

# Opinion

21898 Farmington Road/Farmington, MI 48024 Robert Sklar editor/477-5450

6A(F)

O&amp;E Monday, April 16, 1990

## Whoa!

### Don't raid block grant fund

**I**F FARMINGTON Hills truly needs another code enforcement officer, it should reassess its priorities and include one in the 1990-91 budget.

We categorically oppose raiding any community development block grant money to pay for a new officer, notwithstanding that the CDBG program allows such a use.

As we see it, it matters not that much of the new officer's workload would be in the southeast census tracts, which qualify the city for the federal aid.

A code enforcement officer is a code enforcement officer. That officer shouldn't be limited to a four-square-mile area, as would be the case if CDBG money were used.

Farmington Hills now has four such officers, three in the field. By almost any standard in the growing suburb, a fifth seems justified — even inevitable.

**ZONING VIOLATIONS** touch every part of the city, newer subdivisions as well as older sections. Why single out the Grand River-Middlebelt area? Blight is blight, no matter where it is.

So why the games? When they needed a way to pay for the city attitude survey and the year 2000 project, the budget wizards at 11 Mile and Orchard Lake Road found it.

If another code enforcement officer is such a priority, then budget for one. With planning for the 1990-91 budget at hand, the timing is perfect.

City manager Bill Costick pegs the annual cost of a fifth officer at \$40,000. That's less than half of 1 percent of the city budget — not exactly an

insurmountable expense. Costick is right: "Where there's a will, there's a way."

As proposed, the \$40,000 would come from the city's CDBG capital improvement program pot, which originally weighed in at \$100,000 for 1990-91.

**WE'RE THANKFUL** the administration steered away from the \$206,000 ticketed for housing rehabilitation loans, one of the city's most important services.

But why diminish the value of capital improvements? Neighborhood road and drainage improvements aren't glamour services. But they're darn important. New pavement and better drainage give the entire neighborhood an emotional boost and inspire stable property values.

We appreciate Costick's wish to hold down taxes and work in concert with residents to keep southeast Farmington Hills vibrant.

We agree with him that a cooperative approach to zoning regulations is a critical first step to "really making an impact."

**BUT WE'RE** concerned about the changing nature of the CDBG program.

First, the feds cut Farmington Hills' block grant by \$11,000. Then, Costick said administrative costs associated with housing rehab loans would be \$10,000 higher.

Factor in the \$40,000 for a code enforcement officer, and the amount available for housing rehab loans and capital improvements would be \$61,000 less than anticipated.

Frankly, we're not convinced the money for a new code enforcement officer can't be found in the general fund.

## Allow police officers to do their rightful job

The writer, Tim Lurion, is a Livonia resident.

**I** AM writing this rebuttal to a column that appeared in the March 29 issue of the Observer & Eccentric. "Police quick to abuse powers" by Tim Richard.

Again the readers are subjected to the personal opinions of a frustrated, liberal journalist who uses his powers, as an editor, to tarnish the image or blacken the eye of all honest, hard-working police officers. Now, that is what I call "abuse of powers."

American police officers have traditionally been regarded as courageous protectors of the innocent. They regularly face the threat of physical harm or death.

Yet the damaging words of police brutality, complaints of improper enforcement of traffic laws, stories of illicit confessions and maltreatment of prisoners, and news accounts of police bribery, refusals to release ongoing investigative reports to the media and incompetence have altered the traditional image of our "men in blue."

Who has changed — the police or the public?

Unlike other representatives of local governments, the police officer is in view 24 hours a day.

There is no doubt, much of the criticism results from the fact that he/she has become the uniformed symbol at which a community's pent-up resentment over social conditions can be aimed.

Men and women who accept hazardous public service are no different from any other person desiring the good will and good opinion of their fellow citizens.

Consequently, it is hard for a police officer to accept danger daily, without frustration and oblique malice, in the face of mounting public disrespect and outright hostility.

We should never forget, in our dealing with a police officer, that he/she may have just spent an eight-

### guest column

hour day (or more) confronting drunks, thieves, drug users, suicide and accident victims.

We cannot expect the officer to show the composure of a surgeon, the understanding of a clergyman or the learning of an appellate judge.

And, we cannot impose restrictions on our law enforcement agencies that will render them powerless to prevent crime and apprehend criminals.

I am personally distressed and appalled at the Observer & Eccentric for allowing such shoddy journalism to be printed in your fine paper. So, I implore you, managing editors and misguided sensationalism writers, to support the police; or, if nothing else, get off their backs.

"Men in blue" should be heroes, not targets.

### from our readers

#### Reform panel: sleazy front

To the editor:

If you've been mailed a colorful flier from the Committee for Auto Insurance Reform, burn it. This is not a citizens organization, but a sleazy front for the insurance industry.

It's loaded with lies about "extravagant medical coverage" and "frivolous lawsuits." Like many legitimate consumer organizations, they pro-

pose to lower rates, but what they don't say is that it would be at the cost of reducing essential medical coverage and a victim's right to sue. And they neglect to mention that they are in fact the insurance industry.

Please notice the Committee for Auto Insurance Reform flier is printed with three colors of ink. That makes the publication three times more expensive than the black and white leaflets most citizens groups use. And that money comes from, you guessed it, the policyholders.

Timothy Lachowski,  
Farmington Hills

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This need to schedule sufficient time crops up when the person with arthritis has to attend a wedding, anniversary party, or a theatre performance. The event starts at a set time, and late arrival causes embarrassment to you and poses problems for your host. Late arrival risks losing the pleasure of the event and may convince the arthritic individual that the effort to get out of the home is greater than the gain.

Thus whenever possible, the two of you should work out, days in advance, the time required to get ready and arrive at your destination. Then add 30% to that estimate. Finally, you should have a plan to keep comfortable and entertained, if preparations go well and you arrive early.

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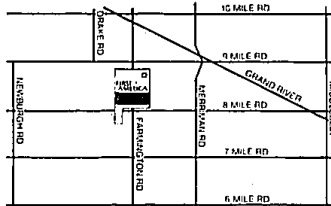
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