

Monday's Commentary

Community welcome brings Observer thanks

It's nice to be home.

The crackerbarrel, checkerboard and all, is set in the reception area. The coffee is brewing.

Every once in a while a really nice thing happens that truly warms a person's heart. Last week was one of those nice times.

Thanks to the folks of Farmington and Farmington Hills, the Farmington Observer staff has thoroughly enjoyed the fine welcome residents have rendered.

As many of you know, last week we opened the doors to our new office in the Downtown Farmington Center at 23352 Farmington Road, just south of Grand River.

Since knowing of the move, the staff has been excited.

But like most moving projects, it took some time to get all the details worked out. By last Monday, with all the boxes stacked on our desks and garbage strewn around the room, we just sort of sat around staring at one another, wondering where to begin.

Then it happened.

Residents started dropping in off the street to say hello, welcoming us to town. After this happened a few times, I noticed faint smiles coming over the staff members' faces. A couple visitors later, there were grins all over the news room.

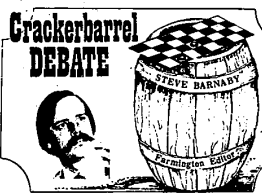
It finally hit us that we are home. We are where this community's newspaper belongs — on Main Street.

For years now, this staff has done its darndest to produce a newspaper of which the community could be proud. But something was missing, and we all knew it. We didn't have an office in the Farmington area.

But thanks to a lot of concerned and hard-working folks from the community and the management of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, this very important move has been made.

And believe me, it feels good.

It feels good to have residents like Nancy



Leonard drop by every couple of days just to shoot the breeze. It feels good to walk over to the drugstore, bump into Bill Conroy and strike up a conversation.

And it feels especially good when Walt Konig pulls up in his van, hefts out a crackerbarrel and plops it down in the newsroom.

It's nice to be welcome in town.

This move to the Farmington area is a commitment the Observer is making to the community. We want your newspaper to be even better.

In the coming months and years, you're going to see a lot more of the Farmington staff. You'll see us eating in local restaurants and stopping off for a brew at the local watering hole.

You'll also be seeing us at more public functions. And, of course, we'd be glad to drop by your home, if invited, of course.

So be sure to either give us a call at 477-5450 or drop by and say hello at our new office.

In a few weeks, when we get settled in, we're going to have an open house so we get a chance to meet even more residents. But don't be shy. You can drop by whenever.

Just think. You may catch Willoughby Wink and me playing a game of checkers.



Farmington Observer Editor Steve Barnaby (right) got a big treat last week when Walt Konig was the bearer of glad tidings and a brand new crackerbarrel with checkerboard mounted on top. Walt said he was only one of the culprits involved in providing the gift which rounded out the new newspaper office. (Staff photo)

Tinkering Around

by LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Annie's a real heart throb

Annie was laying down on the job again. And her job wasn't exactly what every mother could possibly foresee for her daughter.

It's just as well old Annie never had a mom, or a dad. In fact, Annie was a real dummy but she's made a lot of hearts beat faster.

Annie's full name is Rescued-Annie and she usually takes up a large part of the classroom floor during CPR classes. Through the vagaries of state regulations and by virtue of being drafted for the class by my boss, I was sent off to Mercy College in Detroit this week to learn more first aid than I knew existed.

I was most struck by the simplicity of most of the first aid procedures. Even Annie wasn't difficult to resuscitate — in a classroom that is.

Annie's simplicity illustrates that potential life savers will remember the pro-

cedures when the rest of the world ends that hypersensitive, hyperactive state that occurs during an emergency. That state usually insures the absence of most coherent thought.

Simplicity has got to be the thing.

I'VE LIVED through a couple of medical emergencies as a helpless bystander. Believe me, it's the most helpless, frustrating feeling in the world to watch someone suffer through a stroke or a heart attack. It's far worse to watch them die because you don't realize what they're feeling for months afterward and because maybe, just maybe, a trained person might have been able to save that life.

But Annie has helped trim the word maybe from a few vocabularies.

Let me tell you about Annie. She looks awful. She isn't breathing so she's

blue around the mouth. And that awful pinched look of death is settling on her face.

And as with everyone who's traumatically ill, she's heavier than she looks. A lot heavier. She feels like 150 pounds of dead weight.

Tilt back her head, check her breathing, give four breaths into her and check her breathing again. Check her pulse and her eyes, too. If she looks like she's not responding, the student practices CPR on old Annie.

ANNIE SHOULD BE laying down on more floors. The system she helps to teach ought to be available more often.

Besides teaching basketball, baseball, football and tennis to our high school students, we ought to find the time to teach them CPR.

It may someday give another person extra time to enjoy those sports.



"Around the edge"

by Jackie Klein

One drink leads to 1,000

Who is the alcoholic?

He's the 45-year-old executive who needs a tennis racket. She's the middle-aged housewife who drinks away her boredom and insomnia. It could be the 15-year-old who started drinking for kicks at 12.

Compulsive drinkers are found in the country club, in the kitchen, behind a desk or a wheel, at parties and in the gutter. They are teenagers, young adults and the middle-aged.

They have talents, ambitions, pressures, fears, anxieties, insecurities, frustrations and a wide spectrum of personality traits and disorders.

There are as many theories about drinkers as there are "authorities" and as many statistics as there are figures and those who figure. There also is apathy among those who hide their heads in the sand and those who really don't want to understand the "disgusting drink." There are myths, misconceptions, mysteries and tragedy.

The teenager who tipsles today may be your child or mine. We don't call them drinking problems yet, but they could become troubled alcoholics in the not-too-distant future. If you're a parent who hides his head in the sand, help is just around the corner.

"HOW TO Talk to Your Child About Alcohol" is the topic of an 8 to 10 p.m. Feb. 28 workshop in Southfield Parks and Recreation Building. The speaker is Bob Talbert who knows about drinking problems because he's been there.

Alcoholism is the number one public health problem in the United States. It affects almost 10 million, three additional persons for every alcoholic. It's a disease like diabetes, epilepsy, cancer and heart trouble. It develops in about one of 13 drinkers.

Alcoholism develops in persons with

the "X" factor, capacity to become addicted to hard beverages. It develops at different rates for different persons—from six months to 20 or 30 years. It begins when the drinker needs twice or three times as much alcohol to get the desired affect. One drink leads to 1,000 or more.

Alcoholics start drinking for the same reasons other people do. Alcoholism is approachable, controllable, understandable and preventable. Untreated, it's insidious, progressively destructive and may be fatal.

Most experts agree a person should be free to make a choice about drinking without pressure from others. There's nothing anti-social about refusing a drink if that's your choice.

SOME EXPERTS say survey data on the drinking driver is subject to bias, statistical misinterpretation and politics, especially if the motorist is young. Many factors other than alcohol are related to the probability of accidents.

What is true is that drivers with high blood alcohol levels tend to have more accidents and they're more severe and expensive. The worst collisions, in addition to the intoxicated, are among the young or very old and inexperienced.

What authorities agree on is that alcohol is a drug and a depressant. Mixed with other drugs, it's a double whammy and can be fatal. And teenagers are into this lethal combination.

There are no overnight, simple solutions to any substance abuse. But there's hope. Education, early detection and community treatment facilities are forces operating for the control and reduction of alcoholism. Southfield schools and human resource department and the Oakland County Substance Abuse Office know that parents want to talk to their kids about drinking.

ing and that can be hard. That's what the Feb. 28 workshop is all about.

No wonder kids and parents are confused? Kids often can't get their values together. For a long time, non-alcoholic abuse headlines knocked the alcohol problem out of the top box.

IT'S PERHAPS the oldest most neglected disease but alcoholism isn't as sensational as pot, amphetamines, heroin, cocaine and the wide range of uppers and downers.

Can parents who indulge in a martini or two every night to unwind and sometimes get smashed at a party justify this practice to their kids who think drinking is worse than marijuana? And if teenagers imbibed the hard stuff, enflaming their parents, how many families discuss their feelings about alcohol? Non-drinkers don't talk about it either.

Alcoholism is a complex, progressive illness. Its control is just as complex. Nothing short of total abstinence will eliminate drinks and drinkers.

The underlying problems which precipitated the drinking may always be there. But there's nothing worse than doing nothing about it.

Objectives of the Southfield workshop are to help parents communicate and establish credibility with their children to promote decision making. In fact, a parenting guide to alcohol education includes a message from "The Prophet" by Khalil Gibran, which bears this out.

"You may give your children your love but not your thoughts for they have their own thoughts. You may house their bodies but not their souls. You may strive to be like them but not to make them like you. For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday."

from our readers

Homeowners respond to CSC

Editor:

After reading the article of Jan. 29 on the Christian Service Commission (CSC) of Farmington, the members of the Section 36 Homeowners Association felt a reply is necessary.

Some of our members felt the picture in the upper right hand corner implied that the type of housing stock is available in our area. We feel that so many articles have been printed on this controversial subject which reflect others' views, that since we're directly affected, it was time for us to express ours.

It seems strange that the CSC waited several years after receiving their bishops letter on providing homes for the poor before taking their stand on low income housing. We wonder why a church in Farmington wants low income housing for our city. Why are they now shaking the dust off this letter instead of last summer, when the meetings on low income housing were held?

The present residents of Farmington Hills have helped build and pay for our city and have earned the right to a voice. Now the CSC in Farmington would strip us of that right and presume to dictate from afar. How many members are there on the Commission — are they a majority or a minority of the church? Are some of their members living in more affluent areas of Farmington Hills, and are they? The alleged improvement in our drainage problem resulting from the Waldron Drain is very surprising. In

fact, it's miraculous. That drain runs from the Rouge River up Waldron and ends at Independence, where it is capped. This drain, when finished, is a main trunk which crosses our streets and each street will have to be ditched or another drain will have to be run down each street into the drain, should it be paved. This will be paid for by special assessment. The Waldron Drain is in the master plan and should be paid for by an ad valorem tax. If this had been done, then the Community Development Block Grant Funds could have been used to pay for the assessments which many cannot afford. As it is, we have a million dollar hole in the ground.

The article states, "many people have a dislike of government regulations" and a "resentment against those who need and accept government subsidies." We do not dislike the government regulations but we do object to the city's disregard for them in concentrating low income people into an already depressed area. The concentration of low income housing clearly disregards the federal guidelines. We cannot avoid contact with the less affluent, we are the less affluent.

The resentment comes from the city providing housing for others when our area residents have struggled so hard to obtain, maintain, and pay for theirs. We do not deny the need for low income housing in the city, but we do object to being targeted for it. We resent the city providing and caring for the

needs of the expected to reside, when the needs of the poor in our area have been so sadly neglected. Our members want the council to know we do not want the low income family housing here if it is not placed in the rest of the city first.

The CSC had confused the two issues of senior housing and low income housing, although we admit they are tied together in most government fund programs. Our association is not against senior citizen housing. In fact, we voted to support the senior citizen housing bond issue. It is regrettable that the council saw fit to turn to MSBDA (who get their funds from HUD) instead of applying themselves to building their own housing.

Whenever there is doubt in the city about zoning, housing, or any issue, the best place to settle it is at the polls. When a council vacillates between building their own housing and turning to MSBDA or HUD, we can readily question whether or not they can make that decision.

The city has rescinded the bonding question without giving the residents of this city a chance. A chance to prove their moral conscience; a chance to volunteer their time, energy, and money; a chance to roll up their sleeves, stiffen their backbones and get to work on the solution of how to build for our own; and a chance to prove we are indeed willing.

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