

# Opinion

33203 Grand River/Farmington, MI 48024 Bob Sklar editor /477-5450

O&E Thursday, April 13, 1989

## Speed limits

### Base them on safety factors

**S**PEED LIMITS should be based on safety standards, not arbitrary guidelines — even when natural beauty roads are involved.

To best serve the community, safety should be of utmost concern when the city council reviews speed limits along the three newest mile-long stretches of natural beauty road in northwest Farmington Hills.

"We don't want to live with fast traffic every place," councilwoman Jean Fox said in defending the low-speed philosophy along natural beauty roads.

Sure part of a natural beauty road's charm is tranquility. Slower speeds encourage that. They help motorists enjoy the environmentally sensitive vistas.

But as councilman Philip Arnold put it, ordinance guidelines aren't "the vehicle for addressing speeds."

That's especially true in this case. Speed limits for the city's fast-developing northwest quadrant were set just a year ago.

**NATURAL BEAUTY** road ordinance guidelines, adopted last May, call for a 35 mph speed limit along paved major roads.

That's already the speed limit on 13 Mile, between Drake and Halsted. But it's 40 along the other two newest mile-long stretches of natural beauty road: Halsted, between 12 and 14 Mile.

Along the city's only other natural beauty road — Howard, a dirt local road — the speed limit is 25.

Is 40 too fast for Halsted? Maybe not. But a posted speed limit of 40 often means traffic is going 50. A natural beauty road designation shouldn't lower the speed limit. But safety concerns certainly should.

How fast traffic goes along Halsted should rightly be decided by the city council. Working with the city's traffic engineer, the council must weigh existing conditions, planned development and the natural features that prompted the natu-

*To best serve the community, safety should be of utmost concern when the city council reviews speed limits along the three newest mile-long stretches of natural beauty road in northwest Farmington Hills*

ral beauty road designation.

Residents of Nova Woods Condos, northwest of 13 Mile and Drake, think 40 mph along Halsted is just fine, thank you. They point to the city's uniform 40 mph speed limit along mile roads. But residents along Halsted think 35, or even 30, is more appropriate for a road that has poor sight lines.

**MAKE NO** mistake: The three newest natural beauty roads are wooded, rolling, historic and picturesque.

A drive along any of these roads, each with a canopy of trees and a captivating character, instantly relieves the stress of the day. For a moment, storefronts take a back seat to greenery.

Designation as natural beauty roads will protect native vegetation, wildflowers and rock walls in the right of way from unintentional and unnecessary damage resulting from maintenance or construction activities.

The city took care in paving the roads to protect trees, vegetation and slopes. Homeowners have preserved stone fences. Even some developers tied the architecture of their projects to the area's general character.

Natural beauty road ordinance guidelines should be changed to reflect maximum speeds — say, 40 on paved major roads — but leave the exact speed limit to the city council so it can consider a road's individual characteristics.

## Public libraries

### It's time to give another look

**I**T'S A GOOD place to get a videotape or a compact disc. It's even a good place to get a book.

Public libraries are important assets to their communities. If you haven't visited your local branch lately, it's time you paid a return call.

This week is National Library Week, and it calls to attention just how dramatic the change has been.

Unlike the dark, stuffy places we remember from childhood, most modern libraries are bright and inviting.

They contain a substantial amount of material of interest even to non-readers. Many offer videotape rentals, including movie hits. Many also have large, well-stocked collections of records, tapes and compact discs for your listening pleasure. Many also offer the latest in financial planning and tax information (though you better move quickly if you're still doing this year's returns.)

We salute our local libraries — and encourage you to take another look.

## Patient rights

### Issue must not be abandoned

**P**ATIENTS' RIGHTS legislation in Michigan is far too important and necessary to die at the hands of the abortion controversy.

State Rep. David Hollister, D-Lansing, has worked 15 years for legal means to allow patients to designate an advocate who will carry out their expressed desires for medical treatment, including termination of that treatment.

But Hollister is giving up after long battles with special interest groups — both pro-life and pro-life factions — that have turned the patient rights legislation into an unresolved abortion controversy.

We urge Hollister to hold his ground and continue providing the leadership necessary to legally honor patient wishes without foisting criminal and civil liability on medical professionals and family members.

Right-to-die legislation is not and should not be an abortion issue. We support prohibiting a patient advocate from exercising medical treatment for a pregnant patient that would be detrimental to the embryo or fetus without probate court approval.

**BUT RIGHT-TO-DIE** legislation can and should stand on its own. Today, family members of such patients appeal to the court system for help. If this issue is a thorn in the side of special interest groups and legislators, remove the thorn. Deselecting the pregnancy provision from Hollister's legislation would not change the legality of protecting an embryo or fetus in this state. But its removal would open the gates for changes in the state probate code for patient rights.

Special interest groups have a right to their opinion. But terminally ill patients have a right to relief from lingering in frustration and agony

*Right-to-die legislation is not and should not be an abortion issue. We support prohibiting a patient advocate from exercising medical treatment for a pregnant patient that would be detrimental to the embryo or fetus without probate court approval.*

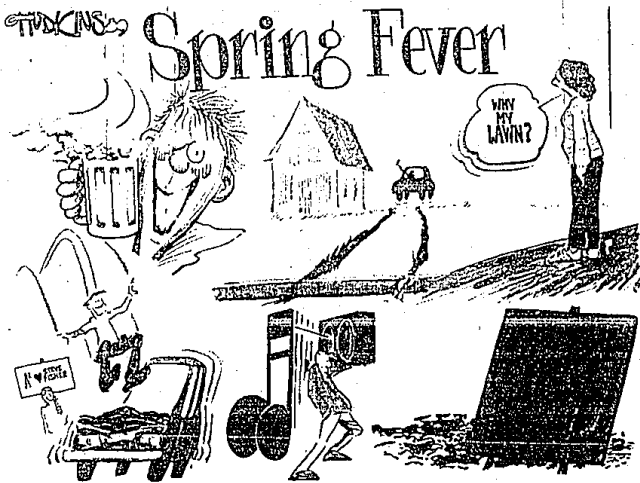
as captives of modern medical technology.

Abortion and fetus rights unfortunately don't appear to have a resolution in our time. The number of patients, families and medical professionals who could benefit from right-to-die legislation far outweighs the number of pregnant patients and their families who may be forced to seek a lengthy and expensive resolution to their dilemmas in the court system.

As Hollister told reporters recently: "A pregnant woman falling into a persistent vegetative state happens about three times in a decade. That concern has prevented this device from being used many, many times. This bill is important. Abortion is not the issue."

**WE AGREE.** Now is the time to address overriding human needs, not the political needs of legislators and special interest groups eyeing the election year.

While legislators and special interest groups have successfully thrown this human and medical issue into the abyss of philosophical debate over the definition of new life, terminally ill patients continue to linger in agony. And their families and physicians continue to suffer the toll.



## Company's charge of altered date low blow

**FARMINGTON SCHOOL** board trustee Janice Rolnick called it "malicious, derogatory and an attempt in trying to destroy the integrity of the board."

Superintendent Graham Lewis said he felt it tarnished the school district's image and "hurts us in the eyes of the community."

Three days after the school board waived attorney-client privilege and released a legal report stating that operating money can't be used to build a new school, Alexander Hamilton Life's Freedom of Information Act request to try to examine that key document.

On Jan. 31, voters by a 3-4 margin approved \$7.3 million in bonds to build a west-side elementary to help relieve district overcrowding. Part of the reason the Observer — and many voters — supported the bond proposal was Flanagan's assurance that no voter-authorized operating millage could be used for such a major capital improvement.

On March 3, after two informal requests were turned down, company economist Patrick Anderson filed a Freedom of Information Act request to examine all district docu-



**Bob Sklar**

Flanagan, a man of his word, assured the public "we didn't change anything."

**WE SUPPORTED** Alexander Hamilton Life's Freedom of Information Act request to try to examine that key document.

On Jan. 31, voters by a 3-4 margin approved \$7.3 million in bonds to build a west-side elementary to help relieve district overcrowding.

Part of the reason the Observer — and many voters — supported the bond proposal was Flanagan's assurance that no voter-authorized operating millage could be used for such a major capital improvement.

On March 3, after two informal requests were turned down, company economist Patrick Anderson filed a Freedom of Information Act request to examine all district docu-

mentation that operating money can't be used to build a new school.

The district administration made five documents available but — citing attorney-client privilege — withheld district attorney J. Kingsley Cotton's legal report. To its credit, the school board waived that privilege March 21.

**TO ME,** McMaster's claim that the date was altered before he even tried to get an explanation or before he even tried to view the original copy came off as a blatant lunge for publicity.

Ditto for company economist Joel Wittenberg's March 24 letter to school board president Jack Cotton. Instead of inquiring why the date seems to look lighter, he concluded it had been altered and demanded to know why.

As it turns out, the reason the date might look different is because the original two-page opinion was reduced to one page for general release — a taxpayer saving, in my mind.

Bob Sklar is editor of the Farmington Observer.

## Farmington readers' forum

Letters must be signed, original copies and include the address and telephone number of the writer. Names will be withheld from publication only for sufficient reason. We reserve the right to edit them. Send letters to Readers' Forum, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River Ave., Farmington 48024.

### Parents laud school board

**To the editor:**  
It is great for Farmington Schools that our parents and educators have openly verbalized what we have known for so long: that parents do play an integral part in their children's educational process.

The seventh correlate of the Effective Schools Research — upon which Highmeadow Common Campus is modeled — really says it all: "that effective schools are concerned with home/school relations, that parents understand and support the basic missions of the school and are made to feel that they have an important role in achieving this mission."

We applaud the trustees of the Farmington Board of Education (for supporting sibling priority at Highmeadow). They patiently and respectfully listened to our facts and feelings. They were sensitive to our goal: appreciating our sense of humor and empathizing with our sometimes intense emotions.

It is time to make way for more community participation and involvement on committees, in decision-making from our council.

Clearly, with the boom in commercial and residential development experienced by Farmington Hills in the last several years, it is imperative that those persons charged with responsibility over managing and governing our city and its assets continue to recognize that their decision-making power has the ability to severely alter the course of our

city's future.

A vigilant attitude should be maintained on a continuing basis so as to assure that future development is "managed" and that our city's residents are given maximum benefit from our tax dollars.

I believe that Paul Sowerby could add the stability and positive element to the decision-making process entrusted within our council. The council surely had a tough task in attempting to choose from the candidates.

### Sowerby a solid choice

**To the editor:**  
I am taking this opportunity to thank the council members of Farmington Hills for their wise choice in selecting Paul Sowerby to fill the vacancy created by Mr. Alkatch's resignation from the city council.

I have worked with Mr. Sowerby on the Zoning Board of Appeals for the last several years and consider him to be competent and well-qualified for the position of council member.

Some of the very key issues that face our city in the near future require astute, well-thought-out, decision-making from our council.

Clearly, with the boom in commercial and residential development experienced by Farmington Hills in the last several years, it is imperative that those persons charged with responsibility over managing and governing our city and its assets continue to recognize that their decision-making power has the ability to severely alter the course of our

city's future.

A vigilant attitude should be maintained on a continuing basis so as to assure that future development is "managed" and that our city's residents are given maximum benefit from our tax dollars.

I believe that Paul Sowerby could add the stability and positive element to the decision-making process entrusted within our council. The council surely had a tough task in attempting to choose from the candidates.

### Corps says thank you

**To the editor:**  
Christmas 1988 is history.

As a result of your generous contribution of time and effort, we are able to report to you that we have been able to serve 113,000 people. This represents an important part of our providing \$3 million services in the metropolitan Detroit area in 1988.

We are ever mindful that our ability to serve is greatly due to the support you have given to us.  
Lt. Col. Clarence Harvey, Salvation Army

## Observer & Eccentric Newspapers

Steve Barnaby managing editor  
Rich Perlberg assistant managing editor  
Dick Isham general manager  
Richard Brady advertising manager  
Fred Wright circulation manager

Suburban Communications Corp.  
Philip Power chairman of the board  
Richard Aginlian president