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Editor

## When issues heat up, editors draw blasts

Three major issues are getting lots of attention in the suburbs these days:

- Providing senior citizen housing.
- Closing schools because of declining enrollment.
- Creating neighborhood homes for groups of retarded adults.

This column in no way attempts to offer solutions. Rather, it tries to clarify the role of the community newspaper in presenting developments about such critical events.

**IT MIGHT BE BENEFICIAL** at this point to define what a community newspaper really is.

Unlike metropolitan papers, the community newspaper is devoted to one town, plus the immediate areas which the logically into that town. That would include such things as school districts.

The community paper's staff devotes all of its time, energy and efforts to reporting the activities and events of the area. There are no state or national news wire services, no syndicated columnists, no comic pages.

Concentrated within community newspaper pages are the happenings, the humor, the heroics, and the heartbreak of one area.

**COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER READERS** usually are a loyal band. They often refer to it as "our paper." They tolerate occasional blunders and slips as they will accept less than perfection from wives, husbands, sons, and daughters. After all, the community newspaper is usually considered part of the family.

All goes well until the big issues arrive — like building senior citizen housing or deciding which schools to close.

That's when the people begin to take sides.

And a lot of readers are suddenly troubled, because "their" newspaper is suddenly printing a lot of thoughts and opinions from the "other" side. Folks don't seem to understand. Some are outraged.

Since the editor is pretty visible, moving constantly around the community, a few readers side up to him or her to ask embarrassing and pointed questions.

**AS IT TURNS OUT**, the editor must explain the job. First what it is not — to espouse only one side of a controversy.

He/she notes there is the responsibility of presenting an issue as objectively and fully as possible, with all sides given the chance to state their feelings.

On top of that, there is the open invitation for readers to express themselves, in their own words, via letters to the editor.

**TWICE EACH WEEK**, a vital part of my job is to read all 12 Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, from Rochester to Canton, from Garden City to Southfield. Toss in Birmingham, Troy, West Bloomfield, Westland, Livonia, Plymouth, Redford and Farmington to round out the even dozen.

That makes for a lot of community news reading.

And almost without fail, the content is extremely interesting. I am always impressed with the way the various O&E staffs carry out their prime responsibilities of covering their communities — the bad and the beautiful.

These three prime issues keep popping up every where. Nearly identical arguments one reads about housing for seniors in Birmingham pop up in Farmington. Flory comments regarding the closing of schools are mirrored from town to town.

**THE NEWEST BLASTS** are coming over homes for clusters of five or six retarded adults who live as a family unit.

The concept is growing. With each new proposal for such a residence, arguments, pro and con, spring up. The editor's job is to see that all sides are well aired in the columns of his/her paper.

This is what community journalism is all about. Would that readers might remember this.

**IN PREPARING FOR** a recent appearance before a Reporting 300 class at Michigan State University, I asked O&E community editors to jot down some of their thoughts on their brand of journalism and include a few tips for students.

Here are some of those observations:  
"Decide who your audience is. Define what is important to them. Write about it, clearly and simply. Implicit is the understanding that you will be a dependable source of the news you

write about — dependable in that news is covered consistently, accurately."

Another:

"What's going to happen is more important than what happened. People stuff is best what's happening to them, what they're doing."

Another:

"In budget stories, learn to calculate percentages because dollar figures alone can boggle the mind. Tell what the story means to the citizen tomorrow, not what the board did last night."

Another: "Reporting for a community news paper means telling local readers how issues affect them — how the school mileage will cost them and so forth. Get a good liberal arts education. Don't skip the math, accounting and science courses. Plus a lot of English literature and grammar."

And finally, this one:

"Reporting in the community type newspaper is the wave of the future in journalism. Any student (going into this field) should be prepared for a very sophisticated audience. Frequently readers know subjects (you write about) as well as the writer. You're accessible enough at the local level so that you hear about it if something is wrong."

I hope this gives you an insight into the goals of this and other community newspapers.

## Why dental drills don't hurt so much today

**Q.** Dear Dr. DeFrancesco: What is a difference between today's dental drills and those of past years? — R.W.

**A.** Tremendous improvements have been made in the efficiency of dental service. An example is the equipment used to prepare the teeth for fillings and crowns.

For years dentists have used rotary tools (drills) for this purpose. These cutting instruments rotated at top speed of 5,000 revolutions per minute. Discomfort was often felt from the vibration, pressure, and heat that developed in the use of these instruments.

Too, improvements in the motors that turn the instruments and the use of the turbine principle permit speeds of up to 300,000 revolutions per minute. Only a very slight touch is required to cut enamel and dentin at these high speeds.

The rotations are so rapid that the sense of vibration is eliminated. Of course heat is generated by such rapid cutting, but the instruments are devised so that a spray of water and air is directed at the



**Dr. Joseph DeFrancesco**

area being cut, keeping the temperature at a comfortable level.

With the advent of this high speed, new types of cutting tools had to be developed to prevent their rapid wear and loss of cutting efficiency. These im-

provements add up to more speed and comfort in dental operations.

**Q.** Dear Dr. DeFrancesco: Are acid drinks injurious to adult teeth? — A.B.

**A.** The excessive use of acid drinks such as lemon juice can damage adult teeth. The acid in itself may be sufficiently strong if the drinks are used frequently to dissolve the tooth substance, or the acid may neutralize or reduce the natural effectiveness of the saliva in protecting the teeth.

**Q.** Dear Dr. DeFrancesco: I have a clicking noise

upon opening my mouth or while chewing. — P.R.

**A.** The sound is a joint disturbance (Temporo-Mandibular joint).

Conditions which may contribute to or cause this disturbance are malocclusion of the teeth or uneven bite. (Bite is the relation between the upper and lower teeth when the mouth is closed and the teeth are brought into contact).

Other causes are: overclosure of the bite, poorly fitting dental restorations and habit, such as grinding, clenching, or gritting of the teeth.

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