

Monday's Commentary

Willoughby honors council with waffle dinner

Walking into the office the other day, my eye was caught by some tickets laying on the counter.

"The Willoughby Wink Annual Waffle Dinner," the tickets announced.

I wondered just what our good friend Willoughby, town gaffly and Farmington Hills write-in candidate could be up to. I waited anxiously for his next visit.

I wasn't disappointed.

"You coming to my dinner, Barnaby?" asked the chubby gentleman.

"Can't really say, Wink. Just what is this waffle dinner all about?" I queried.

"Well, since I've gotten active, I figured it would be a nice thing to honor the council incumbents."

"I've been thinking of doing this for a long time. But the time just didn't seem right — until last Monday night."

An evil glint beamed from Willoughby's eyes.

"I don't understand Willoughby. Explain it to me."

Wink reached for the inside pocket of his rumpled trench coat and brought out a wrinkled list of names.

"WELL, BARNABY, this is a list of persons who will benefit from the dinner. On this list are all the senior citizens who won't be able to live in Farmington Hills because they can't afford it."

I was befuddled. For a man running on a platform of free beer and pizza, this statement on the city's most volatile issue was unusual.

But then I figured that even an old itinerant like Willoughby had a morsel of compassion underneath that crusty exterior — unlike some other folks.

"I figure this is the only way out for the senior citizens who need rent subsidies to keep alive. Especially since those ballot questions have been put on the November ballot."

Willoughby's voice hardened as he demonstrated this uncharacteristic air of concern for a real live social issue.

"Give credit where credit is due, Barnaby. Since the council has backed down on the senior citizen project at Freedom and Drake they might as well be so honored by throwing this waffle dinner," he explained.

THE SYMBOLISM of the dinner's title sunk in.

"You see, Barnaby, for months the city council has stood its ground, proclaiming that they had studied the senior citizen housing issue upside down and backwards."

"An advisory vote, they said, was unnecessary because they had studied the issue. But it's pretty obvious that the primary vote result has brought out the survival instinct."

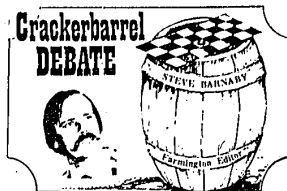
Willoughby swept his Gatsby hat from his balding head and waved it in the air.

"That ballot question on whether a person prefers to provide housing for 'needy' senior citizens or 'needy' families is a farce," he said.

"So what if voters approve an \$8 million bonding issue for senior citizen housing. Everybody knows that such a project won't supply the housing that truly poor senior citizens need."

"And it's very obvious that nobody in this town is going to fork over another three mills for senior housing. It's all a big joke."

By this time the old fella's forehead was dripping with perspiration.



"Some people will do the darndest things to remain in elected office."

With that Willoughby stuck his crumpled list back inside of his trenchcoat and bounded out onto Farmington Road.

The last I saw of Willoughby, he was hawking his "Waffle" tickets on the street.

I think I'll buy one. Looks like needy seniors in this town will need all the help they can get.



A familiar scene at Georgette's is the lady, herself, Georgette Tams, heating up their classic dish, quiche. (Staff photo by Randy Horst)

tinkering around.

by LOUISE OKRITSKY

Spell success Q-U-I-C-H-E

The atmosphere is straight out of Andy Hardy and the food is midwestern American with a touch of the Middle East.

Put those two ingredients together and before you can say "quiche laque!" you have Georgette's Cafe in Farmington's Village Mall.

Georgette's is the sort of place regulars lunch at to meet other regulars. The small size of the cafe heavily lends to conversation between the patrons. Conversation includes new houses, old plumbing and politics and develops at the counter between steak in the sack dentures and soup at the day slippers.

Presiding over the crew which ranges from head merchants to the city manager to shoppers are Georgette and Fred Tams. They share kitchen chores, bus tables and smile at the patrons while lining the menu-wave oven which warms up the soups, quiches and sandwiches they serve.

Behind the fledgling business they've been open for one year, lies an old-fashioned story of love and ambition that could have easily figured in the plot of an Andy Hardy epic.

Tam came to the U.S. from his native Lebanon after applying his B.A. to hotel management there. After the new graduate had worked for five years, he decided to return to school.

"I FELT A GAP," he explains. "I wanted to keep going to school. I figured that you have a period for study in your life and it isn't very long."

He decided to join his sister in Michigan and enrolled at Eastern Michigan University. There, he met Georgette's brother and ultimately Georgette. They were married in 1975 and the following year Tam quit school to work for the Sheraton Cadillac at Metropolitan Airport.

After the Sheraton, he worked for the Hyatt Regency in Dearborn and eventually became assistant

controller for the Cadillac Cadillac in Detroit.

He figured being an assistant couldn't have been as pressing as being chief accountant and settled down to enjoy the fruits of corporate life.

Instead, he ended up fussing with the hotel's budget. "The chief accountant resigned and Tam was given the job."

It lasted three months. Then he quit. "I quit same home with him."

"I quit with my wife. I took papers home. I was fighting with my friends," he said.

One night he came to the conclusion, "I'm living once, let me enjoy life. What's money if I'm sick."

HE BEGAN SHOPPING AROUND FOR another job.

Georgette encourage him a bit. "She'd tell me, 'Your health comes first.'"

"Otherwise I wouldn't quit my job."

He decided to open his own small restaurant.

"The only way to make money in this country is to have your own business," he said.

Upon the advice of Georgette's sister-in-law, they chose the site of the old Cozy Cafe in the mall.

To get on their financial feet, the couple run the business without help.

"I give Georgette a lot of credit. Both of us run the place. We cut the expense of labor. If we hired somebody, we'd end up working to keep them."

"We're working hard in hand for the sake of the business. Sometimes, she works more than I do."

They try to make the customer feel at home. Georgette shops daily for fresh produce. They try to remember what the regulars like to eat.

"In my business, I'm too close to the customers. It's my social life, too. You don't see that in big restaurants. This is really a good atmosphere," Tams said.

'A fortune in fear' featured at security confab

A new industry is finding a fortune in fear.

Not far from where I live, for instance, is a tiny auto parts store. In the time it takes me to buy a tailpipe, the store has a monitor that appears to take my picture eight or 10 times, complete with thumbnails.

The store paid plenty for this machine, but they probably figured they'll have it paid off by the time I buy my eighth or ninth tailpipe. The machine, however, has made sure I won't buy any more tailpipes there.

You don't have to look hard for other examples. Beer stores with bullet-proof glass, gas stations that don't take cash after sundown, grocery stores that take your picture before they'll take your check.

This stuff bothers masses of people, but protects against a select few.

If 200 people buy beer at the corner store every day and it's robbed once a year, then bullet-proof glass makes one gunman think twice — and 72,900 other people think I'm surrounded by gunmen.

But these things are all chickenfeed compared to the last trick used by the American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS). Last week, it held its 20th annual seminar in the Renaissance Center.

THE ASIS represents businesses, primarily. These businesses have got things they want to keep. Trade secret (profits and labor union organizing were high on the Renaissance Center list of things the ASIS wants to make sure don't happen).

Not that there aren't other, more specialized worries.

Hindley Brothers, Barnum & Bailey Circus World sent a guy, for instance. The Herman Koller Health Complex also sent a guy.

More understandably, Standard Oil sent several guys. A crowd of Japanese represented IBM. The Puget Sound Power & Light Co. didn't miss the show.

Hardware is a big part of keeping things, and at the seminar they displayed stuff that would make

months water at a family reunion of the Hatfields and McCoys.

Take Razor Ribbon, a trademark name for stainless steel barbed wire. "The Razor Ribbon," as it's called, is stronger than regular barbed wire, and studded with razor blades. Already, a brochure boasts, it's in use "at every type of facility from schools and amusement parks to nuclear power plants and maximum security correctional institutions."

Now, how can you beat stuff that already keeps both Mike Mason and Richard Rife in their place? Well, at least two other companies think they can — they produce razor blade-studded wire, too.

TETRADYNE makes armored cars, complete with concealed gunports in the doors and an optional tear gas delivery system. They modify Chevrolets, Fords, Dodges, Jeeps and Mercedes. One thing you can still count on in America's consumer society is freedom of choice. If you don't like Tetradyne, you can buy your armored car from Armored Vehicle Builders.

You can go to the Counter-Terrorist Driving School in Virginia to learn how to handle these babies.

A company that rents out security guards had a display made prominent by a large sign maintaining that "Industry today faces three major problems: labor disputes, terrorism, theft. Any or all of the above, not necessarily in that order."

Something called the London House Management Consultants, Inc., sells pre-employment tests that are necessary because "one-third of all employees are bad risks."

The companies that make and sell this stuff say the companies that buy and use it have a right to protect what they have, and naturally they're right. But only within limits.

THE RIGHT a company most wants to protect is



Mike Scanlon

its right to make money. All companies want to make money — the problem is that only a comparatively few companies have profitable secrets or products valuable enough to the world generally to justify protection of this nature.

Auto parts and beer stores probably don't belong on the list. Probably Hindley Brothers and Barnum and Bailey doesn't, either.

In the interest of protecting companies that may neither need nor deserve protection — but want it anyway, the way you want unnecessary chrome on a car — the rights of millions of individuals are overlooked.

Individual rights certainly take a back seat when any company with the money to buy concealed tear gas delivery systems is allowed to do so, for instance, even only to protect six-packs or trained animal acts.

And if London House Management Consultants, Inc., uses an accurate sales pitch for its pre-employment tests and it's really true that "one-third of all employees are bad risks," then we're all in a lot bigger trouble than even Razor Ribbon can handle.

Because statistics from the Department of Labor show nearly 100 million Americans are employees somewhere.

And that means 30 million of us are bad risks. But let me tell you about something exciting — cameras concealed in clocks . . .