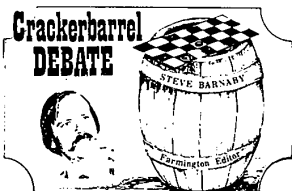
Imagine having your phone ring at 1 a.m. and having some sweet voice ask what you were doing. I'll bet I wouldn't say I was watching television. Besides, I've been known to do more than one thing at a time.

Actually, I think it's all a plot downtown at WWJ headquarters. With our luck, we'll get to see Pete Waldmeir's dream fulfilled. Now, I'll be the first to admit that Waldmeir is a top-notch columnist, but I couldn't take any more than a week of Waldmeir interviewing hiszonore Coleman Young and speculations about what Maureen Keane, Orville Hubbard's woman, is doing now that Dearborn's eternal mayor actually is stepping down. I don't think Pete could take either.

No wonder the Detroit News has swapped television stations with the Washington Post. Who would want to be responsible for that mess? Like I say, Waldmeir's fine on paper, but what a drag on the tube.

At any rate, the management over at 4 is known for such "wise" decisions.

Channel 4 also pre-empted the quarterly "Week-



end" program which is carried by Channel 50 instead.

But back to Snyder. Now here's a guy who is the insomniac's friend. All of us who watch him know what special grace he offers.

Dedicated fans know that underneath those manicured nails, tailored suits and molded hairdo is a real midwestern hick—just like you and me. I mean, how can you think a guy is really suave when he sits in a chair obviously too small for his legs which are draped over the chair's arms?

I mean you've got to like a guy who over national television makes the classic remark of all times "different face, same breath." You know he's got the common touch.

The final proof that he is one of us came when he fessed up to being a close friend of good old Lou Gordon, with whom we all carried on a love-hate relationship through the years.

Actually, I suppose, all this disgruntlement on my part is due to the fact that I once aspired to being a talk show host in earlier days, having majored in broadcast journalism at Wayne State. So Snyder is my way of fulfilling that Walter Mitty dream.

EARLY IN the morning, after sitting through a tedious and terribly boring council meeting, I can come home, kick off my shoes, break open a diet pop and watch the great commoner do his thing.

So for you folks who share the same love for good old Tom, be sure to complain to the "brains" over at Channel 4 before Jan. 2. Let them know that there are thousands of us around who would rather watch Snyder hug a teddy bear than Wallace Beery kiss a pelican.



Hors d'oeuvres by Lynn Orr Why the hopscotch?

Why did former state police director Col. George Halverson resign his post as director of the Farmington Hills police after only four months on the job?

Back in August, it was pretty easy to take Halverson at his word. He'd gotten himself in another rapid-pace rut and needed an extended vacation, he said. I was inclined to accept that at face value.

There was speculation then that the problems among the Farmington Hills troops were too much even for a former top dog in the state, but Halverson and City Mgr. George Majors laid those rumors to rest rather easily—at least for most of us.

Last week, however, the news broke that Halverson is seeking the top spot among Warren cops just four months after his Hills resignation. True, he took his vacation, and he's apparently been looking back. But the news that he was out job hunting set off renewed speculation about why he left the Hills in the first place.

When contacted at home last week, Halverson simply said he'd talked to Warren officials about the job. Majors said last week that maybe the timing was bad for the Hills job, that Halverson simply hadn't taken the rest he needed.

Majors has nothing but praise for Halverson and his accomplishments in his short stay at Eleven Mile and Orchard Lake Road.

ALL PLAUSIBLE. But Hills tongues still are wagging.

One plus for Halverson's story is that one certainly couldn't expect that Warren would be an easier town for a police chief. The former Warren police commissioner was fired by the mayor last month, which certainly can't make the job look too tempting for someone out to avoid another hotbed of trouble.

Warren's bigger, of course, but Halverson didn't strike me as someone looking for a bigger pond. If he does get the Warren job, he'll have to move

there, which was one of the problems in the Hills. He couldn't find the appropriate house, he said, which is why he commuted from Okemos for his four-month tenure.

The commute between Okemos and Warren looks like a long stretch to me. Lots of questions here, but apparently no answers which curb speculation both in the press and among Hills police officers.

The patrolmen now are adjusting to the third director this year, former Oakland County Under Sheriff John Nichols, a colorful figure in his own right.

As former Detroit police commissioner, Nichols is used to dealing with problems, so one hopes he can manage any that come up in the Hills. After all, it's hard to believe a quiet little community like Farmington Hills could house a hotbed of controversy, excluding senior citizen housing. That's what the residents think anyway.

Tinkering around It's a question of attitude

by LOUISE OKRUTSKY

After attending a reception in the Hills the other week I've confirmed what I knew all along. It'll be a long time before we quit discussing senior citizens' housing, low cost housing and mid-rise apartments in town. If you're sick of the subject now, wait a year and maybe, just maybe, you'll have relief.

I've suspected that it's more than an attitude toward seniors, blacks and mid-rise that's at work here. There's an attitude toward the city itself that's emerging from the foggy recesses of the heart.

Now, anyone with two eyes and a fundamental reading ability will know that I privately clapped my hands and grinned a giant grin when the council approved RCE and RCE-1.

After a year of covering the story, it's more than just nice to see an outcome you can privately agree with. It stresses privately because out there in public, on page 1A, I'm not allowed the luxury of expressing a private opinion. And I don't think I should.

WHILE ADMITTING sympathy for senior citizens' housing, I'll skip over the obvious comments about observing some feeling toward the older residents which borders on a combination of fear and a lack of understanding. (The sure I like old people but not in my backyard' feeling does exist.)

but a goodly percentage of those who oppose the zoning amendments

are residents who built nice homes in what they perceived to be good neighborhoods and are unwilling to see that area change.

I can understand that people are concerned about a change that will affect their home and their family. Changes like that hit close to the heart. An issue like that will be fraught with emotional response.

Couple that with the emotions engendered by the thought of mom and dad growing old together or alone and you have the ingredients for a gut level controversy.

In addition to dealing with their feelings toward their neighborhood and their elders, the issue demands that residents take a look at the future of their city. In a city that can attract corporate types who will move out in a few years, thinking about the future can just add fuel to the fire.

Residents who have determined that they will stay on in the Hills have expressed concern about the changes the future inevitably brings.

BUT WHILE looking at the future of the city with mid-rises on the horizon, literally and figuratively, there are these residents who have decided to adopt a static view of the years to come.

Low income housing may not be needed because it's obvious that all the low income residents are going to stay in the south end, goes the static

view. Out of sight, out of mind, out of the mainstream.

Since there won't be an increase of the residents in that side of town, there won't be any need to consider housing.

Since most of the residents in the Hills will be able to afford houses, more apartments won't be needed either, the argument continues.

And of course, if there was a provision for mid-rise apartments, you'd have to contend with the specter of Southfield. Southfield, in its early days, made just about every planning mistake known to man and might have even invented a few extra. Seeing another city's mistakes doesn't mean that it will automatically happen here if mid-rises do come to town. Realizing another's mistake in using what might be an affective addition to a city doesn't necessarily mean that tool is forever off limits.

I KNOW that I'll be branded a heretic for suggesting this, but someday as this city grows in adults and dwindles in children, it will be forced to take a look at providing for the older adults who have made this town their home. Where will you build for them?

This town will need mid-rises someday.

The argument that the city should remain as it is now is rhetoric in support of a static town. The argument that the city should cling to the status quo is one that will give the Hills an unbalanced population consisting of middle and upper middle class families with two or three school age children. Who else would invest the time and money in a subdivision home? Certainly not a single person or an older couple with grown children.

There's nothing wrong with encouraging families to settle here. But what makes a community alive? Is it a static version of how things should be? Should things always be the same? Will the population always be the same?

A real community is a mix of different types of people of different ages, incomes and backgrounds. That's what offers a certain richness to life and gives children an opportunity to understand something beyond what they believe is their family's position in the community.

TELLING A COMMUNITY to stay the same is the same as telling a person never to change. That's laying the groundwork for boredom and shallowness.

An obsession with having the old neighborhood stay the same always is unrealistic. It's a question that goes beyond mid-rise housing and into the hearts and minds of the residents.

Only teenagers want to stay young forever. True adults accept the change in life with grace and understanding. Some really gifted souls even learn to relish it.

It's about time the Hills grew out of its adolescence in its attitudes toward itself.

"Between the lines"

by Carl Stoddard

Sex and married rabbits

I was in my early teens when I got my first sex education class.

We lived in the country at that time and we raised a few rabbits. My father took me back to see the rabbits in their hutch one day and pointed out that their activity that day was for more than fun. People do the same thing, he said, and that's how they make babies.

Additional details on the subject were supplied by friends and other assorted sources that make up the American sex education system.

Obviously not everyone learns this delicate but important subject in the same manner. Some people learn in X-rated movie theaters. Others learn from discussions with enlightened parents. For still others, the lessons may be garnered from on-the-job training.

It would be nice to expect parents to do the proper job of teaching this subject. But some parents are unwilling or unable to adequately cope with the subject. So the task has been given to the schools, by default.

LAST WEDNESDAY, Gov. Milliken signed a bill into law which permits the teaching of birth control in the schools. The law ends Michigan's rather dubious distinction as one of only two states that has prohibited birth control education. The other state is Louisiana.

The law should bring a more rational approach to the teaching of human sexual relations. No longer will teachers be required to avoid "an essential part of a student's education."

Sponsored by Rep. Barbara-Rose Collins of Detroit, the law lifts Michigan's 58-year-old ban against teaching contraception in public schools. But it does not require that the subject be taught and the local school district will still have the final word on the subject.

The school board will be able to decide what information should be included in health and sex education courses. Parents may also request that their children be excused from such classes without loss of credit or any other penalty.

An advisory board, under the law, must be established to review the sex education program and classroom materials. This advisory board will consist of parents, students, educators and other members of the community.

Be advised, too, that teachers cannot discuss abortion and cannot dispense birth control drugs or devices to students.

Undoubtedly, many parents will be

shocked to realize that birth control is even considered a topic of discussion in school. Perhaps, in the eyes of these parents, the subject is unnecessary for their child. That may be so. But it doesn't alter the fact that the number of teenage sexual experiences and

pregnancies have increased in recent years.

Teaching birth control in the schools may not be the best possible answer to the problem, but it is better than ignoring the subject or looking for answers in a rabbit hutch.

from our readers

Nardineer defines senior citizen planned complex

Editor:

To set the record straight and so that it may not go too far astray, the Nardineers are still working toward their Senior citizen apartment complex at the rear of the Nardin Park Church. There are many contingencies to overcome before we can be success-

ful. The greatest of these is to get the congregation of the church to grant the sale of the property for the erection of a senior citizen housing complex.

The Methodist Central Commission also has to concur for this sale to be

consummated. Also, the property must be re-zoned by the city council of Farmington Hills.

The Nardineers are very much concerned in seeing that this program be brought to a happy and successful conclusion. Contrary to all rumors, the building will only be two stories high.

If completed, it will be occupied by senior citizens only, and it will not be subsidized housing.

WILLIAM TWIGG,
Nardineer and
a senior citizen
since 1958

She thanks plumbers

Editor:

There has been many a joke about the expense of plumbers these days, so you can imagine the mind boggling experience of being invaded by 10 of them.

I had been having a problem with my sewer backing up for several years. The last time the roots were cleaned out, I was informed the tiles were caving in and the whole line needed replacing.

I had talked with Jay Harrison, the Farmington Building Inspector, about my dilemma. He in turn informed Mr. Lee Rutliff of the Western Wayne Plumbing Contractors Association. You see, these men are members of that organization, and once a year, they donate their labor, materials and expertise to someone in need.

They had looked at half a dozen homes in the Farmington area, and Lee said they picked ours because it needed the most work. They dug up the sewer, put in steel lines, replaced a toilet, some water lines, installed my faucets throughout the house and did any other plumbing needs they could find.

WHENEVER I tell people about these men from the Western Wayne

Plumbing Contracting Association, they all say, "I never heard of such a thing." Well neither had I, but let me tell you, it sure renewed my faith in the goodness of our fellow man.

May God bless those plumbers. God has surely blessed me and my family by sending them. May you readers be aware that our world is filled with many wonderful people.

JOYCE MARTELL,
Farmington

Orchard Ridge drive ban opposed by resident

Editor:

Residents of Farmington Hills are no longer allowed to drive through Orchard Ridge campus.

Is this private or public property? Isn't this a public road paid for with our tax money?

If we can't use the Orchard Ridge campus, can't something be done now to reduce the taxes being levied against us to support it?

LAWRENCE DOYLE,
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READERS' FORUM

Letters must be original copies and contain the signature and address of the sender.

Limit letters to 300 words.

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