

Opinion

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Lansing should not ignore spas

MUCH ADO about nothing? Hardly. The Farmington and Farmington Hills city councils have acted responsibly in considering ordinances that require massage parlors and schools to be locally licensed and inspected. Wisely, the ordinances also require masseurs and masseuses to be free of contagious or communicable diseases.

Even though a 1980 state act requires those giving massages to be licensed, lack of money has prevented the state from enforcing the law or regulating such practitioners, said Judith Dennis, administrative secretary to the state Board of Massage.

Therein lies the problem.

Given that concern about activities in oriental health spas now is statewide, law enforcement and related regulation should come from Lansing, State Sen. Jack Paxon of Farmington Hills and state Rep. Wilbur Brotherton of Farmington should grab the leadership reins in trying to accomplish funding for that purpose.

MEANWHILE, THE two local city councils are on a constitutional collision course — and wrongly trying to over-legislate morality — in supporting an ordinance provision prohibiting a man from massaging a woman and vice versa.

Constitutionally, the provision is on rocky ground — a position acknowledged by Farmington Hills city attorney Paul Bibeau.

Just a presumption that illicit sexual activity is more likely to occur between people of the opposite sex certainly isn't enough of a reason to prosecute or prohibit a man from giving a massage to a woman.

The provision smacks almost of being a form of job discrimination in that most massage parlor clients are men.

What's more, there's no basis for the provision in light of another ordinance provision prohibiting masseurs and mas-

seuses from plying their trade in a closed room beyond public view. That certainly should ruin any appetite for an unlawful sexual encounter.

FARMINGTON HILLS council members will vote on the controversial provision when they consider approving a massage regulation ordinance next Monday. Farmington councilmen approved the provision in adopting an ordinance Jan. 20. Once the ordinance takes effect in Farmington Hills, oriental health spas there would have 60 days to comply. No such spas currently operate in Farmington.

The regulatory moves are the result of a public outcry over allegations that oriental health spas serve as fronts for prostitution. In October, the Farmington Hills Police raided five such spas in response to community complaints about the spas' operation. Seventeen people were arrested on prostitution-related charges. Trials are pending.

Citizens for a Decent Community, a grassroots group of Farmington Hills residents concerned about what's going on behind closed spa doors, heightened community awareness and provided the impetus for the regulatory moves while picketing oriental health spas on Nine Mile Road.

Make no mistake: it's the duty of a city council to tackle community issues head-on. But in legislating, it's the council's duty to do so not only in a timely manner, but with prudence.

Farmington-area residents may want massage parlors regulated, but they no doubt also want the laws governing them to stand up in court.

Frankly put, Mr. Mayors and fellow Farmington and Farmington Hills council members: There's wisdom in licensing and regulating the operation of massage parlors and schools, but in doing so, don't skirt the Constitution. And please, don't try to over-legislate morality!

— Bob Sklar

Roads in Oakland: They need a boost

SOMETIMES YOU really should want to pay your taxes. I know that's hard to believe as we creep ever closer to that magic day in April when Uncle Sam demands his due.

But really now, some taxes actually benefit you. Despite what they think in Washington, there is more to spending your tax money than defense contracts and limousine service for VIPs.

And while the nation's leaders are figuring ways to avoid paying for our priorities while saving theirs, we have some important business with which to deal — our roads.

That's right, our roads. More than likely, the roads in your area could stand a tad of upgrading whether you live in Wayne or Oakland.

BUT AT present, the focus is on Oakland County. And, as usual, the bureaucracy being what it is, we are slightly behind the eight ball.

Anyone who drives around the county knows the problem.

We are paying the price for our prosperity. The resounding business boom in areas like Novi, Farmington Hills and Troy can be heard around the metro area.

But even more graphically, it can be seen through the front windows of our cars — in the form of endless traffic jams on too-narrow, overused roads.

The Oakland County Road Commission recently released a report outlining the problem and listing some tax alternatives to upgrade the roads.

Before you read on and get too upset about more taxes, just stop and think about what's happening in Oakland County. While growth in the rest of Michigan ground to a dead halt during the recession, Oakland, a one-time rural haven, has developed into a major business and living center.

COUNTY ROADS are unable to handle the skyrocketing growth. Arteries like Big



crackerbarrel debate

Steve Barnaby

Beaver, Rochester Road, Crooks and Northwestern are nothing short of nightmares.

It's permanent grid lock, as many commuters refer to the situation.

The road commission's study shows that within the next 10 years, more than 200,000 additional jobs will be created in the county. That's larger than the population of any city in the county.

It's like the Silverdome filled up 2 1/2 times. And we all know what a nightmare the Silverdome traffic is just one time around.

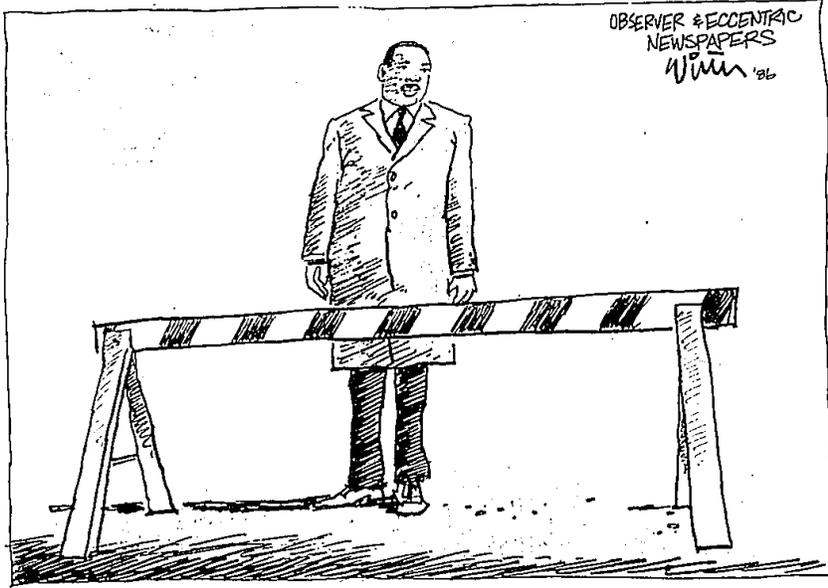
The county needs \$625 million to deal with the crisis. And the county ought to get it.

The road commission suggests a number of alternatives:

- A county property tax;
- Tax districts with new developments footing the bill for local road maintenance;
- A continuing sales tax on automotive products sold locally;
- Local vehicle fuel taxes.

Taxes always hurt. But the days of our Washington dollars doing the job quickly are coming to an end. We must fend for ourselves as the area continues to prosper.

So smile just a tad when you pay one of these taxes. Just think, with better roads, you just might get home a little earlier — and be alive to tell about it.



Sweet dreams for equality

REMEMBER DR. KING?

I fine tune the focus on the projector. There we are, a couple of college kids from the University of Detroit. It's March 14, 1986, and we're covering Dr. Martin Luther King's speech at the Grosse Pointe High School auditorium for the Varsity News.

Donald Lobsinger, chairman of a right-wing fringe group called Breakthrough, uses his pickets to block easy access to the auditorium. We walk up and down the line, looking for an opening. Finding none, we lower our heads and charge across. There's Dr. King, standing all alone on stage. There must be thousands of people in here. And look at their faces. Boy, if looks could kill...

The film rolls forward three weeks to April 4, 1968.

OH, MY GOD. They killed him. What's that? Oh, sure. We can blow up my pictures to go with the story. But, why kill a dreamer? Murder doesn't erase a dream for equality. It only creates a nightmare.

I hit the fast-forward button on the projector. It takes nearly 18 years, but the nation finally celebrates its first holiday honoring Dr. King.

Nearly a thousand people fill Southfield's pavilion. Black and white, young



Sandra Armbruster

and old. They even run out of chairs.

The speakers talked of dreams, of dedication, love and freedom.

We are "instruments of peace," says Dr. William Anderson, an adviser to Dr. King.

We join hands, raising our voices, our arms and our vision skyward. Grownsups brush their eyes while singing "the truth shall make us free." Bodies rock gently as we join Southfield/Lathrup student Gary Bokas in singing "Let there be peace on earth."

For one long, glorious moment, the dream is alive.

YET WHILE there is a celebration in Southfield, the city government refuses to co-sponsor the celebration, saying it doesn't want to set a precedent. Elsewhere in the metropolitan area, our national celebration of Dr. King's birthday passes without much notice.

School districts in our circulation area pay little attention. Bloomfield Hills had newspaper clippings displayed near school media centers. West Bloomfield schools

had packets of information available to all high school students. Farmington schools left the observance up to individual principals. Plymouth/Canton school officials said they've held programs in the past, but did nothing Monday. In Westland where blacks still live south of Michigan Avenue but there are no black elected officials in the city or schools, officials occupied themselves with a millage election.

The cities in our area, almost all white, uniformly ignored the holiday. Tiny Orchard Lake Village rescheduled its council meeting.

HOW FAR we've come; how far we have left to go.

"As long as Ronald Reagan turns back the clocks on affirmative action and gives comfort to the Ku Klux Klan, we've got some work to do," says Anderson.

"As long as there is apartheid, anti-semitism and oppression in Central America, we've got some work to do." "As long as there is segregation and discrimination and opportunities denied... we've got some work to do."

I unplug the projector.

Anderson's words still ring in my ears. "King is dead, but it is not finished."

"The dream lives on, and we can make it become reality if we stand together, hand-in-hand."

Dearborn: no easy solutions



Bob Wisler

THOSE PUSHING for a written agreement won't buy the wink.

Dearborn officials are caught in a trap, however. The controversial parks ordinance was an election-year proposal that most Dearborn politicians didn't want to have anything to do with.

Dearborn's mayor for the eight years previous to Guido, John O'Reilly, shunned the parks issue. Dearborn's police chief said it couldn't be enforced. One Dearborn councilman pushed to get the proposal on the ballot and citizens approved it.

Mayor Guido was conducting a different kind of campaign en route to a victory, which cost \$135,000. One of Guido's strategists devised a campaign that focused on the "Arab problem."

DEARBORN, A city with only a handful of blacks, has the largest Arab population in the United States and Dearborn's white majority is not too happy about it. Guido in his campaign literature promised to do something about it.

It almost seems that the present ad-

ministration is paying for the faults of previous administrations, a kind of Biblical handing down of the sins of the fathers.

For more than 20 years, Orville Hubbard was Dearborn's government. He kept his job and immense favor with the public by keeping Dearborn clean and white.

No matter what the present day administrators say, Dearborn had a history of deliberately excluding blacks. Those who tried to move into the city were badgered and troubled until they left. Hubbard wanted it that way.

WHILE HUBBARD barred the front door an Arab population came in the back door and this relatively poorer class is seen as a source of social problems.

At the same time, Dearborn's subsidized ride is over. For many years residents received better than average services while paying a lower than average city tax. The Ford Motor Co., with its headquarters and giant plant in Dearborn, paid the lion's share, willingly.

But times change. Ford protested its tax share and the courts upheld the contention that the city was soaking the auto giant to subsidize the rest of the city. The tax rate is changing.

For Dearborn residents, the clamor over the parks obscures other problems. It's sure to get worse before it gets better.