

Opinion

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Moment of truth

14 Mile — no longer a country road

MERE MENTION of roads casts an eerie shadow over the quality of life in Farmington Hills.

Nothing can wrench property values like fear — fear that a four-mile trip will eat up a half hour.

Traffic gridlock is the price of prosperity in a booming city with underbuilt roads. To witness near-parking lot conditions, head to 14 Mile and Orchard Lake Road at rush hour.

Farmington Hills has taken long strides toward unclogging roads. But it has barely scratched the surface, even with ongoing improvements.

Meanwhile, residents who paid \$100,000-plus for their dream homes now fear that excessive widening will bring even more through traffic, particularly along residential-bordered roads like 14 Mile.



Bob Sklar

roads, fear that a super highway will spawn super problems — more noise, more fumes, more traffic, threatened property values. Pebble Creek Condos stands to lose much of its entryway under the five-lane plan.

Farmington Hills council members support a combination four- and five-lane roadway along the one-mile stretch of 14 Mile, but say they'll consider concerns raised by nearby residents before making a final decision.

CITY TRAFFIC engineers, who recommended five lanes, say the one-mile stretch carries 23,000 cars a day, many bound for Orchard Lake Road and Northwestern Highway from the lakes area. The count is projected to grow to 42,000 cars by 2006.

Even if dirt portions of Farmington Road, Drake and Halsted are paved, the solution isn't to leave 14 Mile — a major east-west artery — a country road. How many lanes are too many?

Perhaps the wisest course would be to taper the existing five lanes from Orchard Lake Road to Hunters Ridge Apartments to four lanes through the residential zone beyond. Flare the road to five lanes again near Sinsbury Plaza through the Farmington Road intersection. Then taper the road again.

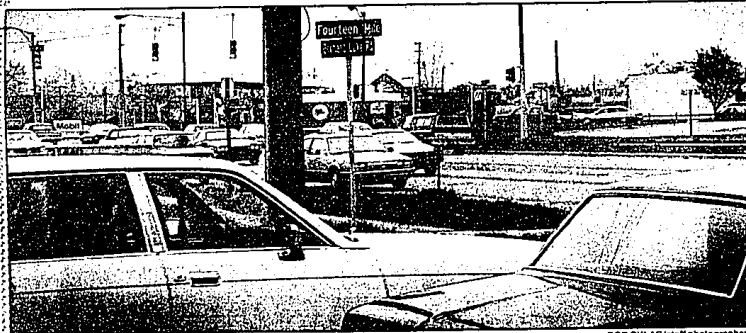
Widening plans are a reaction to pleas from Gateway-PLUS, a planned development advisory council of West Bloomfield and Farmington Hills folks, to do something about the Northwestern Highway-Orchard Lake Road-14 Mile bottleneck, where there's more stop than go much of the day.

Strangely, Gateway-PLUS is now claiming Farmington Hills is trying to ramrod through plans for more than three lanes along 14 Mile. In a report unveiled April 9, 1986, Gateway-PLUS recommended "a four-lane road vs. three or five lanes" because of all the right turns.

THE HEAVY equipment isn't going to clandestinely roll in any night soon. Too many technical road blocks remain. City manager William Costick also plans to approach West Bloomfield supervisor John Doherty to foster a cooperative spirit — and to ask township trustees to help foot the \$1.6 million cost.

With a government grant expected to cover 75 percent of actual construction costs, it's incumbent to find out quickly how many lanes the Federal Highway Administration considers suitable. That will weigh heavily on whether any widening occurs.

People who move along or near major two-lane roads shouldn't be overly surprised when widening plans surface. They should be expected, given Farmington Hills — only a few years removed from being "out in the country" — sits smack in the middle of one of southeast Michigan's real estate hotbeds.



BOB SKLAR/staff photographer

The intersection of 14 Mile and Orchard Lake roads is one of Farmington Hills' near-parking lots at rush hour.

Shapiro's tough years at U-M

ACADEMIC ALL-STARS in the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers area still respect the University of Michigan despite the turbulence in Ann Arbor.

U-M was first or second choice for a half-dozen of the top scholars in last week's report. When U-M wasn't listed first, it was mentioned in the same breath as MIT and Harvard.

So it's only fair to look at the good side of Harold Shapiro's presidency (1980-87), and not just March's capitulation to the Rev. Jesse Jackson, a non-resident who has never been elected to anything, and the Black Action Movement.

Not only is Shapiro departing U-M for Princeton, a university one-third the size with no medical or law schools, but he's leaving his successor to keep the noble but impossible promise of boosting black enrollment and faculty to 12 percent.

IT HAS BEEN a rough eight years for Shapiro, who lasted less than half as long as the average of his predecessors. One would guess now is the time for a U-M president to bask, Blanchard-style, in glory.

Shapiro took office when a recession was decimating state budgets and the post-war baby boom had petered out. He made some of the toughest and

most painful decisions in U-M's 170-year history as he methodically assessed every proud U-M offering, closed programs, eliminated departments and reduced schools to departmental status.

And he did it without sacrificing quality — or so the Academic All-Stars and counselors believe. Meanwhile, the economy has recovered, and U-M sits at the head of a high-technology boom. Even with a Spartan alum in the governor's office, U-M gets the lion's share of state research money and appropriations. There's a big alumni fund-raiser going on. The football team distinguishes itself in 10/11ths of its games.

What a time to leave! There must be a moral or a political message.

MY OWN FONDEST memory of Harold Shapiro was the week in 1981 when I heard him talk economics on the Schoolcraft College campus and then at the U.S. Rep. Jack Kemp speaking at Bill Broomfield's bash in the Silver dome.

Shapiro, an economic forecaster, said Congress should make spending cuts, get inflation under control, and only then cut taxes to stimulate investment. He cited case studies of Europe in the 1920s.



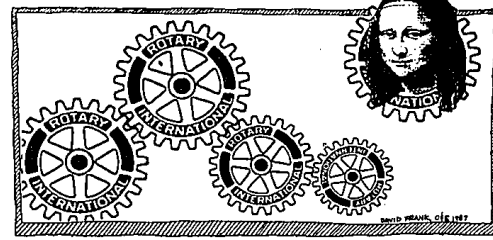
Tim Richard

I quoted his remarks to Kemp, who was proselytizing for the tax cut first. Kemp spluttered — I have it on tape — about "your friend, the economist, the professor, or whatever he is." Kemp daydreamed about the tax cut: "Oh, we're gonna have more revenue. The tax system will be more efficient, even though the rates are lower. You'll get more revenue from a healthy economy than a depressed economy."

Shapiro was on target. Kemp was off by some \$200 billion.

WHAT KIND of president should U-M hire? Here's my profile: Someone with state government experience. Someone from a research-level university, not necessarily in the Big Ten. Someone with a demonstrated prowess at beating down entrenched interests on campus. Someone who has held down tuition.

And he ought to be Lebanese.



Closing the gap

Small town and suburban service clubs have done much to perpetuate the division between men and women. But salvation comes in surprising packages.

This week the Rotary was saved from itself by the U.S. Supreme Court. A few years ago, the Jaycee organization was equally blessed by a court decision that mandated that women could be members if they so choose.

Lord it is frustrating to think we are fighting this same old hackneyed battle in 1987.

But still more groups exist that want to exclude women for no other reason than that they are born with a different combination of genes. And even though the most recent court decision was welcome, the court did say each service organization would have to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

It's sort of like tearing down a wall brick by brick.

Let's hope the rest of these organizations that discriminate come around on their own. The consequences of more delay are legion.

Women have a right to equality and they deserve it now.

But continuing discrimination by service clubs, country clubs and other organizations hiding behind the veil of privacy, deny it on a daily basis. Many insecure men continue huddling in corners to tell their "guys stories" and, at the same time, to make corporate decisions.

These groups are the poorer for denying women membership and business suffers when women are shut out.

THE OTHER NIGHT a major professional organization held its annual

crackerbarrel debate



Steve Barnaby

dinner to honor those who have contributed to their industry. That industry, by the way, deals largely with the business that directly or indirectly feeds most of us in Detroit — the automobile.

The ceremony was akin to a ritual from the past.

All those being honored were men. All the past presidents were men. Everyone on the dias was male.

The wives were introduced as mere shadows of their husbands, graciously thanked for support of their spouses and for mothering several children.

All married women were introduced by their husband's first and last names. In short, their total identity was buried within their husband's.

Now this professional organization allows membership to women. But very few women populate the profession. And those that have obviously haven't penetrated the leadership ranks.

Unfortunately, that is still typical in America. Attitudes are tough to change.

And despite what many people think, service clubs still have a substantial impact on the business community and its many professional organizations.

Let's hope the rest of these clubs have the smarts to open their doors without a court order.

Science as a cure

TIMES WERE tranquil and the future was bright when Marian High School opened its doors a quarter of a century ago.

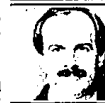
The Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary founded the all-girls school on Lahser between 14 Mile and 15 Mile roads in 1959. (Note: Those at Marian grit their teeth when someone says they are "next to Brother Rice." Marian was there first; the boys were Johnnies-come-lately. Brother Rice is next to Marian.)

Today, according to a school press release, Marian remains "a quality, value-oriented Catholic high school for young women, committed to Christian ideals and academic excellence." The academic side of the slate is emphasized on Marian literature, which notes that 95 percent of its graduates go to college where the majority perform above average work.

Excellence doesn't come easily — or cheaply. This year's tuition was \$2,350. On the other hand, maybe the price isn't so high. Public school expenditures range from \$1,700 to more than \$5,000 per child. A proposal last week by state Sen. Rudy Nichols (R-Waterford) would guarantee each public school \$3,000 per student, more than 27 percent higher than the Marian fee.

FRIDAY, THE 850 women of Marian took a break from their classes to watch classmate Anne Marie Emmert and other dignitaries break ground for a \$1.5 million science addition and renovation project.

In "Inherit the Wind," a play inspired by the Scopes Monkey Trial in Tennessee, the Clarence Darrow character tries to forge a holy alliance between science and religion. So it was Friday when Sister Carol Quigley, who's on the board of directors of the Sisters of the



Rich Perlberg

Scientific knowledge should be used 'not in the service of weapons, but in the service of technology that liberates.'

Immaculate Heart, urged students to "integrate science and religious values."

That's vital, she said, since the values adopted by today's students will be society's values at the turn of the century. To date, she continued, scientific advances have left the globe on the brink of nuclear destruction. Far better, she suggested, to use science as a way to find cures for cancer or AIDS and not as a tool to destroy mankind. Scientific knowledge should be used "not in the service of weapons, but in the service of technology that liberates," she said.

Speaking of liberation, Sister Carol quietly but clearly noted that the advancement of women has been listed as one of the top three priorities of Pope John Paul II, a pronouncement that might surprise some papal critics.

Nonetheless, Sister Carol said, "The church must take into account the discrimination of half of its members."

That brought to mind another speech where listeners were admonished to "challenge the status quo" and "the proud of heart."

That speaker was also a woman. Her name was Mary.