

# Cries of urban sprawl mask other problems

**SUBURBS, HEAR THIS.** You can't have it both ways. You can't try to isolate yourselves from Detroit and Pontiac and their problems, and then cry that you should have been consulted when word surfaces of a proposed mega mall way the heck out in Auburn Hills or a Somerset North in Troy.



**Judith Doner Berne**

Both impact your communities. The communities of Southfield, a major suburb struggling to remain viable, and Lake Angelus, a tiny suburb trying to remain undisturbed, will ask the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) for a regional impact study of Auburn Mills, the 2.3-million-square-foot mall slated for I-75 near Joslyn Road. Size-wise, that's about twice Troy's Oakland Mall. Other communities may join the chorus. Southfield has been on record against urban sprawl, for some time — well, uh, sometime after Northland. City fathers don't like what's happening in Novi, particularly now that Southfield-based Providence Hospital wants to shift some of its services that-a-way. They were on record against The Palace and the new GM Tech Center.

"We ought to learn from our experiences," Southfield City Manager Robert Block said. "If it (Northland) was wrong and eventually hurt Detroit, then let's not repeat it."

**AUBURN HILLS'** Immediate neighbor, Rochester Hills, is also making noises of concern. "Here we

COG has already violated its principles by making the Auburn Hills mega mall site eligible for federal road aid.

• It will only do the review if a clearing house review committee says it should.

• And, bottom line, it is only an advisory body, although its advice could influence that federal aid for roadwork.

go again," according to Rochester Hills Mayor Billie Irigoin, who last fall successfully fought against a traffic pattern for getting to The Palace which used Rochester Hills' streets.

The proposed mega mall "shows the lack of coordination between the municipalities in this fast-growing county of Oakland," said Rochester Hills councilman Ed Baron. He said there should be some sort of regional analysis of a community's plan for such a large project.

Enter SEMCOG, which is on record on behalf of curbing urban sprawl, favoring older cities and preserving nature in the countryside. As the official planning agency for the seven-county region, they recently endorsed such a plan as proposed by "the Big Four" — Oakland County Executive Dan Murphy, Wayne County Executive Ed McNamara, Detroit Mayor Coleman Young and Macomb Board Chairman Mark Steenburgh.

But what will a review by SEMCOG do? Southfield county commissioner Lawrence Pernick says that SEM-

BUT, WHAT, if not SEMCOG? It seems to be the only agency with the potential for making us stop, look and listen to the sounds of growth. Is the growth real or manufactured? Is it just one more move to avoid dealing with our real problems: racial polarization, unequal educational opportunities, crime and drugs?

Suburbs, you can't duck from what happens in Detroit and Pontiac and then hope to control what happens in Novi and Auburn Hills.

Once again, the Detroit metro area is in this together. If we attack the real problems, the growth can re-spring from where there are already roads, sewers, water.

"What we're doing here is spending dollars to build a mall in a corn field, while we abandon our older cities," says Rochester Hills' councilman Baron. Sure wish I'd said that.

Judith Doner Berne is assistant managing editor for the Oakland County editions of the Observer & Eccentric newspapers.

## points of view

# No, it's not abnormal to rate personalities



**Doc Doyle**

Q: My son, after only three days of school, is already making some pointed remarks about one of his teachers and his new principal. Some remarks are not very good. His ninth grade buddies joined him the other afternoon on our outdoor basketball court and their observation of a couple of teachers makes me wonder. Who do you believe?

A: Believe me, the same scenario is going on in teacher lounges about certain kids who are returning this year. I call this parking lot and lounge chatter. Really, it's not abnormal for students and teachers to "reflect" on the personalities they will be dealing with this new school year.

However, let's make an agreement. I promise to believe only 50 percent of what they tell me about you, the parent. If you promise to believe only 50 percent of what they tell you about me, an educator.

What your 15-year-old son and his buddies are doing is simply running the teachers they will be dealing with this year through their Adoles-

cent Accreditation Analysis. Unbeknownst to them, they are into a "psychological mapping," or a printout of each teacher so to determine strategies on how to deal with each teacher's style and each teacher's expectation this school year.

This first week of school, therefore, is really a mutual assessment program: teachers assessing their students' personalities and behavior patterns and students scrutinizing their teachers' egocentricities.

As parents of a ninth grader you must be experiencing the metamorphosis of early adolescence, when your son is the epitome of knowledge, brighter than the teacher or parent (the parent who becomes more limited every year). But don't

despair, by the time your son/daughter is 25 you will — if your patience can last that long — have children that recognize you were not so "out of touch" after all.

Don't overreact when your son perceives a teacher to be "different." Time and again, students return to school years later and thank the very teachers they thought were unfair at age 16.

On the other hand, if a pattern develops over a period of a few months in a certain class where your son exhibits a real nervousness or anxiety, you, as a parent, have an obligation to talk with the teacher, counselor or principal to clear the air based on factual information — not idle parking lot chatter.

Dr. James Doyle is an assistant superintendent in the Troy School District. The answers provided here are the opinions of Doyle and not the Troy School District. Questions for this column should be sent to Doc Doyle c/o the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

# Promotion-wise travel industry making waves

**MY OUTBOARD** motor was on the fritz one day in 1982. I took it to the place where I had bought it, but the guy was out of business.

The telephone directory, in the days when it wasn't so bulky as to be unusable, yielded a number of outboard dealers capable of handling my brand of quiet fishing motor.

Most were out of business.

Traveling US-2 in the Upper Peninsula that July, I noticed one boarded-up restaurant and motel after another.

That was in the bottom of the recession. Today you fight for recreation space. And maybe prosperity is better.

**This summer was Michigan's first \$10 billion summer, according to Travel Bureau director John Savich.**



**Tim Richard**

**THIS SUMMER** was Michigan's first \$10 billion summer, according to Travel Bureau director John Savich.

The record occurred despite a slowdown in the national economy and an erosion of consumer confidence, he said. Erosion of consumer

confidence? A poll of metro Detroiters released last week showed just the opposite. And shopping mall stores in Oakland and Washtenaw counties, in particular, are so hard-up for help that they're offering tuition incentives and child care.

Savich last week launched the bureau's new Michigan Fall Travel Guide and Calendar of Events at a news conference, saying:

"Make no mistake: Although preliminary figures may say that travel had a \$10 billion economic impact this summer, this has been a tough year. Every year since 1985 has set a record in Michigan travel history, and it becomes harder and harder each year to improve on the record performance of the previous 12 months.

"We started 1989 faced with predictions of rising gasoline prices and a softening economy. We got erratic prices, slow growth in the gross national product, a seven-point decline in consumer confidence, and a 10- to 15-percent growth in hotel rooms — all of which makes for a very unusual year full of mixed signals."

State parks now take reservations, and over the Labor Day weekend many were filled — despite the abundance of mosquitoes generated by early season rain.

Every town in creation seems to have a festival of sorts. Savich revealed there were seven "Celebrate The Great Lakes" included even Wyandotte. Wyandotte.

In florid language, Savich unveiled the new "user friendly" fall travel guide. It combines a calendar of festivals and activities with a selection of 25 color tours, 80 elder mills and other goodies.

Copies of the free Michigan Fall Travel Guide and Calendar of Events can be obtained by calling

the Travel Bureau at 1-800-5432-YES.

So promotion conscious is Savich's office that they even have a number for the hearing impaired: 1-800-722-8191.

The travel industry has come a long way since the bottom of the recession, when UP restaurants were boarded up and boat dealers were belly up. If one were old-fashioned, one could even say it's getting crowded out in our beloved booties.

Tim Richard is director of the Suburban Communications Corp. news service, SCC is the parent company of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

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