

editorial opinion

Take a trip to paradise

Willoughby Wink groaned as he thumbed through the department store catalogue. Here it was Nov. 15 and Christmas was quickly sneaking up on him.

But this year, Willoughby vowed, he was going to get his shopping done early.

"None of these last minute desperation shopping sprees for me," he exclaimed to no one in particular.

"Say, Willoughby, you should try one of these new gargantuan shopping centers sprouting up around the suburbs. They've got just about any store you could think of," said one of the friendly patrons, at the local pub which Willoughby commonly hung his hat.

"I hate shopping centers," retorted Willoughby. "I'm going to use my handy dandy catalogue and avoid that mass of humanity who flock to shopping centers."

"Oh no, you don't want to do that. You've got to experience one of these places to believe them. They are regaled with theaters, restaurants, fountains, plexi-glass elevators and mono-rails."

"WHY, THEY ARE THE SUPREME MONUMENT to suburban life," said the friend. "In years to come, archeologists will marvel at the ingenuity of the suburban mind for building such structures."

Willoughby's curiosity was piqued. He threw his catalogue into his raggedy old brown paper shopping bag (with reinforced handle, of course) and off he went to explore one of these edifices.

Driving along, he passed mile after mile of tract housing, beautifully set in subdivisions, befitting of any annoying foliage such as trees or shrubs.

"My heavens, it certainly is a long way to this place. I wonder if I'm really saving any money by having to drive this far to shop?" he wondered.

"Of course, items are probably a lot cheaper so it will all come out the same at the end," he rationalized.

Soon, he noticed a spectacular view rising above flattened landscape. There, right before his eyes was the new "Fools Paradise" Shopping Center.

The majestic structure glared in the sunlight—52 stories.

Willoughby lost his breath at such an overwhelming sight.

"Could this be a shopping center?" Willoughby thought in somewhat of a quandry. "Not even the Egyptian pyramids or the Mayan temples could equal this."

Willoughby was so impressed that he took out his Brownie camera and took a whole roll of 620 black and white film so as to have his photo album crammed full of the rather unique looking whatever it was.

Our friendly umbler drove around for at least 15 or 20 minutes marveling at the architectural wonder, and trying to find a place to park.

"My God," he exclaimed. "It looks like a giant roll of aluminum foil."

Parking his car in what the management of this grand place bragged was as large as 35 football fields, Willoughby began the long hike to the structure. All the way, he gazed upward at the structure.

Crunch.

Willoughby's neck snapped with a painful crack. "Ouch, that hurt," he said, rubbing his sore neck. Willoughby had to stop gazing upward because it pained him awfully.

After walking for 25 minutes, he reached one of the numerous doors, entered and at once noticed that the inside was even more spectacular than the outward shell.

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PERSONS roamed the cavernous lobbies which connected like a Cretan labyrinth. Standing at strategic intersections were uniformed personnel directing the traffic.

Store after store abutted, each with its own flashing sign. The smell of popcorn, Coney Island hot dogs, pretzels and mustard permeated the complex. Giant pears, draped in sparkly plastic beads, towered over the populace of this city unto itself.

C'ville district residents to vote on 5-mill renewal

Claremont School District residents will be asked to renew a five mill property tax at a Jan. 17 special election.

The board Thursday set the special election date and the placement of the tax renewal, equal to \$5 per \$1,000 of state equalized valuation.

The board said it will decide later if a recommended 2.8 mill levy, \$2.80 per \$1,000 of state equalized valuation, will also be put before the voters to help balance the budget and avoid additional program and personnel cutbacks.

If the tax increase is proposed and approved by voters, it would be the first in the district, which includes parts of Laverne, Farmington Hills and Bedford Township, in nearly nine years.

Supt. DAVID McDOWELL told the board in a budget report recently that the projected spending for the current fiscal year is expected to be \$22.00 million more than revenues.

He said deficit financing can only be

Farmington student tries home economics

Jane Andrew, of Farmington, is among 19 Adrian College students who are completing their final field training in teaching this fall.

Miss Andrew is teaching home economics at Tecumseh Junior High School.

O&E



Willoughby pushed through the crowd to see even more, but his gaze was frustrated by his stiff neck.

"I must see more of this wonder of the world," he thought. But his neck just wouldn't allow him to look any higher.

Finally, in a fit of frustration, Willoughby lay down on the artificial marble floor so he could see all the way to the top of the 52 floors.

It was a revelation. Clouds careened around the elevators and Willoughby was sure that he saw a seven-headed dragon painted on the ceiling of the 52d floor.

In somewhat of a trance, he thought he heard a harp but, alas, it was only a strain of music from the piped-in machine which continually played the same tune over and over again.

Suddenly, Willoughby was shaken from his reverie, when a boy scout troop, which was touring the capitalists' dream, stomped over his prone body.

He set out for the nearest store, hoping it would offer some safety, and at the same time provide the item for which he was shopping.

"Hello, do you have the Super Swat," Willoughby inquired of the dour looking clerk.

"I'm sorry sir, but we're all out of that item," she said, snapping her gum.

"Perhaps they would have them at one of our other stores. Just take the people mover, three miles to your left, jump on the elevator, go up 15 stories, get off the elevator, turn right at the sign which says 'Keep Moving or You'll Get Crushed,' walk down two flights of stairs and you'll bump right into it."

An hour later Willoughby arrived at his destination.

"I'm sorry sir, we're all out of that item," said another clerk who Willoughby could have sworn was the same woman who he had talked to in the first store.

"But, if you take the B elevator to the third mezzanine..."

Willoughby arrived at the next destination. He was doing better, it took him only 20 minutes.

"Sir, you only can purchase the Super Swat with the Johnny Kill Doll, his fighting tank brigade and a division-size force of little plastic soldiers plus a map of the Crimean War battlefield," said the clerk.

"And how much is that," asked a very tired Willoughby.

"All total, tax and dealers delivery charge included, it will cost you \$683.79," she replied.

Two hours later, a dazed Willoughby found his way to an exit of this rather strange place without his Super Swat. Exhausted, he leaned up against one of the towering bead covered pillars to rest before making the long trek back to his car.

For support, he pulled on one of those strands of beads and much to his utter amazement the entire structure began to deflate. Toys, clothes, pretzels, human bodies, baby strollers, escalators, elevators, telephones, movie theater seats, beds, pillows, mashed potatoes, Maurice salads and mannequins were thrown from the structure in a great gust of air.

Soon nothing was left except for a giant pile of aluminum foil.

Willoughby smiled to himself as he walked back to his car.

"I'll stick to my catalogue, thanks," he said to no one in particular.

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STEVE BARNABY, Editor
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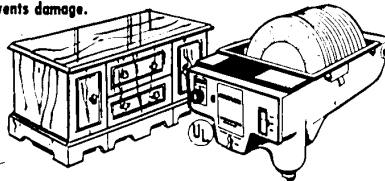
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