

## editorial opinion

# Majoros responsible for negative city image

"We simply have to develop better methods of communication with the people because we know that there is no better system of ultimate reliance on the discriminating choice of the people. But they have to be informed. The first responsibility is information, is truth."

That statement by Adlai Stevenson, made in 1958, dramatically points out the major problem of Farmington Hills in 1978—lack of communication.

Relationships between the city council, the administration and the residents are in a shambles. For the last three years, the major complaint from both the council and residents has been an absence of communication from the city bureaucracy.

Ultimately, the blame rests on one person's shoulders—City Manager George Majoros. Resolution of the problem only can be solved by one body—the city council.

Last week's move by city council to pare down administrators' pay increases from seven to five per cent is the culmination of a growing concern by elected officials that the administration isn't doing the job it should be in communicating with its employees, the residents of Farmington Hills.

A VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE is what they call it in the British parliamentary system.

Those familiar with that system realize the consequences of such a vote—a change of administrative leadership.

Let's look at the record which has led up to this no confidence vote.

Continued and growing complaints have surfaced in the last few years about residents' inability to communicate with this administration.

Even former City Councilman Bob McConnell used to spend meeting after meeting haranguing Majoros over why one or another requested report hadn't been made. Sometimes the request lapsed for three weeks, sometimes it lapsed for three or four months.

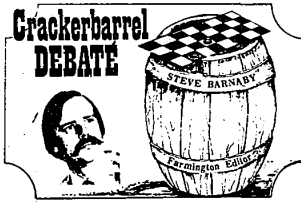
Majoros' excuse was that he would have to confer with his department heads. Majoros has time and time again abused a section of the city charter which states that the council can only communicate with city employees through the city manager.

It has been his escape clause in being responsive.

More recently, a special meeting was conducted to air complaints from residents and businessmen who have problems communicating with the Department of Public Services. This department, which has one of the most difficult jobs in the city, has been suffering from a common complaint in the Hills—bad public relations.

Whether residents' complaints be real or imagined, their concerns still aren't being answered. It's the city manager's job to see that this is done. Majoros hasn't done that.

The "no news is good news" mentality has spread throughout city hall. The controversial dust control issue never needed to be controversial. But the inadequate information mailed out to residents



by the city manager only served to fuel the fires.

Even the way the information was divulged was inadequate. Some residents who would have been directly affected by the special assessment weren't notified of one of the public hearings.

The information contained in the letter to residents contained far less information than had been requested by the city council. Because of this, councilmembers sat back in confusion with egg on their collective faces while irate residents howled about the assessment.

The primary complaint at this year's budget hearing wasn't that taxes were going up, but that residents had difficulty getting hold of the budget. The summary sheet was inadequate, excluding departmental breakdowns and proposed pay raises for administrators.

ADDING TO the frustration was that Majoros

had defied city council by submitting a sheet of administrative pay increases which exceeded a then-mandated seven per cent by almost one per cent.

Police relations has been a big headache for city residents and a colossal embarrassment for the city council. Continual complaints have been lodged about rude and impolite conduct. But the police officers can't be blamed entirely. In one year, the department experienced three changes in command.

The low morale only recently has been raised by strong leadership from Police Chief John Nichols. But even the usually gregarious Nichols strangely has been silent.

Majoros' compulsion for the low profile borders on the dangerous. Back in 1975 when a former finance director resigned under questionable circumstances, Majoros requested that the press remain quiet on the issue. Residents had a right to know of that incident.

The city manager's strong point has been his ability to hire competent administrators. Finding Parks and Recreation Division Director Doug Gaynor, Finance Director Girard Miller and Nichols have been feathers in his cap.

IT'S A SHAME to let this fine team of administrators suffer because of inadequate leadership.

It's wrong to let the city remain in a state of confusion because of poor communications.

Action to right this situation needs to be taken—now.



## "Around the edge

by Jackie Klein

## Tinkering around

by LOUISE OKRUTSKY

### Why am I so sorry now?

"Love is never harder to say you're sorry," are words destined for immortality.

But it seems to me life is often having to apologize or at least feeling obliged to.

It's always amusing to me that so many persons apologize for refusing to order a cocktail in a restaurant. It's as though they're ashamed of not being with it, and they must explain to the waiter or waitress who couldn't care less.

"I'm sorry, my ulcers are bothering me," is one popular excuse. How about, "liquor doesn't agree with me," or "I'm driving," or "I'm too young to drink-ha-ha." And then there's always the inevitable, "Booze has too many calories and I'd rather have a hot fudge sundae with whipped cream and nuts."

The same holds true for persons who can't eat certain foods and go into a long dissertation about their gastrointestinal tracts, histories of allergies or dietary laws.

I have a friend who starts telling me a complicated story about what happened to her on Tuesday. She always interrupts herself to say, "I'm sorry, it was Wednesday," which doesn't make her saga any less boring.

BEING A reporter has given me many occasions to apologize, often when I believed I was right.

"That was a great article you wrote about me, but..." has prompted me to say, "I'm sorry" before I discovered I

spelled the guy's name wrong or what sin I committed to elicit that ill-fated word "but."

"I'm sorry, but that's how I interpreted it," I have often said. But apologizing when you're confident you are justified is backing down. And I have many times joined the society of back-downers.

Sometimes, it gets so bad I apologize to my seatbelt for not fastening it when the buzzers go off in my car. Or I say "I'm sorry" to my over-sized Collie who's lying in the vestibule, preventing me from opening the front door.

"I'm sorry to bother you," I have found myself saying to the information operator, a salesgirl, a gas station attendant or a service man who gets 10 bucks just for showing up.

It's funny how often you apologize when you really don't have to and you don't when you should. When you have a legitimate reason for expressing regret for an oversight, have you noticed that you're often on the defensive?

WHEN A friend complains she never got an invitation to your kid's wedding or Bar Mitzvah, it may prompt you to blame it on the mail service or the inefficiency of your social secretary whether you have one or not. In any case, you're too busy passing the buck to "I'm sorry."

"You didn't visit me in the hospital," may cause you to remind the complainant that he or she neglected to

call you when you had the Asian flu. You may also bring up other slights, real or imagined. With your back up, you're in the wrong position to apologize.

Then there are those who are just too darned independent to apologize and believe the customer is never right.

One called an exterminator to eradicate some black, unidentified crawling objects invading my home. The serviceman challenged me to identify the insects which, at that moment, refused to appear as evidence.

The guy wouldn't do anything because I hadn't caught the pesky creatures and preserved them in a jar as Exhibit A. "If I knew what they were, I wouldn't have called you in the first place," I snapped as the exterminator slammed the door in my face.

I quickly called to complain to the "bug manager" who listened to my gripes, mumbled something about my being buggy myself and hung up on me.

I could give a long list of examples of merchants whose motto appears to be, "The customer is always wrong or has gone off his tree. Never say you're sorry to a flake or a crank."

All this brings me to conclude that "never having to say you're sorry" is a lot of bunk, but saying it too often is just as bad.

I'm sorry, but that's how I see it. Oops, I said it again.

Childhood is usually thought of in glowing nostalgic terms by adults who have long repressed the memories of growing pains and remember fondly the unique youthful freedom from worry or concern.

Instead of remembering the sleepless night over not being invited to a party or not being chosen for the basketball team, adults who have become selective in their childhood memories recall the new party clothes or the basketball game they helped win.

Instead of picturing in their minds the slightly threadbare furniture which had suffered through children's penchant to make a sofa into an imaginary mountain, they'll remember the games invented on a rainy day. Rather than remember moments of childhood doubts and confusion, many will remember a mother's patience and a father's guidance.

But some children will not have the luxury of selectively forgetting minor childhood pains. Some children will be faced with painful memories that refuse to disappear.

THEY ARE the children who are victims of their parents' abuse. Instead of leaving their frustrations at home or focusing their anxieties on an inanimate object, their parents beat them.

Like the mother who pushed her child into a sinkful of scalding water.

Or the woman who shoved her son into the back seat of a stranger's car, pleading, "Take him, I don't know what to do with him anymore."

While mothers rate as the persons most likely to abuse a child, boyfriends, girlfriends and fathers are equally capable. Mothers are more likely to abuse a child because they are home with their offspring for the entire day. For the stay-at-home mother, there's no escaping into the cool darkness of the bar or a stack of work at the office.

It'd be easy to think of all of the abusive mothers as phantoms of the opera, preying on their own offspring. And it would be just as easy to excuse them as overzealous parents and overlook what they're doing.

If we read the advice columns long enough, we gain a stock of all the pat answers and makeshift solutions available to mankind. But even pat solutions involve taking the risk of becoming embroiled in someone else's life. The neighbor that believes someone else will report an abusive mother is mistaken.

THE NEIGHBOR who believes reporting an abusive mother is in the same league as Big Brotherism or spying is mistaken. Is it spying or prying to try to help someone who's sick? We're quick to label a co-worker

who's off sick from work a lot as making an emotional problem.

We're quick to practice some armchair psychiatry after a party or meeting old friends. But when we come up against a real issue we think of the reputation of the adults and possibility of being sued over the life of a child who really has very few rights in a court of law or on the street outside of the ones adults give him or her.

If you know of a child who is being abused but are afraid to call for help, I wish you could have seen the photos of abused children that I looked at recently. Big-eyed children who should be trying out for the school play or organizing a game of tag in the back yard stare out of the photos. Everyday sort of kids you find in any neighborhood. Just like your kids except these youngsters had the misfortune to be in the wrong place at the wrong time in front of the wrong person.

If you do tell the juvenile bureau about an incident, you won't have to give your name. Just the location of the child.

IF YOU'RE a mother who needs help, you won't get a police record if you call for help. You'll just get help you need.

And you'll help one tiny human reclaim a part of the childhood he should have.

### With baby you get bagels

Some of life's encounters are unforgettable.

Jack puts it this way. Getting ready for a baby is just like riding a bicycle. And he proved it when he put together a borrowed crib in about 18 minutes flat the other night.

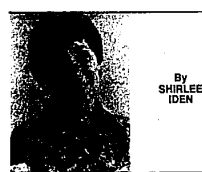
Don't misunderstand, childbearing days at the Eden household are over, permanently. It's Arik Cheshin, our strapping soon-to-be-a-year-old grandson we're preparing for.

Although Arik is an American citizen, that is a dual citizen of Israel and the United States, and this will be his first visit to the land of his mother's birth.

Elaine and Alex will bring him some 6,000 miles on a huge jetliner to New York City and then to Michigan. For an infant to travel such a distance at such a tender age raises little more than a casual yawn these days. Arik's odyssey will make him just one more world traveling baby out of many.

Statistically, that may be ho-hum, but this arrival is a big thing to his grandparents who haven't seen him for almost five months and especially for his great-grandparents who have yet to make the acquaintance of their premiere great-grandson.

THE THREE Cheshins will visit for



By SHIRLEE IDEN

at least a month and perhaps as much as two months. As I write this, I am preparing to make my own brief journey to New York to be at the gate when these special guests arrive.

If that's what being a Jewish mother means, well, so be it.

Arrival day is Elaine's 24th birthday, but we think we're getting the best gift of all. And just eight days later, we'll celebrate Arik's first birthday and the 49th wedding anniversary of my parents. And Arik's planning an open house for lots of friends one afternoon during his visit.

We've stocked up on paper diapers, but are considering a diaper pail. Modern conveniences give you those options today. Our son brought home a food mill from the health food place he works at in Ami Arbo so we can prepare Arik's food as he is accustomed to it.

I remember Elaine blending avo-

cados, bananas and such. And I recall that the baby likes yogurt. In this land of plenty, I don't think Arik will go hungry.

We've shopped for crib sheets and a blanket and forgot a rubber sheet. Not so bad because when I remembered I also saw some cute bluejeans, a bathing suit, T-shirts and jacket I figure the little man will be able to use.

Welcoming back children who have left home also means clearing out closets appropriated once their users vacated. It's amazing how no number of closets is too many when they become available.

IF THE flight is not too late, the three Cheshins and Savta Shirlee will fly home the same evening to enjoy birthday cake with Saba Jack and Aunt Trish and Uncle Bruce. Plus a few very eager friends of the little mother.

If not, we'll have to stay overnight in New York and fly home in the morning. That might be fun. Of course, Savta Shirlee and Arik will bunk in together, and let the weary parents recuperate from the rigors of a 6,000 mile trip with baby.

Either way, once home, it will be like they've always been there and Alex will understand how welcome he is, too, when we break out the bagels and lox he loves so much.

## READERS' FORUM

### Reader seeks boycott to fight atrocities

Editor: I concur 100 per cent with your editorial of May 12 regarding the apathy of the American people.

I congratulate the news media for making us aware of world atrocities, but my frustration in reading your editorial is further compounded by my limited knowledge of whom to contact or how to go about a lawful protest of these atrocities.

May I at this time offer a suggestion to the news media—please mention the products these countries export to the United States so we can boycott specific products.

Also, please list the names and addresses of state department officials most likely to be in a position to act on receipt of letters of protest.

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