

editorial opinion

Local action needed to quell world unrest

Sitting at my desk watching folks stroll up and down Farmington Road, some thoughts come to mind on how the state of world unrest could snuff out the tranquility passing by my window.

The appropriate thought was made by American journalist Dorothy Thompson.

"They have not wanted peace at all; they have wanted to be spared war — as though the absence of war was the same as peace."

America, coddled in its cloak of isolationism, denies that the world is teetering on the brink of war. Suppressed is the reality that we, as a world power, will be drawn into that conflict if we persist and insist on maintaining that stance.

I fear we soon shall be jolted from our self-im-

posed tranquility — unless America chooses to use the power we have to forge peace.

We still are weary from our Vietnam involvement. But Vietnam, with all its incumbent conflict, still exists to haunt the world.

In Iran, the odds are that a false move, or no move at all, will cast this country into a war for which it shows no enthusiasm.

The Khomeini regime, armed with some of the most sophisticated weaponry in the world left behind by the Shah, is allied with Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Jews have been expelled from Iran, an American soldier wounded during the siege on the American Embassy, has been spirited away from the Iranian hospital by armed Khomeini agents to stand trial for who-knows-what.

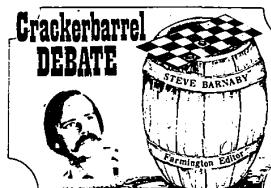
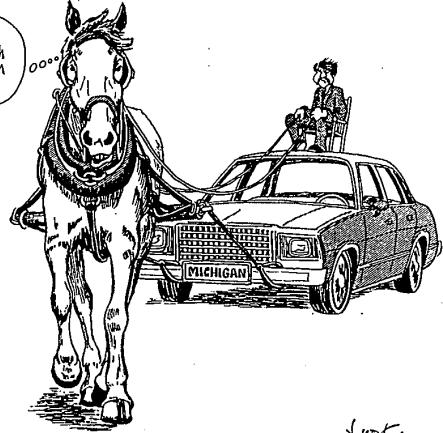
to Vietnam, by letting the treaty with Taiwan expire and by vacillating in Iran. But the odds are this country would be forced to take a stand with Israel — agree or not.

Our mania to avert war is costing us the peace.

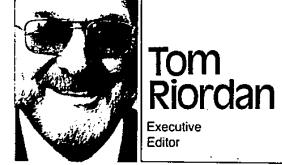
Countries can't be expected to rely on an alliance with America when, over the past decade, we have deserved so many.

How many embassies will be abandoned, how many ambassadors will be murdered, how many treaties will be broken before we completely lose our international credibility?

It's time we take a stand for peace instead of coveting in hopes of averting war. If we neglect our responsibilities, the tranquil scene on Farmington Road could only be a memory.



What, I ask, will this country do if Iran attacks Israel in alliance with its Arab neighbors? Yes, we may have bought time by cutting off aid



Bernie's legal lesson

Every so often you can learn something from your kids.

For instance, my son Bernie, now 26, had a penchant during his teen years for finding himself in traffic ticket troubles.

Once there was a midnight call: "Mr. Riordan, this is Deputy Smith of the Jackson County Sheriff's Department. Your son Bernie is being held in county jail."

"Oh, my gosh," I gulped. "What did he do?" "He was in a car that was speeding and littering."

THE NEXT MORNING I rushed to the jail to post bond and learn all the terrible details. I figured that Bernie, then about 18, would be full of remorse. If he was, he didn't display much. He was peeved at being caught.

This was back when you had to be 21 to drink legally. As most adults and most teens of that era knew — and, I suppose, once again with the law back to where it was — kids are going to sip beer.

Bernie and a buddy somehow bought a six pack and were driving around, drinking the brew. When a patrol car drove into view, the two panicked and sped off.

What to do with the illegal bottles? Why, throw them out the windows. No thought was given to the approaching police officers.

So Bernie and his pal ended up as guests of the sheriff.

I hustled around to the rear of the car, thinking I'd see a bent and twisted post under a meter. What I found was my rear bumper a good two feet from the post.

That's when I first saw a sign, about eight feet above the lot on a utility pole. It read: "Do not back into parking spaces."

AT HOME THAT NIGHT I wrote the Rochester police chief, told him I didn't "back into a parking meter," wouldn't pay the fine and wanted "my day in court." My son's lesson was sinking in.

The chief responded in writing a few days later and said that if I just would pay the \$10 it would be the end of the matter.

I quickly was back at my typewriter to state: "I respectfully request my day in court."

Well, I got it — almost a whole day, at that.

HAVE YOU EVER appeared in district court?

I hear it's pretty much the same everywhere.

All persons scheduled for a day are told to report at 8:30 a.m. That's when we criminal types first see the docket. On my day, there were 47 of us listed. Guess who was No. 17.

Most of the other 16, many with attorneys, were standing around, smoking, reading newspapers, speaking in knowing terms about past court adventures.

When 10 a.m. approached and there was still no sign of the judge, I questioned the bailiff. He was more than frank in his reply. "Oh, she never gets here before 10:30."

Apparently there was little reason. The first couple of hours seemed to be devoted to lawyers plea bargaining with the assistant prosecutor in a side room.

ALWAYS ONE TO DISPLAY brass in tight situations, I decided to do a little chatting with the prosecutor. I simply walked into the room where all the attorneys were coming and going.

Apparently my three-piece suit impressed him and he thought I was one of the brothers. I started to discuss my situation and to say I thought the charge was unfair.

When he grasped the real situation, the prosecutor coolly informed me to wait until docket item No. 17 was called.

There were a lot of troubled people in district court that day.

A middle-aged man had so many speeding tickets that the court had lost count, and the last time he got caught, he had no valid driver's license. His trade: chauffeur for a Metro Airport limo service.

Three young men (about Bernie's age) were in big trouble for running snowmobiles on a county road. And so it went.

AS THE MORNING wore on, I began to feel sort of foolish for "wasting my time" in fighting what I thought was an unfair ticket.

Suddenly my name was called by the bailiff. I struggled up to the bench, now fully determined to fight my cause to the highest court if I couldn't find justice in Rochester.

The assistant prosecutor began to recite the facts to the judge. Suddenly he was saying that there seemed to be some sort of misunderstanding about the way the ticket was written. He recommended that the charge be dismissed.

"Do you agree with the prosecutor?" the judge asked me.

"You mean that the charge be dropped?"

"Yes, that's right."

"I agree."

"Case dismissed," intoned the judge.

AS I TURNED and strolled nonchalantly from the district courtroom, maybe I was a tad sorry that it wasn't L. Brooks Patterson himself whom I had bested in this titanic legal battle instead one of his minors.

But that thought quickly passed.

Another took its place — Bernie really had taught me something about courts and justice.

Night and day

Larks vs. owls at home

They say the world is made up of larks and owls. Some people function better early in the morning, while others function best late at night.

The tragedy is that opposites attract, and there can be a communications gap if a lark and an owl get married.

Picture the breakfast table. The lark has been up hours, planning the day, and the owl just grunts something about needing another cup of coffee to get going.

At dinner time, the lark's chin is probably sinking into the soup while the owl is talking about how much fun they will have later that night disco roller skating.

I imagine families which include a lark and an owl have few children. They just operate on different time schedules.

IF INDUSTRIES were smart, they would operate on two shifts and use metabolism tests instead of seniority to decide who works when.

Companies in California that are national in scope should always hire larks while companies in New York should hire owls, so everyone would be working at their peaks during office hours with the three-hour time difference.

Supposedly there are more successful businessmen from the lark category because they start their days off with a bang...unless, of course, they run a drive-in movie or a night club.

Apparently unlike intelligent quotients, which don't change much during persons' lifetimes, the lark and owl categories can change.

Most young children are larks, particularly very young children, but very few teenagers are, especially on weekends.

As you get past middle age, more people become



larks because the need for sleep lessens.

Once you figure out whether a person is a lark or owl, you know what to expect from him or her. Unfortunately, sometimes you run across someone who is neither lark nor owl, and you keep wondering when they are going to come to life.

AFTER YOU HAVE figured out whether you are lark or owl, you should adjust your lifestyle accordingly.

If you are a lark, make sure there is a place in your house where you can work before the rest of the family wakes up. Also, learn how to cook breakfast.

Pick a job that starts early and associate with other larks so you are working with a team whose members function at their peaks at the same hours.

If you are an owl, move to someplace like Greenwich where they have very long nights. You'll get more work done and still be able to see the "Tonight" show and late movies on TV.

If you run across someone who seems to be cheery in the morning and still can be hard at work at midnight, be suspicious. He or she probably has a cat hidden somewhere and is probably dozing while everyone else is taking a long lunch hour.

NOW YOU MIGHT ASK what my son was teaching me. In that case, actually nothing.

But remember, I said he had a penchant for ticks. Some were richly deserved, as the incident above. Others were questionable.

What Bernie did teach me was that if you think a traffic summons is unfair, you should be willing to fight it in court.

When he first told me this I gave the stock adult answers: That's a waste of time. You never can win. Pay the fine and forget it. The police are always right. Certainly they hold all the trump cards.

Well, after Bernie won a few of his court sessions, I began to pay attention.

WHAT BRINGS ALL THIS to mind was some conversation Saturday morning in a Southfield restaurant along Nine Mile Road.

Joe Rose, who does construction jobs working out of his shop/dormroom, was having a cup of coffee when we fell into conversation. A couple of tables over sat four Southfield policemen eating breakfast.

"Say, Joe," I asked quietly so that I wouldn't be overheard by the cops. "Did you hear about the raid some Southfield policemen conducted a week ago?"

Joe hadn't. So I recounted the tale.

"Seems a fellow who runs a Southfield party shop had a lot of no-return pop in his store when the new can and bottle deposit bill went into effect.

"Retailers had been told they shouldn't sell the no-deposit stuff. But he did. The police warned him to stop. But he kept on.

"So couple of weeks ago, several Southfield patrol cars swung up in front of his store, and seven officers went in to arrest the merchant. They put him in handcuffs and took him to jail, where he was held for three hours.

"When his case got to court, it was thrown out. The judge said it wasn't a criminal matter, but civil."

Joe chuckled.

THAT PROMPTED ME to regale Joe with a legal adventure I had last fall in Rochester.

It all started innocently enough. I was scheduled to attend a meeting at our office there and decided to park in the city's off-street lot behind the paper.

For some reason, it seemed easier to back into an empty space. I dimmed the meter behind the car and went into the meeting. Two hours later I returned and discovered a ticket under the wiper blade.

When I studied it, I was jarred. It was for "backing into a meter," as written on the face of the ticket by the officer.

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