

Opinion

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18A(4)

O&E Thursday, June 18, 1987

But safety first Road something special

MORE THAN the design of a road is at issue in the debate over whether to realign Drake.

The area's country charm also is at stake.

That charm is what residents of the Drake-Howard area are fighting to preserve. It's also what city leaders hope to protect although — wisely — not at the expense of road safety.

The decision to pave the winding, graveled stretch of Drake, north of 11 Mile, isn't questioned. Washboard conditions have convinced even diehards that paving is necessary.

Options range from paving without realignment to paving and straightening the road.

RESIDENTS FEAR straightening not only would encourage faster speeds between Grand River and 12 Mile, but also destroy nature's best.

City administrators acknowledge Drake isn't a major north-south artery like Haggerty. But they rightly say they can't put aesthetics in front of liability.

Safety probably will dictate some realignment of Drake. The sharp curves are barely safe at 15 mph because of blind spots. But realignment should be painstakingly plotted to protect as many trees and as much of the area's natural beauty as possible.

Residents who addressed the city council June 8 would have you believe there's unity against any realignment. They point to a petition with 500-plus signatures.

But some area residents privately concede they're downright scared by the curves and prefer some redesign.

ENTER THE newly formed advisory committee of city staff and area residents. Its aim is to allay fears and strike a compromise.

The city went to great lengths to preserve the tree-lined appeal of 13 Mile, west of Drake, when it was paved. There, trees are within two feet of the road. Safety was compromised in the interest of preservation.

The key difference is that 13 Mile is



Bob Sklar

straight. Drake isn't. The roadside trees along 13 Mile pose a hazard. But the blind bends that mark Drake pose even bigger dangers.

There's precedent in saving trees when paving roads that curve. Old Orchard Trail in Orchard Lake and Orchard Ridge in Bloomfield Hills are prime examples. Drivers seem to equate those winding roads with serenity and hold back on the accelerator. Besides, common sense says you can't negotiate big bends at breakneck speeds.

But don't think for a minute that pavement won't bring some faster driving to Drake, even if the speed limit is 25 mph and stop signs are installed.

SO VERY limited realignment and strict traffic enforcement, coupled maybe with a traffic divider of some sort, might be the answer. Wholesale destruction of trees obviously isn't.

In debating Drake's design, let's not forget the significance of the historic Millers House of Sleepy Hollow.

Just another old house it isn't. It's within in the city council-designated historic district. Such designation means the land is equally historical. A house within the district should only be moved when the community's welfare is threatened, not for the sake of convenience.

Clearly, we're talking about more than paving a road. We're talking about balancing environmental, safety and historical considerations. And we're talking about the human values of our neighborhoods, which give the city its character.

Pave Drake, but don't dismember the neighborhood. That's the challenge before the Drake Road advisory committee — and, ultimately, the city council.

Team up to curb teenage drinking

IT MIGHT not be too late.

Police crackdowns on liquor-licensed establishments since late last October in Farmington Hills have fueled the ire of merchants and restaurateurs.

The October/November 1986 crackdown resulted in 50 establishments being cited for violating state and city liquor laws. In an early June sweep, police cited another 12 licensees — six for a second time.

Angry licensees have continued to ask why police don't ask for their help rather than making them the hunted.

As one restaurateur aptly put it: "We want to be a part of the solution, not a part of the problem. We would have appreciated being told by the police first that there was a problem with teens."

Undercover police operations have shown that, indeed, many licensees have become lax in fulfilling the responsibilities that accompany their precious licenses.

Yet it's clear licensees are not the only ones to blame for a world of teenagers — who like the adult role model — believe liquor is a party accompaniment.

IT'S TIME police, licensees and parents actively join forces in combating what many believe is a teenage drinking crisis.

Enlightenment is the key. A forum where police could re-emphasize the licensees' legal responsibilities would be helpful and set the groundwork for cooperation. It wouldn't hurt to also do the same with parents.

Licensees could discuss their individual difficulties in managing the teens that frequent their establishments.

And parents would do well to hear first-hand the problems their teens provide merchants, restaurateurs and the police.

The liquor, beer or wine sold knowingly or unknowingly to teens could be



Joanne Malliszewski

the cause for tragedy. It's that simple. Yet it's so easy to forget.

Now that the community knows some establishments have failed in their responsibilities, it's time to have a meeting of the minds.

SOME LICENSEES — and parents — are truly unaware of the depth of the teenage drinking crisis. Education should now take precedence over prosecution. It must be asked whether licensees are changing their ways piecemeal to avoid citations or if they are changing — if at all — to help solve a problem.

Continuing wholesale liquor sweeps may serve only to criminalize the very people the community needs help from if the teenage drinking tide is to be turned.

Cutting teenagers' source of alcoholic beverages makes a lot of sense. No, licensees should not be excused their failings. But enlightened and cooperative partners is also what's needed.

Police, parents and licensees all have their points of view on teenage drinking and each serves a vital role in stemming the growing tide.

Police must be more than enforcers. Licensees must follow the law. Fear of offending or inconveniencing customers is not an excuse for violating the law.

Customers could lend a hand as well. A willingness to show identification would do much to ease licensees into a positive habit.

CHUCK N89



Remembering the legacy a crusader has left to us



Lou Gordon

REMEMBERING LOU — it's a good way to stay honest and humble.

You may never have known Lou. He has been dead for just 10 years.

Detroit's never been the same since he left us suddenly one night in his sleep.

For 12 years on his TV show and in his newspaper column, Lou Gordon terrorized politicians, humbled the powerful, regularly parried with corporate giants and generally kept the establish-

ment swirling in a state of perpetual dizziness.

Lou was a rare and precious breed of journalist — a muckraker of the first order. Few of his kind exist today. He was refreshingly irreverent and blessed with a healthy disrespect for those who were bloated with their own importance.

He never was a part of the establishment media, cozying up to the rich and powerful. The media never liked him and he kept haranguing them about their bad habits, even after one of the Detroit daily newspapers hired him in hopes he would clam up.

It didn't work, of course.

EVERYONE, absolutely everyone, had an opinion about Lou Gordon. And whether you loved him or hated him (there was no in-between) you watched his program.

Slotted in prime time twice a week against the best the networks could muster, Lou teamed with his wife, Jackie, and consistently carried the highest ratings. He received thousands of letters every week from a public that was either adoring or hating him, depending on the subject.

All the time Jackie was at his side — sometimes launching a kick underneath the desk to keep him in line.

Recently, I had the pleasure of eating lunch with Jackie, who now works with Jacobsons.



crackerbarrel debate
Steve Barraby

We talked business, then we talked Lou.

After explaining to her that this column often was written with the spirit of her husband in mind, I launched into my best Lou Gordon imitation.

"You know Jackie, I told those people years ago . . ." I said, waving my hands in the air. Lou was like that, you know.

Her eyes lit up, she laughed and regaled us with stories about an era long past — the night the show was taken off the air; his battle with the telephone company that brought thousands to a public hearing at Oakland Community College; and how he cared, really cared.

LOU HAS left us, journalists and readers alike, an important assignment — fight like hell for the people who can't fight for themselves. You'll never be very popular that way. You won't be accepted as part of the establishment.

You'll be a better person because of it. You will have left this world a better place.

Critics turn green over policy

I AM A SOMEWHAT bemused observer (or am I an eccentric observer. I never have figured that out) of the flap about the number of out-of-state students attending the University of Michigan.

University officials defend the fact that 36 percent of its students are not from Michigan. Such an admissions policy promotes diversity, upholds the university's high standards and brings in better than \$8,000 a pop, which is better than triple the tuition paid by in-state students.

Critics, including some publicity-seeking lawmakers (pardon the redundancy), say that's a lot of ivory tower equine manure. It's a smug attitude, they say, for a public institution to block admission to the sons and daughters of in-state taxpayers (and voters).

THIS IS not the first time (nor shall it be the last) that those who see the world through maize-and-blue filters have been accused of being slightly caught up with themselves.

Remember a few years ago when a football coach, who was then losing

games at Michigan State but who now loses games with the Detroit Lions, caused a riff when he referred to Wolverines as arrogant asses?

Many Michigan fans were outraged at such petulance but they were not all that offended by the allegation of arrogance. Of course they were arrogant; they had a right to be.

Likewise, I fail to get xenophobic about the New Yorkers. Ohioans and other foreigners feeding the Ann Arbor economy. Look at it this way: It's one of the few arenas where imports are making money for us.

MAYBE MY indifference to this squabble is due to the 17 years that separate my infant son from his first col-



Rich Perlberg

lege tuition. My area of financial concern focuses on day care, the opposite end of the spectrum.

In that regard, munch on this: In-state tuition for the University of Michigan is about \$2,400. If you live in a \$150,000 home, your public school property taxes are at least \$3,000. People squawk about the cost of public education, yet those fees pale next to the nearly \$5,000 I pay in day care. And though it is a very fine day care center, it teaches my boy nothing about French or computers.

Obviously, my next step is to enroll my baby at the University of Michigan. He'd get a good education with a dose of arrogance and I would save \$50 a week — unless he gets rejected in favor of some out-of-state baby.