

## editorial opinion

### Applause, applause, applause

## Traveling show good idea

It was good to see the folks from the corner of Orchard Lake and Eleven Mile trek on down to Section 36 to discuss the facts of living in Farmington Hills.

For years, Section 36 residents have felt left out of the mainstream of city political life if for no other reason than their southern geographical location. In recent years their homeowner's group has come alive and is rattling the city hall doors.

Economically, the area isn't the most lucrative in the city, but the majority of residents take pride in their community. Last Thursday's special meeting on sewer problems and housing rehabilitation between Section 36 residents and the city council is a positive omen.

**MORE MEETINGS** like this should be conducted around the city.

No matter how hard elected officials and administrators attempt to keep in touch, it's tough keeping a political ear to the ground when the council meets every week miles away from where the action is.

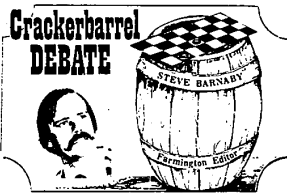
Many persons have a tendency to forget that Farmington Hills is a large city when it comes to clocking up the miles.

City council would do themselves, the administration and the residents a real favor if it had more meetings spread around the city.

It's difficult to get a crowd out to council sessions. Apathy is a key word when it comes to talking about local politics. The voter participation committee has been studying ways to get out the vote. Well, shifting the city council meetings to various locations throughout the city would help to lighten resident interest.

The way I picture it, when the council met in a certain section of the community, an issue or two pertaining to that area could be on the agenda for that week.

Residents would be better informed and the local elected politicians would be a step closer to residents.



Adding to the validity of this idea would be to have the city department heads attend the meetings. In this way if residents had questions, they could get word that night on their problem.

**THOSE OF YOU** who read this column regularly know that I have a tendency to throw a barb or two the way of the Farmington Hills city officials.

Even I believe that too much criticism without some solutions is irresponsible.

I've been particularly critical of the communication gap that exists between the Hills city government and the residents.

Meetings around the city is one step toward solving this problem. One-on-one contact always helps to alleviate tensions and creates a better understanding.

Of course, this idea isn't anything new. For awhile the school board moved around the district from building to building so more residents would make a showing. Other cities do it.

Detroit has it written into their charter to have council meetings around the city.

So council, here's a bit of an olive branch from the local editor. I'll support you on this one all the way.

## Tinkering Around

by LOUISE OKRUTSKY

## Chop trees; save the city

Walking through the woods, when you can find a couple of trees standing around not doing much, is an invigorating experience. So, I was understandably glad to discover a little woodland clump in Farmington Hills.

Ah, nature. The sunlight drifted in, the mosquitos drifted out. I stood there surveying the scene and scratching my newly acquired mosquito bites, feeling virtuous. I was enjoying the great outdoors.

At least I was enjoying it until I felt something land on my head.

Have the birds finally taken their cue from Hitchcock and managed to organize into guerrilla units?

Is the sky falling?

Should there be a movement to put diapers on crows?

These were some of my thoughts in that split second when a person first perceives that something has happened.

I leapt to a conclusion and jumped into nearby bushes out of absolute astonishment.

**BUT I SHOULDN'T** have feared. It was only a tape measure falling on my head.

At the end of the tape measure was a rather short, balding man wearing white buck loafers, blue polyester pants and a T-shirt that said, "I want to be a punk rock star in New York City."

"What are you doing?" I asked in a tone that must have mixed awe and irritation.

"I'm measuring the trees," he said as if it were the most normal thing in the world.

"You dropped your tape measure," I answered for lack of anything better to do. I was stalling for time. I was sure he was some sort of dangerous escapee.

"I'm lobbying for a new zoning ordinance," he said. "I want all of the trees in the city to conform to the zoning code. There shouldn't be anything above 25 feet tall in this town."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because that's why we moved out here—to enjoy the level lay of the land. We could have moved up north to live with a tree planted here and a tree planted there."

"Trees ruin the property value. Yes, I see you're shaking your head. They do, indeed. Have you ever had a sidewalk uprooted by a tree root?"

"**HOW ABOUT** plumbing with tree roots clogging the basement drain. Take that one to your rolo rooster man," he said. I was speechless.

"Trees are a safety hazard. In the winter if there's enough ice and snow on the branches, they'll crack. Kids will climb on them and fall off."

"A healthy tree is all right but once they're older and get sick then they turn hollow and can fall. They're a hazard, I tell you."

"Besides a sick tree curling up its leaves in agony of Dutch Elm disease is a blight on the community. And every fall they'll mess up your lawn by dropping their leaves all over the place," he said.

"It's disgusting. It'll ruin property values," he continued.

"If you cut all the trees down to 25 feet, what will there be to look at?" I asked.

"The beauty of a clean subdivision street. I'll rest easy knowing it's safe for humanity. Everyone knows burglars hide in trees," he answered.

"What will you put up instead of trees? What will gardeners do?" I asked.

"They'll have to be content with bushes up to 25 feet high and small trees. We can't cater to a few hobbyists here," he answered.

"Besides," he added, "I know what I'm going to put up in my yard."

"What?" I asked.

"A ham radio tower. I'm going to plant them all over the city. You heard of Johnny Appleseed? I'm Sammy Shortwave."



## "Around the edge"

by Jackie Klein

## Fabulous '40s — sad fun

Have you ever been invited to a 1940s party?

It seems to be the thing to give bashes with themes of the 1920s through the 1950s. I wonder what party-givers are going to do when they run out of decades.

A sure sign of getting old is when you start looking back. But the fabulous '40s are years to remember for those of my generation.

Do you recall when President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in one of his famous fireside chats, told Americans, "My friends, I have said this before but I shall say it again and again and again. Your boys aren't going to be sent to any foreign wars..."

Some things don't change in 30 years. In the 1970s, President Richard Nixon said again and again and again, "Let's make one thing perfectly clear. I am your president, make no mistake about that. Peace is at hand, and we are bringing the troops home from Vietnam."

Do you remember bobbysoxers in mismatched shoes and socks and keen teens in zoot suits? They were more interested in dates, acne, movie stars and Frank Sinatra than in boring facts about atomic energy.

IN THE revolution of youth from adolescent to teenager, kids remained responsible to traditional parental discipline. They became compulsively conformist within their own age group and were unconcerned about world problems.

The only parallel to the youth of today is the teens in the '40s were baggy, rolled-up blue jeans, sloppy shirttails and even striped football socks.

"Smooching" has been replaced by "making out." Kissing argyle socks has evolved into making macramé neckties. Juice box Saturday nights mopping up soda pop rickies and jitterbugging have changed into disco dancing and who knows what else.

Thousands of frenzied bobbysoxers bombarded Sinatra, "the king of swoon." "The voice" has faded. New songs and singers have come and gone. But teenagers still scream in ecstasy to groups like Seals and Croft.

How did some people react when the shattering news about Pearl Harbor turned a peaceful Dec. 7, 1941 into bloody Sunday?

I remember being stunned and frightened. But some radio listeners called newspapers and asked, "Have you got any score on the game between the Chicago Bears and the Cardinals? Aren't you getting anything besides that war stuff?"

Some thought Pearl Harbor was another Orson Welles hoax. Others

complained about spoiling their Sunday dinner.

**DURING WORLD WAR II** on the home front, milled mills still whirled. Sales of new spring rayons just as sheer as nylon stockings were announced. Meat, sugar and gas were rationed. People were trying to make do with a scarcity of hairpins and eye glasses.

College-deferred boys enlisted and most males between 18 and 36 received "greetings from Uncle Sam" in their morning mail. If the guys had eyes, ears and throats, they were in.

Do you remember when Superman, Joe Palooka, Tillie the Toiler, Little Orphan Annie and Terry and the Pirates went to war? And movies showed gallant American servicemen as heroes and sadistic Germans and wily Japanese as villains.

Popular songs were, "This is the Army, Mr. Jones," "I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen," "You'd Be So Nice to Come Home to," "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," and "The White Cliffs of Dover."

In some ways, the 1940s was a beautiful era. It was also a devastated decade like the 1960s. What will be said about the '70s in the years ahead? Some people enjoy predicting the future. I think it's more fun looking back.

## Hors d'oeuvres

by Lynn Orr

## 'Grease' — oiling nostalgia

Sandra Dee? Troy Donahue? Greasers and frats?

The trouble with "Grease," filmdom's latest contribution to a long line of great movie musicals, is that only a small percentage of the viewing audience can appreciate the campy quality of its gibes.

For those in the audience who are painfully forced to recall such movie greats as "Farrish," in which Troy Donahue seduces Sandra Dee, and "Gidget," in which Sandra Dee outwits all those out to seduce her, "Grease" is a howl.

From the opening credits with an animated parody of "Snow White" and other Disney spectacles, the viewer over 30 is in for a great time. But it's surprisingly disconcerting to be in the minority guffawing. Something's wrong when the 14-year-old in the seat next to you keeps poking his mother.

A sneak to the ladies' room confirmed my suspicions that "Grease" underscores the generation gap. At my height of five feet, I was the second tallest female in line. A grandmother behind me stood five-four.

The comments about the movie centered on one thing—or perhaps three to be specific—John Travolta's eyes, mouth, and body.

A few weeks later while discussing the movie with a 19-year-old who works in our office, I asked if she liked the music which I've been humming in my sleep.

"Well, sure, it has a good beat," she said. "But who's Sandra Dee?"

TWO of the movie's songs are based on the

Sandra Dee complex suffered by every would-be cheerleader in the 1950s. If you don't know that Ms. Dee was a blonde, cute, breathy ingenue how do you comprehend the division between the frats and the greasers? The love aspect of the movie is based on the conflict between the two sets as represented by Olivia (frat) and Travolta (greaser). It's the whole conflict-in-values thing.

Today's teenagers cope with the same problem when a jock takes up with a burnout, or an "A" student dates a dropout, but I couldn't help wondering if the kids in the audience knew what was going on.

It would be nice to assume that adolescents could take some comfort in the fact that teenagers coped with basically the same problems 20 years ago. But I don't think that's how the movie came across.

And the exchange with my co-worker confirmed my doubts that nostalgia has a place in the social comment category. Unlike annotated Shakespeare and Dickens, the celluloid medium cannot explain past social conditions in footnotes. It has to rely on the background the viewer brings to the theatre, explain past social conditions in footnotes. The visual media copes with the aspect of immediate media demands immediacy and must cope with the background the viewer brings to the theatre. While "Grease" is fun, most of the ironic pokes at the Eisenhower era go over the heads of the majority of today's filmgoers.

Unfortunately, the advertising push is directed at the youth set, and that's out of whack. "Grease" has to be a lot more fun for those who can blush with their own memories. But if you feel out of place in a theatre crammed with youngsters, inform your children that you're tagging along as a reference library and don't let on that you're enjoying it.

## Readers' forum

## Stop senior homes

Editor:

This is the third time I am writing about my particular gripe, but I am wondering why the Southfield residents aren't making noise when twice I have stated in my articles to the editor that only a small percentage of senior citizens occupying McDonnell Towers I, are former residents of Southfield.

Why are we building another senior citizen tower, McDonnell II and still another complex for senior citizens in back of the Telex Shopping Complex? If we do not have need for these senior citizen complexes that are being built for senior citizens of Southfield, so it has been stated by our elected politicians, why is our administrator accepting federal funds to build these towers?

When it has been said by the council and our administrator that these buildings are for senior citizens of Southfield, and there are people coming from all areas of the county and metropolitan areas, they are not telling us the truth.

As a result of these stupid decisions being made by the candidates of our council and city administrator, our Southfield residents voted in, there is constant consternation and frays with the homeowners, wondering where the low income housing that must be included in the federally funded deal, will go now. No one wants it in their backyards.

Why in the world didn't our brilliant city administrator consult the people of this city before so handily going along in his own shady way, when he knew that the people of this city would

scream and yell as soon as they knew what the whole deal involved? Just because he was going to receive federal money, he thought he was getting something for nothing.

Anyone with an ounce of brains knows you do not get something for nothing. Why do we have to build senior citizens housing for other communities? All you have done, Mr. Administrator, is cause unrest, distrust in the city government.

Residents of Southfield, let our elected officials of this city know they are killing this beautiful town. Call them, write them, go to council meetings and give them your thoughts on the whole deal.

DOROTHY M. ZUCAL  
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