

## Hour of decision nears

The hour of decision is here for Farmington area residents. They must either support the Farmington Community Center with their money and in-kind services or let it become another fond memory.

To say that the center is struggling to survive would be an understatement. In operation since 1969, the historic home has served thousands as an activity center.

But every year the economic struggle becomes more difficult. Coping with the center's money troubles is something akin to stopping an avalanche. The larger they get, the more difficult they are to stop.

Every year the center is forced to

shave a little here, cut a little there. The biggest casualty is the once-georgian mansion. Anyone who has ever maintained a home realizes the expenses incurred — and the older the home, the bigger the expenses.

The worst thing to do is to let those needed repairs go "until next year." Unfortunately, the center has been forced to do just that. And the old Goodenough home is beginning to show the scars of neglect.

The center — its board, executive director and volunteers — has served the community well. Frankly, the residents have been less-than-ardent in reciprocating.

Certainly, thousands come from throughout the metropolitan area to take advantage of some truly interesting and rare classes. At times it's difficult to find a place to park around the center.

But class fees are inadequate in keeping the center afloat.

Alternatives are available. The city of Farmington Hills could absorb the center into its recreation plans. At present, the city is contemplating purchasing the adjacent property. Or the property could revert back to the family which once owned it.

The community will decide the center's fate when it votes with its pocket-book in the coming years.



Although it's often difficult to find a parking spot at the Farmington Community Center, financial

difficulties plague the former residence of Lumen P. Goodenough.

## Sparks fly when you say 'group home'



Nick Sharkey

THE SPECTER of group homes for the mentally retarded has returned to the suburbs. Troy, Redford Township and Plymouth Township homeowners protest the start of group homes in their neighborhoods.

In Redford, homeowners held a meeting last week to plan strategy to stop plans for construction of a home planned for six physically handicapped and mentally retarded adults. A similar home in Plymouth Township is opposed by the Plymouth Township Board. Troy homeowners are riled up about a proposed home in their city.

Group homes use a relatively new concept of getting mentally retarded adults out of sterile institutions and into residential settings. The program has been developed by the state Department of Mental Health.

IT APPEARS THAT one of the best methods of unifying a suburban neighborhood is to notify people that a group home is coming. Then the sparks start flying.

The approach in most neighborhoods is automatically to oppose a group home and then to start fighting out how to do it. Entire objective thinking is done about the advantages and disadvantages of group homes.

What are the "objections" that are trotted out? Group homes will lower property values. The mentally retarded will be unsupervised and will harm themselves or the property. Group homes are commercial enterprises in residential neighborhoods, thus violate zoning laws.

Reality is different. Studies have demonstrated that group homes do not lower property values. Group homes are well-supervised, and most

staffers have attended college. Most group homes are run by a non-profit agency working in the area of mental health.

State authorities have also taken many steps to lessen the negative impact of group homes in a suburban neighborhood. They give advance notice so homeowners are prepared for a group home. They also scatter homes throughout a community so there is no concentration in any area.

BUT RATIONAL arguments and advance warning don't seem to help. Proposed group homes can bring out the worst in any suburban neighborhood.

If we like to admit it or not, part of the attractiveness of suburbs is discrimination. We like to be surrounded by persons "who are just like us."

Poor persons can't afford to live in most suburbs because of the high price of housing. Minority groups are congregated in the inner city. The mentally retarded are kept in institutions in distant cities.

So far, those with a different economic background, race or culture have been effectively barred from the suburbs. When that is disturbed, suburbanites become upset.

So far, my personal experience with the retarded has been limited. When I was growing up, a retarded person was either put away in an institution or hidden by the family. Having a retarded person in a family was considered a disgrace.

Thankfully, that is changing. We all must learn more about the retarded — and all the other minority groups we have kept at a distance. For the retarded are people, too. That means they have the same rights as you and me.

Those rights include the benefit of living in a suburban neighborhood.

## Defense \$\$\$ siphoned at our expense



crackerbarrel debate  
Steve Barnaby

JUST ABOUT anyone who has ever been associated with the military realizes that most of its forts and installations are based in the South.

Us Northerners folk never seemed to mind. After all, traffic congestion is bad enough without having tanks and troop carriers tearing up the highways. Oh, sure, once in a while on our way up or back from northern Michigan, we see a meager convoy of National Guardsmen plying their way to Grayling to serve summer stints. Even that looks odd.

But for years the idea of allowing a full-scale, military-training facility to be built on the outskirts of a Farmington, Birmingham or Livonia would have been met with outrage.

Lord, what fools we have been.

MANY OF US distinctly remember the Nike bases in Rouge Park; along Southfield Road near Schoolcraft; at the north end of Belle Isle; and on what's now the Auburn Heights campus of Oakland Community College. In the Cold War days, those areas were the booties, the outskirts of town.

But after the Cold War mentality thawed, those bases were dismantled, and that's the last the Detroit area saw of soldiers in the streets.

After all, we told ourselves, let the poor old South put up with the annoyances that come along with military bases — rowdy recruits, prostitutes and packs of wild dogs roaming the streets.

We in the North had industry, jobs, wealth. Let the South, with its great military tradition, have the bases.

NOW MICHIGAN, and dozens of other northern and western states, are losing billions of badly-needed tax dollars — much of which goes to our southern neighbors.

Pennies per individual, you say. Not so. Every family in Michigan is paying thousands of dollars a year.

In a report recently released by a Lansing re-

search group, Employment Research Associates, the devastating effects of this procedure were graphically demonstrated.

All in all, Michigan residents pay out \$6.5 billion more in defense taxes than they will get back this year. That's \$2,350 per family — a healthy down payment on something like, say, an automobile. Metropolitan Detroit will lose about \$2.9 billion or \$2,200 a family. We all know that we could do a lot more with those bucks than the eds do by burying them in missile silos or sending troops off to Lebanon to get the Israelis off the hook.

Other economically hard-hit Michigan cities also are suffering from this unquenchable military sap sucker. Flint will pay out \$529.7 million, while Grand Rapids forks out \$411.4 million. Even little old Jackson is forced to pay out \$61.4 million in military homage.

Better it be called highway robbery.

IT'S TIME we put the federal government and our southern neighbors on notice that the gravy days are over. We no longer are willing, nor can we afford, to foot the bill for exorbitant military spending. Since the Civil War Reconstruction era, we have footed the bill.

Certainly we must be willing to pay our share for a sound military defense. But so must other parts of the country which, up to this time, have only reaped a profit.

Like us, Chicago, New York, Pittsburgh and Cleveland need those oh-so-valuable tax dollars to rebuild economies. By the way, the Big Apple will fork over \$9 billion this year while Chicago will cough up \$7 billion.

It's important that we, as Michigan residents, let our congressional representatives know that we insist this economic bloodletting be stopped. If we bury our heads in the sand on this issue, all the atomic weapons and deployment forces in the world won't do us a bit of good.

## from our readers

### Library thanks Burger King

To the editor:  
Again this year the children's staff of the Farmington Community Library would like to thank Burger King's staff for sponsoring the Library's Summer Reading Club. We had another record-breaking year with 1,282 Summer Readers and a total of 12,528 books read and reported on.

Your 2,000 Burger King Free Meal coupons were terrific rewards for the Summer Readers, and they were much appreciated. Our Summer Reading Club Party at Farmington High School was also a success with 540 readers in attendance. We are grateful for the napkins, cups, dispenser and orange drink for this many thirsty readers.

Again, thank you for your strong support of the Summer Reading program in the Farmington Community.

The Children's Staff

### Solar airwalls recommended

To the editor:  
Cold weather is knocking at our doors again, and winter will soon be upon us. Michigan homeowners are again looking for ways to keep the heat in and the cold out.

In the past two or three years hundreds of Michigan homes, whose owners are of the pioneering spirit, have been partially heated by solar airwalls. Solar airwalls are attached to the south

wall of homes with sunny southern exposures. They are black in appearance to attract radiation from the sun.

As the inside of the airwall heats up, the warm air currents rise and flow into the home through openings at the top. Cooler air from along the floors in the home is drawn back into the lower part of the airwall through openings near the floor. A natural convection is attained with this type system. Best of all, the extra heat is free. Savings of up to 30 percent are claimed to be possible but none are guaranteed.

The Energy Administration in Lansing says that good results have been obtained in Michigan with this type of system. The state is putting its money where its mouth is. Michigan allows a 15-percent tax credit or refund on the first \$2,000 of cost on a state certified system and another 5 percent on the next \$8,000.

The credit will be lower in 1983. On top of this the federal government allows a whopping 40 percent tax credit on up to \$10,000 cost of a solar system. A tax credit is a bottom line reduction of your tax.

Other factors which favor solar in Michigan are a refund of the sales tax paid and exemption from property taxes on state-certified systems.

Kenneth Kemp  
Farmington Hills

### Lutherans get warm welcome

To the Editor:  
Re: the Lutheran High Northwest-Holly Hills Homeowners controversy.  
The road on which I live, Rollcrest

Road, is an access road for Harrison High school students living in Holly Hills as well as for Lutheran High Northwest students coming in from 12 Mile. The Lutheran school is actually west of Holly Hills between Summerwood and Alyshea. People living on Sugarwing, Pond Ridge and other subdivision roads are remote from the school. Highmeadow Road is the access road from Middlebelt to the Lutheran school.

I live across from Harrison, not in the subdivision. However, through the years, I have picked up garbage and porno magazines off of the ground, kicked school skippers, some of whom have started fires, off my property, and nagged pot-smoking and beer-drinking kids to shape up. These were all Harrison kids. I recognized their pictures from the yearbook.

Should I ask the city fathers to close Rollcrest to Harrison kids, causing Holly Hills walkers to go all the way around Middlebelt? Of course not. Neither do I cause the Harrison-Holly Hills drivers, speeding down my road, to go another way.

I have never heard of one incident involving a kid from Lutheran Northwest. Perhaps their parents do the driving. I like the public high schools. All of my kids have gone, are going, or will go to Harrison. Harrison has superb academics, sports, drama and music. Thursday's Observer carried the names of 10 Harrison National Merit semifinalists.

If parochial students' parents are willing to sacrifice for their kids, I wish them well (but not to the point of having tuition tax credits).

As for the proposed gymnasium and

the projected enrollment increase at Lutheran High Northwest, so what? Let those parents who drive out miles for their kids' sake use my street to get to the school, while I walk across 12 Mile to cheer on the great Harrison Hawk football team.

H, neighbor.

Myrna Jean  
Farmington Hills

### Reader objects to editorials

To the editor:  
As a resident of the city of Farmington, I feel something should be said regarding your Sept. 23 editorial, "City Rants it to Hills Restaurant." I believe our "stodgy city fathers" have not kicked Mr. Kapsalis in the teeth as you stated, but instead had the courage and sensitivity to stand behind a small group of residents.

Police records will show that there was a history of trouble when another restaurant at the same location was operating 24 hours a day. There is now a noise abatement ordinance in Farmington requiring, among other things, that restaurants within 100 feet of private homes must stop serving at 1 a.m. Mr. Kapsalis was aware of this ordinance before he bought the property.

We residents welcome Mr. Kapsalis and his restaurant to the area. However, from past experience, we do not welcome the after-2 a.m. dinner crowd. With 18 restaurants operating 24 hours a day, Mr. Kapsalis must be doing quite well for himself. I don't think his 19th restaurant will suffer greatly operating only 20 hours.

Again, we residents thank city council for standing behind the little guy and not letting a restaurant chain tell city council how things are going to be.

I would like to comment also on your editorial "Bigotry shows ugly face on Main Street." Your remarks as far as I am concerned promote racism. By irresponsibly printing the racial remarks of a few people, you have done a great disservice to the owners of TJ Maxx and the people of all races who shop there.

Robert Baessler  
Farmington

### Cheer the Hawks academically

To the editor:  
A big Harrison cheer on your coverage of our football team, the Hawks. Your articles, along with 1981 Class B crown and sterling start (2-0) this year have boosted the school's pride tremendously.

It's too bad you don't mention academic victories in your reports, however. Harrison not only has gridiron greats, scholarships awarded to our Class of 1982 totalled \$120,100, with 75 percent of the entire class going on to college. This consistently high average — 70-80 percent of Harrison students enroll in college — started five years back in our short yet proud history, and

continues on through this year, with 35 members representing Harrison in the National Honor Society.

Thus we have denounced our former title of "the school that looks like a jail" in favor of a much more truthful description: the school that harbors many of the most academically and athletically inclined students in Farmington.

Hail to the Hawks.

Kathy Mehniske  
Harrison High School  
Farmington Hills

### Bigotry is frightening

To the editor:  
Glad to see your article on bigotry in today's paper.

Bigotry frightens me, too, and for a long time I've believed in speaking out when neighbors or friends spread their venom.

Just the other day I ran into a casual neighbor at the Chatham store and she informed me she usually shopped at Farmer Jack's on Schoolcraft but there are too many blacks there.

When she knew how I felt she said, "Oh, I know there are some good ones but..."

I go to a mixed congregation church in the city and find it a marvelous experience to know people from different backgrounds.

I really feel sorry for bigots.  
Jean McKenzie  
Redford