

Monday's Commentary

Before going to polls, think about this tidbit

"Don't be fooled by cheap politics." That's the headline on a piece of garbage floating around Farmington Hills these days. Some folks call it political literature. But it isn't.

But in a very big way, "cheap politics" describes this entire campaign. Distortion is the order of the day.

The issue being distorted is the proposed senior citizen low income housing project proposed for construction down at the corner of Freedom and Drake roads.

Covering this campaign could have been a real laugh — if it wasn't such a serious matter. Senior citizens left out in the cold is the concern. The candidates can fend for themselves.

We've got three guys wandering around town predicting gloom and doom for Farmington Hills if 40 or 50 low and moderate income housing units are built out in some empty field where nobody else wants to build a house, anyway.

A few years back, a guy wanted to build a skating rink out there.

The three, Jack Burwell, William Lange and Donn Wolf are having a field day scaring the hell out of people.

They talk of the evil of federal mandates, plummeting housing values and bringing people from the outside to live in Farmington Hills.

Then they turn around and talk about financing a senior citizen project "ourselves." But they never really get around to saying how it could be done without costing an arm and a leg.

In short, all three of these guys are full of baloney. The only difference between the three is that one is slicker in the way he cuts his, but all three are blowing the same horn.

Detroit's Herman Gardens project is banded about to really get the adrenalin flowing. The Freedom/Drake project and Herman Gardens have about as much in common as a cat and dog.

The Gardens was an old-time public housing project which was a disaster. Some 50 Freedom/Drake projects have been built around the state. All have been successful and nobody has lost a nickel on their property values.

By the way the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) says this project isn't public housing. For persons interested in caring for senior citizens, it shouldn't matter. But for the record, it isn't public housing.



MSHDA is backing the bonds to finance this project which will be built by a private developer. The real issue in this campaign is race. Now don't get me wrong. None of the candidates have come out for or against blacks living in Farmington Hills — none of them have the guts to mention the subject.

Strange thing in this community, nobody wants to be labeled as a bigot and nobody wants to support

integration. Instead they talk about filling the low income housing project with Armenians. You figure it out.

So the issue is swept under the rug by the candidates.

But the street talk, and unprintable letters we receive, indicate that racial integration is very much an issue.

More than once, many more times, I've heard the argument about "niggers" moving into town. It's nasty, real nasty.

What you'll hear in public is talk about bringing bustards of "people" in from Mississippi and the inner-city of Detroit.

Another sick phrase you may have heard is, "I don't want no jungle next to me."

Frankly, I believe that most persons in this community don't think that way. I know that all the candidates are against racial bigotry and wouldn't mind at all if blacks move into Farmington Hills.

Just ask them.

A friend out there says that I've got to hit you folks over the head to get you to listen. Now tell me, was that hard enough?

Some inducement for Congress to cut the budget

Thoughts written on little scraps of paper which accumulated on my desk:

CONGRESS CAN'T say "no" to special interests, and so the budget is unbalanced. So we have more money chasing the same supply of goods — hence inflation.

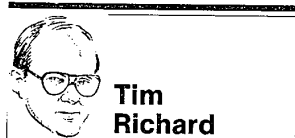
Washington, D.C.'s consumption of liquor, per person, is the highest of any town in the Republic.

Solution: Don't sell any more liquor in Washington, don't serve any more liquor there, and don't allow any liquor to be transported into Washington until the federal budget is balanced.

Shouldn't take long.

CONGRESS PASSES a lot of laws — too many, some folks think — but has a habit of exempting itself from those laws. Some examples compiled by Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.):

- The Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- The Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972.
- The Equal Pay Act.
- The Fair Labor Standards Act.
- The National Labor Relations Act.
- The Occupational Safety and Health Act.
- The Social Security Act.



Tim Richard

- The Freedom of Information Act.
- The Privacy Act.

How's that for a double standard?

OIL COMPANIES' earnings in the third quarter are up 80 to 200 percent over a year ago, but the companies say most of the increase is attributable to "foreign operations."

We may take comfort, then, in the fact that Big Oil is gouging "those people over there" and not us.

Somehow that isn't very comforting.

SPEAKING OF double standards, did you notice the one applied recently in Wayne County Circuit Court?

Although the county is broke, Judge Richard Dunn ordered what few bucks remained, and any new bucks that might come in, to be paid first to court employees, which we may take to include judges.

I asked County Board Chairman Richard Manning about that, but he said not to jump on Judge Dunn too quickly. It seems Dunn is under orders from the State Supreme Court administrator to issue such an order, and the supreme court, as we all know, has superintending powers over lower courts.

And so we have the State Supreme Court, guardian of the notion that all folks are created equal, saying that court employees are more equal than other employees, especially on pay day, whenever there is a pay day.

BUREAUCRATS are unpopular people today, especially in the rhetoric of tax limitation folks. Yet I have a couple of hunches we are picking on bureaucrats unfairly as the causes of increasing government spending.

Take Oakland County. When was the last year County Executive Daniel T. Murphy added any employees to the general government payroll? Not in some years — and yet in 1979 Oakland found itself with three more circuit judges, their staffs and a major remodeling job to pay for.

Wayne County's recent history has been one of continuing cutbacks — albeit not enough — in county employment, except in the judiciary.

**Vote
Tuesday,
Nov. 6**

Shirlee Iden writes

Remember Dallas and Camelot

November, ever a political month, recalls election days and other days. Most notable is the day nearly 16 years ago, when the dashing young president who brought us Camelot was gunned down in Dallas.

Even today, visiting Dallas brings thoughts of that Nov. 22, a black day in American history when President John F. Kennedy was fatally wounded as thousands watched.

My first visit to Dallas was a happy one. Husband Jack had managed to get away for the weekend and would watch as I accepted a journalism award.

Knowing no one in the city, we talked to everyone we encountered. And, invariably, the subject turned to the assassination.

"The whole world stood still," Thomas V. Meachum, a cabbie, told us. "I was in the super market when I heard the news."

"I was so shocked I forgot what I went for. I can't forget that day nor will anyone else in Dallas. It was a low blow for the city."

As every cabbie is prepared to do, Meachum showed us the red brick building, known as the Texas School Books Depository, where Lee Harvey Oswald hid. And then he pointed out the very window the shots are believed to have come from.

ANOTHER cab driver who came to Dallas a year after the shooting said his passengers always want to see where it happened and visit the Kennedy Memorial.

"Even folks with one hour between flights will ask to come here and pay for an expensive round trip from the airport," Henry Brown said.

To do with them, but there's the gulf."

A visit to the Kennedy Museum, a small unassuming memorial, points out the stranger-than-fiction coincidences of the Kennedy and Lincoln assassinations.

Lincoln was elected in 1860 after de-

bates on civil rights issues. Kennedy was elected in 1960 after debates on the same issues, still vital after a century.

Both men were known for their wit, their love of Shakespeare and of the Bible which they frequently quoted in speeches.

Lincoln had a secretary named Kennedy, and Kennedy had a secretary named Lincoln, and both lost a child while in the presidency.

The two presidents were shot on Friday (although Lincoln died the next day) and both were shot through the back of the head in the presence of their wives. Neither regained consciousness.

The victims each had spoken to intimates of being assassinated shortly before their death. Each had the largest funeral of his time in the entire country.

Both Lincoln and Kennedy were succeeded by former senators who were southern Democrats named Johnson.

And both assassins were southerners who were subsequently killed by gun shot before they came to trial.

YET ANOTHER cabbie told us during our weekend in Dallas that the youngest Kennedy brother, Ted, "is a shoe-in."

"He'll automatically be elected president," the cabbie contended.

That Kennedy's hat will be thrown in the presidential ring two days from now. Two Kennedy brothers have fallen victim to assassins. Yet for better or worse, you can be sure this Kennedy will give the campaign his political all.

Whether you're a Kennedy fan and long for the renaissance of Camelot or will cast your vote for another aspirant, most Americans will agree on one thing. Better that the old superstition about things happening in threes won't apply here.

No one is longing for the world to stand still again as it did on Nov. 22, 1963.

Reader asks concern for senior citizens

Editor: Just a short walk, I mean no more than a 15 minute trek away from each of us, lives a senior citizen who is really struggling to keep mind, body and soul together.

The next time you drive to Kroger's or Chatham's or Kmart, look down that dirt road off the main street at the trailer park and try to visualize what life is like in those small, run-down homes at these locations.

I've talked with a number of people involved in working with senior citizens at the Gathering Place, Catholic Social Services, St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Commission on Aging. Let me share with you some of the experiences they encounter in their work.

One elderly lady has not been shopping in a store for over six years. Her children bring her provisions, but don't have time to take her out on a shopping trip.

Many senior citizens are facing winter with a great deal of anxiety. Their fuel oil supplier has informed them they will no longer make partial deliveries. It's a fill-up or nothing. Furthermore, the fuel suppliers no longer will accept budget payment plans — it's cash on delivery.

One senior citizen, living in a trailer, has a broken window. She is worried because cold weather is approaching and she doesn't know how her window will be replaced.

In another instance, a lady's home is very poorly insulated and the cost of heating her home keeps rising despite the fact that her income does not. Her best and occasionally only meal each day is provided by the Meals on Wheels program. She is making a choice between satisfying hunger or health.

Rental of the apartment one senior citizen resides in has risen from \$180 to \$310 per month in ten years, even though this person's income has been relatively unchanged during this period. She is terrified of becoming sick because she does not know how she could afford medical treatment.

Numerous long-time Farmington area residents find they can no longer live in this area when they retire. They have to migrate to other areas like Westland in spite of the fact that most of their friends live in the Farmington area.

One elderly couple, aged 88 and 94, are barely surviving and are very dependent because they feel society considers they have lived too long, even though they are both in good health.

Many parents live with their children, who turn out to be very reluctant hosts. In some cases, the only reason they tolerate their parents is for the social security or insurance checks they control for their parents. Some of the senior citizens in these situations are not even allowed to join the remainder

of the family for meals. There have been instances of mental and physical abuse, called "granny abuse."

A frequent approach senior citizens take, is to cut down on doctor prescribed medication in order to have sufficient money for food and housing.

Because of the rising cost of rent, food and utilities, some senior citizens have to move out of their Farmington area homes and move in with their children who may now be living very far from the Farmington area.

One elderly man is confined to his room in a nursing home and calls an agency daily inquiring about the status of senior citizen housing. He lives for the day he will be able to move out of his room and into senior citizen housing.

One couple did an excellent job of planning for their retirement and did enjoy the first couple of years, but then a major illness to one of the couple wiped out their savings and has now reduced them to a survival existence.

There is a very important election coming up in Farmington Hills for the city council. Senior citizen housing will help make life more secure, more comfortable and less stressful for those fortunate enough to be accepted. When you enter the voting booth, please let your conscience guide your selection. Vote for the candidates who are for senior citizen housing and support getting started as soon as possible.

We have a wonderful opportunity to make a statement about the kind of community and kind of people we are. The statement is we care. Please, let's not blow it.

ED BECKER,
Farmington Hills

Advocates justice rather than emotion

Editor: When we moved to Farmington Hills a year ago, we thought we were coming to a progressive, enlightened fair-minded community. The current campaign for city council and the results of the primary election have led us to wonder about our original expectations. The issue of adequate housing is showing us where we really stand as a community.

It seems we have a choice as a city. We can vote to maintain the status quo and support an "I've got it, too bad you don't" mentality, or we can vote to put our sense of justice and concern for all citizens' needs above all else.

We can vote to be a city where people are central or a city where proper-

ty values become the ultimate criteria for our community decisions.

We hope the voters listen to all the candidates and choose those who are able to address a wide range of issues and will make their decisions based on morally sound principles and not on the desire to please special interest groups.

Leaders who make decisions based on principles of human justice and dignity rather than emotion or expedience may not always be popular, but they may ultimately be more progressive and achieve lasting results. It's our choice.

MR. AND MRS. GEORGE WRIGLEY, JR.
Farmington Hills

Incumbents who support seniors are endorsed

Editor: As a resident of Farmington and Farmington Hills for 23 years, I ask you to please endorse candidates Jan Dolan and Joanne Smith for re-election to the Farmington Hills City Council. This election campaign has been filled with falsehoods and distortions by those who have made this a single issue and who oppose senior citizen and low to moderate income housing. The public is confused. The issue is simple. Either we want seniors and young people to be able to afford to live in Farmington Hills or we tell them that we have no room for them. The proposed plan for privately developed housing for seniors and low to moderate income persons that takes advantage of the return to Farmington Hills

of some federal tax dollars is the only plan proposed that will be able to proceed immediately and the only plan that is affordable at today's money market without raising local taxes.

Liberal and conservative will agree that it is the only workable plan presently available to residents of Farmington Hills.

Candidates Jan Dolan and Joanne Smith, along with present council members, have agreed unanimously to give our seniors and low to moderate income persons a chance to remain in the Hills. Please help them and the community by endorsing Jan Dolan and Joanne Smith for re-election to city council.

MARY S. AVERY,
Farmington Hills

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