

Duke Making Review

DMBA Action Is Unlikely

by HOWARD KOHN
Farmington complaints

against builders have yet to penetrate the Detroit Metropolitan Builders Association

(DMBA). Several homeowners recently aired grievances alleging construction faults and repair delays in a groundswell attack of builders.

BUT THE DMBA has no plans to get involved. Thomas Duke, DMBA president and Farmington-based contractor, said he is making a personal review of the allegations leveled here.

"As far as I can tell, though, things seem to be progressing in an orderly fashion," Duke said. "The inspectors and the builders are doing their best to satisfy homeowners."

Duke said disciplinary action against builders was unlikely. Complaints have been lodged against Town & Country Building Co. of Oak Park, Cousins Construction Co. of Detroit and Ronart Building Co. of Oak Park.

Town & Country and Ronart belong to the 475-member DMBA which represents more than half the active area builders.

DMBA WAS founded in 1927 and functions primarily as a coordinating center and public relations arm of the industry. However, it does have machinery to suspend members who do not measure up to DMBA standards. But DMBA investigates less than 25 formal charges a year, and no member has ever been suspended, records show.

A spokesman said no written charges have been filed with DMBA against Town & Country or Ronart.

Mrs. Norman Evans of 28769 Rock Lodge reported the talk to Duke in February of this year about repair delays by Town & Country.

Mrs. Evans said she received no response from either Duke or the DMBA.

Mrs. Evans is asking the Department of Housing and Urban Development to investigate Town & Country. So far she has collected 26 signatures on a petition requesting the probe.

TOWN & COUNTRY had threatened Mrs. Evans with a civil suit for circulating the petition, but it has not yet filed a suit.

Ronart Building Co. has been charged with several code violations in a home owned by Mrs. Frank Smith of 25277 Hopkins (see above story).

The township building department has filed a complaint with the Department of Licensing and Regulation which could cost Ronart its license.

More than 200 Farmington citizens have signed a petition also being circulated by Mrs. Evans — demanding a review of the township building department and the building code.

THE EVANS family were plagued with slow and incomplete inspections. "Many people have been happy to sign the petition," Mrs. Evans added. "They told me this should have been done years ago."

"But several other said they doubted the township trustees would ever do anything."

Mrs. Evans said petition-signers have been particularly critical of Paul Snover, building department supervisor.

Snover was appointed in the fall of 1967 after 36 years as a mortician in Pontiac. He was appointed by the township board after passing a civil service exam.

Four Head Apartment Canvass

Four Farmington housewives have been appointed to leadership posts for the canvass of apartment buildings during the Oakland residential campaign of the 1969 Torch Drive.

Mrs. Gerald A. Young of 33300 Freedom Rd., who has worked in the last two Torch Drives, will serve as region chairman.

Division chairmen include Mrs. Dennis Phoney of 23899 Colchester, who will be responsible for Hunter's Ridge; Mrs. James Allen Langston of 22182 Hayden, who will direct solicitations in Echo Valley and Kendallwood.

Also, Mrs. Robert Colyer of 22905 Hayden, who will be responsible for apartments in the Grand River area.

This year's Torch Drive will be held Oct. 14 - Nov. 8, benefiting will be nearly 200 health and community services in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb Counties.

In addition to working in the Torch Drive, Mrs. Young is active with the Farmington Founders Festival Committee and the Jaycee Auxiliary.

She majored in English at Michigan State University, and her husband is a teacher-coach with the Farmington Public Schools. Their children are Jeff, 6, and Nancy Elizabeth, 2.

BY WYLIE GERDES

Ronart Building Co. of Oak Park Tuesday began to make repairs on a house in Independence Commons in accordance with recommendations of the Farmington Township Building Department.

The township had earlier filed a complaint with the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulation, an action which could result in the revocation of Ronart's license.

THE BUILDING department acted on complaints of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Smith of 25277 Hopkins Rd. The Smiths and the company have disagreed over repairs to be made on the house.

At the same time, an official of the developers of Independence Commons defend Ronart in the controversy. Ron Fox of Thompson-Brown Co. said subcontractors' work and the Smiths' perfectionism created the situation.

Mrs. Smith told the Enterprise and Observer repairmen are venting a dryer, relocating bathroom lighting, plastering, and wiring for an outside light.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith said poor workmanship and use of wrong materials caused them to repair many parts of the house. They attributed part of the problem to prevailing construction practices and labor shortages.

FOX agreed with the Smiths that labor and current work practices caused many of their complaints.

He noted subcontractors might not comply with a contractor's wishes when their services are in great demand, as they are now.

Other problems, however, were caused by errors in the Smiths' design and his refusal to accept current work practices, Fox said. The Thompson-Brown executive said he feels the Smiths got their money's worth on the over \$30,000 house because it could be sold for much more than \$30,000 today.

"I told him to give these guys a chance to do the best they can, then if you don't like it, you don't have to accept," Fox commented.

Only about one per cent of persons in Thompson-Brown developments are not satisfied. Fox added, but those discontented and disgruntled make more noise than the satisfied ones.

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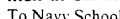
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"What a shame that these people do not learn that business is fun, that it combines the ingredients of all the better games and sports. And the ground rules change too often for it to become boring."

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To Navy School

Seaman Thomas F. Walker, USN, son of Mr. and Mrs. Foster Walker of 25594 Forestville in Farmington is attending the Navy's 18-week Fire Control Technician School at the Naval Center at Great Lakes, Ill.

Fire control involves the techniques of directing a projectile from a weapon to target over a distance of many miles. The school will provide him with the fundamentals of fire control technology and methods of compensating for natural forces which may affect the projectile's course.

Collins At Camp

Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) Cadet Douglas J. Collins, 21, son of Dr. and Mrs. Douglas Collins, of 38415 Grand River, Farmington, is attending ROTC Advanced Summer Camp through Aug. 1 at Ft. Riley, Kan. He received his B.S. from the University of Michigan this year.

In Viet Division

Hospital Corpsman 2/C Stewart J. Moyer, USN, son of Mrs. A. Lefloy Hirsch of 29085 Eastfield, Farmington, is serving with the First Medical Battalion, First Marine Division in Vietnam.

FARMINGTON ENTERPRISE AND OBSERVER, PUBLISHED WEEKLY, 33306 GRAND RIVER, FARMINGTON, MICH. 48304. PHONE 826-4400. POST OFFICE, PLYMOUTH, MICHIGAN. SUBSCRIPTION RATE: \$2.00 PER ANNUM. ADDRESS: 33306 GRAND RIVER, FARMINGTON, MICH. 48304. POSTMASTER: THIS PUBLICATION IS CLASSIFIED AS SECOND-CLASS MAIL.

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