

# Opinion

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## Barrier free

### Open up Tulipwood, ticket speeders

IT WAS a classic example of grass-roots America.

Neighbors all, they came sharply split over whether to remove the Tulipwood barricade dividing the new subdivisions of Farmington Green and Colony Park West from Kendallwood, a 30-year-old subdivision.

For two emotion-packed hours at the Farmington Hills City Council's Feb. 9 meeting, they talked eloquently about everyday things — jogging, nightly walks, traffic, school activities, student safety, speeders.

It wasn't so much "us against them" — some even go to the same church. It boiled down to a dispute over traffic patterns and safety.

Many residents of Farmington Green and Colony Park West, subdivisions of 140,000-plus homes, saw the 8-year-old barricade creating a special enclave, discouraging a sense of neighborhood and blocking the most direct path to Wooddale Elementary.

OPponents of the "temporary" barricade say the roadblock has forced them to take 12 Mile, to Farmington Road to Bayberry to reach Wooddale — a circuitous, busy route. They didn't mention that they pass many more



Bob Sklar

Kendallwood houses along the way.

But many residents of Kendallwood — joined in support by some residents of heavily traveled Valley Forge, Bunker Hill and Lake Park in Farmington Green and Colony Park West — didn't see it that way.

They saw the barricade as pivotal in keeping Wooddale-bound traffic off Tulipwood and in preventing Kendallwood from being used as a shortcut to Farmington Road.

A stub street, Tulipwood was always intended to be a connector road. But given it's soon to be the only such road in a densely populated square mile, barricade supporters have reason to be concerned.

Kendallwood residents say they aren't trying to be unneighborly. But they fear a projected 850 cars per day along Tulipwood would mean one hazard and another along their narrow, ditch-lined streets — the only routes

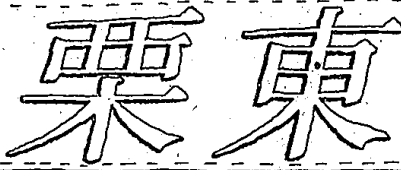
for joggers and walkers in a subdivision with no sidewalks or commons.

IT'S EASY to empathize with the folks who call Kendallwood home. Curving, hilly streets combine with a peacefulness that make the subdivision attractive to people of all ages. It's a microcosm of the city.

But in ordering the barricade's removal — a prudent decision coming only after an agonizing discussion — council members didn't turn their backs on Kendallwood residents. Their order includes an all-encompassing list of new signs intended to keep Kendallwood in general and Tulipwood in particular from becoming the traffic jungle residents understandably fear.

Councilwoman Joan Dudley put it well: "Change threatens. But it has been my experience in my years on the council that our greatest fears just don't pan out."

Unmistakably, the council has placed the burden of enforcing the new stop, yield and no-parking signs in Kendallwood squarely on the police department. Strict enforcement is essential if the signs are to be obeyed and the safety of Kendallwood residents is to be assured.



## New neighbors bring the world

Perhaps you've noticed. Our suburban world is rapidly becoming an international village — and that's good.

Now we're just not talking ethnic groups, here. Rather, we're looking at communities that on a regular basis open their arms to foreign trade, business and commerce.

And with that comes new neighbors with their ancient and often revered cultures.

A few recent lunchtime conversations, along with an article in the Sunday New York Times, reveals that metro Detroit's link with the auto industry has attracted Japanese citizens by the droves.

One recent lunchtime partner, Birmingham resident Barry Jensen, marveled at his new Japanese neighbors' abilities to cope with the American lifestyle. Only the father knows how to speak English. He works in an auto-related industry. The mother and children, he reports, are adapting quickly, having found markets at which to buy ingredients properly suited to the Japanese palate.

THE CHILDREN are off to school and after just one month the family is learning the lay of the land.

Wasabaro Suganuma, that's the father, told Barry and Barb they could call him Bill. Barry admits that learning and pronouncing the family names are a bit of a challenge, but he and wife Barbara have stood firm in their resolve to make their new neighbors feel at home.

They have stuck with calling him



cracker barrel debate

Steve Barnaby

Wasabaro, although Barry isn't sure whether he'll ever get the accent properly placed on the second syllable.

The other lunchtime conversation revolved around Birmingham Eccentric editor Judy Berne's trip to Rittio, Japan.

Rittio and Birmingham have been sister cities since 1976 when they forged an exchange agreement. Judy and husband Ed were given royal treatment and, as Judy admits, she "learned that the value of the Sister City program is not just the formal cultural exchanges ... but for the incidental tourist who wants to know something of the everyday life of its people."

Americans, an innately parochial bunch, always seem amazed at foreign cultures and usually don't adapt easily. Lest you be defensive on this point, stop and think for a moment if you were in Mr. Suganuma's shoes, that you had been transferred to Japan and ended up in suburban Tokyo.

Tough language, that Japanese. And sushi may be all right as an occasional culinary treat but as a part of the regular diet — I doubt most Americans would make it.

And that's too bad.

## Should Detroit or Beirut be insulted?

YOU MAY BE numbing your mind with 14½ hours of "America," but you would do better to ponder some real-life problems in America that not even Kris Kristofferson could mumble his way through. For instance:

For a moment it looked as though someone might be coming to the defense of beleaguered Detroit. There was a headline that said people were taking offense at a politician's comparison of Detroit and battle-weary Beirut. About time, you might say. Detroit has its problems, but it's no Beirut.

Except that wasn't the story. The article was about some Arab-American spokespeople who said, sure, Beirut may have bombings and terrorists, but it isn't full of rapists and muggers like Detroit. It was falsely demeaning to Beirut, they said, to be compared with Detroit.

Omigod. Has Detroit fallen that far? It should be a joke, but I don't hear anybody laughing.

Speaking of jokes, there is a \$500,000 contract waiting for a public relations firm to say nice things about the "People Mover" assuming, of course, that it ever moves and that there are any people to ride it.

You don't make it in big government by asking stupid little questions, but I never expected a government pension anyway. So, here goes.

If the People Mover is such a godsend for Detroit — so much so that it is worth overlooking millions of dollars in overruns to the detriment of a regional



Rich Perlberg

transportation system — then why is there a need for a public relations campaign?

Aren't people already standing in line to ride this marvel? Won't the media give it far more publicity than the city could ever purchase? Would this money be spent if it came from the spenders' pockets rather than a further gouging of the taxpayers? Does Beirut have a People Mover?

Don't look now, but the same Tom Monaghan who brought the split-fingered pepperoni to professional baseball is making sounds about moving the Detroit Tigers west. Not to California or even to Denver, but to Ann Arbor at the US-23 and M-14 intersection where he already owns a big acreage and buildings.

It was only musing, mind you, in response to a reporter's aimless question. And he stressed that such a move was probably impossible and that he was committed to Detroit. But he never absolutely ruled it out.

So, hi again, everybody, and welcome to the home of the Ann Arbor Tigers where, if they don't get a runner home from third base in 30 minutes you get \$3 off the price of your admission ticket.



## She's special

### Others are spotting OU's piano star

CLOSE YOUR eyes and you'll think a 100-pound male Russian is at the piano. Open them and it's 112-pound Theresa Tomoko Mack, an Oakland University senior who is 21 years old and looks 15. She comes on strong.

Theresa hit the jackpot on Super Bowl Sunday when she won first prize in the Oakland Symphony Orchestra's Young Artists Competition.

The judges — all professional musicians and college teachers — quickly awarded her "superior" ratings — meaning the performer "at the level of a seasoned, mature soloist one would expect to hear with a symphony orchestra."

"Bravo!" Lawrence LeGore, piano professor at Wayne State University, wrote of her rendition of "Nights in the Gardens of Spain" by Manuel De Falla.

SHUCKS, I've been saying that all along.

In 1985, the slender girl from Sterling Heights played two competitions in one day — Plymouth's and Oakway's — and won second and third, respectively.

Last year, she turned in a performance of the final movement of the Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 2, winning on it with the dramatic glaze



Tim Richard

of two panthers. Alas, while the judges enjoyed her performance more than any five others put together, they spotted technical flaws, and Mack finished out of the money.

All Oakway competitors get copies of the judges' written comments. The brightest ones heed them. This year Theresa Mack was no exception.

"BRAVO TO your teacher," said another judge, Richard Plippo, chairman of WSU's string department.

That teacher is OU's Flavio Varani, an excellent concert pianist and famed for his records of Prokofiev. Earlier teachers were the late Julius Charles of West Bloomfield and Ruth Burecky, first-class musicians themselves.

The Oakway first prize is Mack's 21st award. She was a 1982 soloist with Livonia Youth Symphony, '83 first-prize winner with the Rochester Sym-

phony, '83 Beethoven competition winner in Grand Rapids, '84 winner in the Oakland Pontiac Symphony competition, '85 semifinalist in the WQHS-FM competition, '86 Birmingham Musicals scholarship winner. . . and so on.

Born in Tokyo, she has been legally adopted by her father, a GM marketing employee. Her mother is a music lover, and her sister is a pretty green pianist, too.

AT A minimum, she'll be in a class with pianists like Ruth Laredo of Detroit and James Tocco of south Oakland. Remember, you read it first in your home-town paper.

I've made such rash predictions only twice before — in 1954, about an obscure pianist named Cilburn, and about violinist Victoria Mullova, winner of the '82 Tchaikovsky competition.

Sure, you believe every word I write, but you want to hear Theresa Mack yourself, right? She and the other winners will perform in Oakway's "Artists of Tomorrow" concert at 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 22, in Kresge Hall at Madonna College, 1-95 at Levan in Livonia. Say hello to her afterwards. There's not an ounce of egotism. The Great Ones are like that.

## Michigan 150 years old

AT STATEHOOD in 1837, Michigan's population was about 175,000. Wayne County had 23,400, more than 13 percent of the total, with 10,000 in Detroit.

Second in size was Washtenaw Coun-

ty, with nearly 23,000. Lying on the military road to Chicago and the new territorial road, Washtenaw had such thriving towns as Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Saline, Dexter and Manchester.