

Monday's Commentary

Wily ol' Trout will follow the new current

The ins are out and the outs are in. And as usual, Mayor Earl Oppertbauer (aka the Trout) is swimming down the middle of the stream, fin in air, testing the political winds.

If listened to closely enough, the winds can be heard howling wolf, wolf, wolf.

That just about sums up last week's Farmington Hills council election and how it's going to be for the next couple of years.

Last Monday, Hizoner was a stalwart supporter of the senior citizen/low income housing project down at the corner of Freedom and Drake. By Wednesday, the day after the election, his rainbow colors could be seen changing.

Just what the wily old politico has concealed under his gills will be revealed at tonight's city council session. Rumor has it that the Freedom/Drake project will be swallowed up like a minnow by the Trout, never to be heard of again.

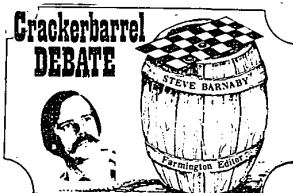
After all, it is the housing opponents who will be holding the winning hand come January. No sense wasting time with present alliances when you can get on the good side of the new guys right away, right mayor?

Such a maneuver is called shifting with the tide. It's also called political survival and that's why Earl Oppertbauer has been around for so many years.

Frankly, I'm looking forward to watching the new city council for the next two years. Most interesting to see is for how long Donn Wolf, Bill Lange and Jack Burwell will remain cuddly.

Odds have it that the triumvirate will be short-lived — especially after Oppertbauer gets through testing out who will be his allies.

You can make one sure bet — Oppertbauer and Wolf won't be political friends for long. It just isn't



in the cards for the two to be allies. Each likes to run the show too much to stay on good terms. In short, Oppertbauer and Wolf will build separate alliances among the remaining council members.

To be fair, Wolf will do all right. He's a survivor. What I want to see is a guy like Lange, who has vowed to vote the way the people want him to vote, rather than his conscience.

I can see it now — the chambers will be packed with irate residents, some on one side of an issue, some on the other. Maybe he'll just have the persons present raise their hands and then he'll know how to vote.

I won't even guess how Burwell will react. Maybe he'll follow in the footsteps of Councilwoman Jody Soronen who once proclaimed that she would vote the way the majority of the council voted.

Other sure bets. Joe Alkateeb will be this city's next mayor. Donn Wolf will be the mayor after Alkateeb.

See you on Monday nights, council watchers.

The Flip Side by craig piechura



Shirlee's sallies

by Shirlee Iden



Founding fathers not lost

Nobody's perfect.

But two centuries after our founding fathers wrote the Constitution, it continues to look as though they had a number of right ideas.

The government they designed has stood up well with a surprisingly low number of amendments necessary to keep things working well.

Changes in the world wrought by technology and science have had an immense effect on human life. But not much on human nature.

If there's one right idea that James Madison and his cohorts insisted upon, it's the separation of church and state.

At this moment, our country's prestige and the lives and welfare of more than 60 Americans hangs on the whim of a religious fanatic who is the government in Iran today.

Neither traditional diplomatic efforts nor polite reason have swayed the Ayatollah Khomeini to now. And in the case of the besieged American embassy, it's unreasonable fanaticism that's in control.

Once kings sent armies out to conquer for Christ or Islam. In the name of religion, hundreds of thousands of people died violently in the Crusades. And many other examples abound.

Just three miles from where I sit, a demagogue priest once used his pulpit

and a weekly radio program to sway thousands.

SADLY, the radio priest of the 1930s who could have exhorted for good, chose instead to attack a sitting president, Jewish people, blacks and others.

Instead of pleading for mercy for the "boast people" of the 1930s who were turned out of Nazi Europe and turned away from any refuge, he spewed hate. Finally, his own church had to silence him. Religion and politics proved too volatile a mixture.

Billy Graham, one of the most influential evangelists of our time, conceded that fact also. After Watergate, the former frequent White House visitor decided it was best to disassociate himself from the day-to-day doings of presidents.

Since the "revolution" in Iran, when a religious zealot stormed into power, personal freedom in that country has become a mockery.

Women were forced into wearing the veil and retreating from many social gains they had made in recent decades.

Under the Ayatollah Khomeini, political executions are carried out daily, unlabeled by the inconvenience of trials.

And deviation from religious norms can mean mutilation or death without

delay, under the present religious regime in Iran.

RELIGION is where we look to be uplifted, to have our better motives, our spirituality prevail. Not so under the unstable government of the Ayatollah Khomeini. There, religion is the tool for repression and hatred.

Yet, history reveals the baser side of religious fanaticism through the ages.

Truth is, when fanaticism takes over from reason, people are put in the path of injustice and on the road to tragedy.

The 60 plus people in the American embassy in Iran are innocent pawns in an irrational struggle. It is difficult to see where their salvation is going to come from.

Invading that embassy is tantamount to invading American territory. The Iranians know that as well as our government does.

But the Iranians are on a "holy" mission to punish their former Shah. They listen to voices other than reason and now lives are in jeopardy.

Though we believe our way — separating church and state — is the right way, it won't stop all Americans from doing a lot of praying for our hostages in that country.

Art as an investment

Lee Lacey swears he dreams in 3-D.

That's understandable when one learns he's a holographer. If you don't know, a hologram is a three-dimensional image exposed on photographic film through the use of laser light. A holographer is someone who makes holograms.

Still puzzled? If you've ever been to Detroit Metropolitan Airport you may have seen an ad for airport advertising showing the head of a model floating in mid-air, winking and blowing kisses to passers-by. Lacey did that hologram.

While the hologram is a fascinating development, Lacey, 32, of Southfield, found the public wasn't flocking in droves to the House of Holograms to view his three-dimensional art gallery.

SO HE ADDED a sideline. Sharing space with the House of Holograms now is Lacey's Gallery of Dimensions, a shop that features the puzzle sculptures of Miguel Berrocal. The shop is at 29289 Southfield Road, behind the Farrell's ice cream parlor.

These dismountable puzzle sculptures aren't games, though, unless you consider price tags ranging from \$225 to \$65,000 child's play.

Many of the artist's pieces are homages to other artists. In 1976 he did an 18-ton piece called "Homage to Picasso" placed in the Picasso Gardens at Malaga, Spain. Then he cast 2,000 bronze replicas of the piece made up of 20 detachable elements held together by magnets. The 12-inch by 4-inch sculpture costs \$2,300 in the Gallery of Dimensions.

An even smaller version of the piece is in the form of a pendant, called Micromento, which retails at \$225.

Business started to pick up by word of mouth, Lacey says, even before the Spanish sculptor-merchandise's bronze wares were formally introduced at the gallery.

THE REASON? Collectibles are the latest rage among investors who'd rather look at art in their living room than a stock portfolio in their safe when they're looking for a hedge against inflation.

"We're getting the young, middle-class investors who want to put their hands on something, enjoy it, have it around the house and still have an investment. After all, we're the generation that wants everything right now."

"But for a person to buy any collectible — be it antiques or fine art — they have to really like the piece to begin with," Lacey explains. "If they ever do decide to sell it they should shop around for buyers. Find the highest price and you'll make a good profit on it. Collectibles or art can be much better than money market certificates. But I don't tell people that when they come in the door. A person has to be astute buying art."



Lee Lacey limbers the wings of this gleaming metal bird. It is one of the few pieces on display that does not disassemble.

Lacey met the artist Berrocal through a mutual friend. Berrocal got interested in Lacey's work after seeing a hologram he did for the Paris Air Show.

Lacey spent a week at the artist's 200-year-old, 40-room villa near Verona in 1978 shortly after that.

"He has a staff of about 50 people just to keep the place dusted," Lacey recalls.

LACEY IS presently working with the artist on a new dismountable sculpture that will feature a hologram housed inside the detachable artwork.

"Berrocal is fascinated by holograms because you can have two things occupying the same space, the object and the image," explains Lacey. "He wants to be able to take off a piece, like a head, and let the hologram reappear in its place holographically."

In addition to running the House of Holograms and the Gallery of Dimensions, Lacey also owns the Holographic Arts Co. of Chicago and serves as a consultant to North Carolina State University, his alma mater, where he's trying to establish holography as an engineering course.

But Lacey's devoted most of his energies toward the grand opening of the gallery Nov. 17-18. At the showing they'll show prospective buyers how to dismantle and reassemble Berrocal's most difficult puzzle sculptures such as "Goliath."

"When you (take the pieces apart) you start to feel like the artist himself felt," Lacey said. "You feel like you know the creative process Berrocal went through."

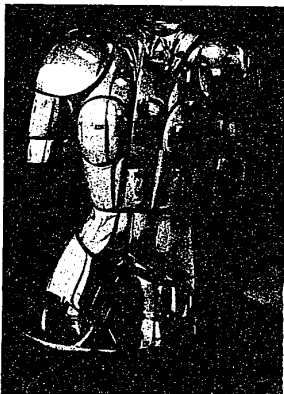
There are 79 elements to "Goliath" and each must be put on in order. A how-to-do-it book comes with every sculpture.

If you buy "Goliath," you have the choice of assembling the statue with a modest fig leaf covering the genitalia or assembling it with a circumcised or uncircumcised penis. Berrocal is unable to jet to Southfield the weekend of the grand opening. But that doesn't mean he won't appear here.

You'll still be able to see the artist's profile from every angle.

Last summer Lacey put the artist on a turntable and filmed him with laser light and special emulsion film for a Berrocal hologram.

Here's looking at you, kid.



This metal man is a puzzle that can sit in your living room for the enjoyment and entertainment of your friends. Price tags for such investments can run from \$225 to \$65,000. (Staff photos by Mindy Saunders)

From our readers

Editor 'unprofessional'

Editor:

In the three years we have been living in Farmington, we have come to depend on the Farmington Observer as a valued supplement to the Detroit News to keep us informed.

But my confidence in your newspaper as an objective reporter of facts and information has suddenly evaporated with the appearance of the "Commentary" by your so-called editor Steve Barnaby in the issue of Monday, Nov. 5.

Barnaby obviously has a strong, personal stake of some sort in the issue since, in the same paper, he signs a personal endorsement ad for one of the "pro" candidates. But he also obviously is unable to separate his emotions from his job, and uses the editorial page to

vent a substantial amount of spleen in a manner which I believe is entirely unworthy of the kind of newspaper you purport to be.

Aside from the fact that Barnaby's writing is highly ungrammatical and unprofessional in treatment, I was astounded at his language. Any honest, skilled writer knows of ways to indicate disapproval without resorting to such terms as:

"... a piece of garbage" (literature he doesn't agree with) "... three guys wandering around" (candidates) "... having a field day scaring hell out of people" (candidates you don't agree with.)

"... full of baloney" (candidates you don't agree with) "Detroit's Herman Gardens project is banded

about..." (how do you bandy about 100 acres of real estate with buildings on it?) "... filling the project with Armenians..." (the apparently doesn't know how the Armenian reference came about, but he takes it out of context).

Etc., ad infinitum.

Barnaby is entitled to his opinion. It's just a shame that he has the Observer as a forum in which to project his bias under the banner of editorial freedom.

Though his/your freedom of speech in print is rightfully guaranteed by law, it seems to me that he/you also have some responsibility for at least a little objectivity.

I certainly see none of it indicated in the issue in question.

Arthur D. Newell
Farmington

A Division
of
Suburban Communications
Corporation

Philip H. Power
Chairman of the Board

Richard D. Agnien
President
Chief Executive Officer

Farmington Observer

"Successor of the Farmington Enterprise"

Steve Barnaby
Editor

2335 Farmington Road
Farmington, Mich. 48024
(313) 477-5450

John Reddy, General Mgr.

Thomas A. Riordan, Executive Editor

George J. Hagan, Advertising Director, Fred J. Wright, Circulation Director