

points of view

Oh the sights on a busy 12 Mile Road

MY WAY TO WORK — PART II

HOW ABOUT that! The eastern approaches to the Farmingtons are guarded by a home for unwed mothers (north of 12 Mile Road), a nursery (10 Mile) and a reform school (Nine Mile).

Those are truly formidable guards, but I'll try to enter anyway on this dark morning (a man has to get to work, after all) and I'll take 12 Mile ... no, not because it's the lesser of the three evils.

Until the early 1970s, 12 Mile was a sleepy country two-lane road leading nowhere for no particular reason. Now it's all business, a ribbon of commerce running rampant straight across Farmington Hills.

For thousands of suburbanites, it's the way to the Twelve Oaks mall in Novi. A lot of people need to get to Novi these days, not only to shop, but also to work at the office complexes that have sprouted there.

Any way, our 12 Mile of the '90s is busy with traffic. I expect to see one of those big orange signs — "12 Mile is traffic-clogged and dangerous. Alternate route suggested" — at Inkster Road where Farmington Hills begins.

THOUSANDS of motorists have indeed found an alternate — I-696, a non-stop superhighway — for their trip to work, the mall or wherever.

So 12 Mile can be slow and local with lots of backups behind cars turning left. Oh, it starts out pleasant enough as a quiet two-lane west of Inkster. I pass the past (the Ulfy Cemetery where some of Farmington's pioneers are spending eternity) and the present (the Greencastle subdivision with its lighted sign).

Cross Middlebelt, and things change. The road widens, there are strip malls and the big Glapollis restaurant. On the right is Jean's Hardware, which goes back to the days when a dairy farmer might have gone there in search of parts for his cream separator.

On the left is Harrison State Penitentiary. oops, that Harrison High School. Lights are showing in its guard towers these dark mornings.



Tom Baer

So many people who go there to watch its outstanding football team play Saturday afternoons remark that it looks like a prison.

And every few years a rumor spreads through the community that the school district is selling Harrison to the county or state for a new prison. People actually believe it.

MOVING RIGHT along, I pass the condo clusters for the wealthy (Twelfth Estate, Inverary, etc.) before coming to Orchard Lake Road. Twelve Mile and Orchard Lake is Farmington Hills' beating heart — if Farmington Hills can be said to have a heart and it beats.

Here's some advice: Get off 12 Mile here and head north or south on Orchard Lake. Go further west and you'll encounter post office and library traffic. Farmington Road-12 Mile is a real mess, and beyond that construction really chokes the flow.

They say 12 Mile will be a beautiful boulevard in a couple of years when the construction is finished. And a highway shall be there, they promise. Right. But now it's a road to avoid.

So ... I head south on Orchard Lake, which narrows to two lanes. There's the Farmington Hills City Hall at 11 Mile with a nice stand of poplars and birches shielding the building.

There's really not much to notice on Orchard Lake going south. The houses are solid-looking and set back from the road.

THERE'S GREENE'S hamburgers at the corner of Orchard Lake and 10 Mile. Is it true that prisoners in our local lockups feed on those burgers? I turn right on 10 Mile, still headed west. Farmington is on my left, Farmington Hills on the right.

Cross Power Road and you pass the mirror of a court house. You can see the reflection of your car as you go past. Ten Mile ends (for awhile) at Farmington Road. Well, it's down one hill and up another and on to work.

Coming soon in this space: My way home.

Tom Baer is the editor of the Farmington Observer.

THOMAS BAER is the editor of the Farmington Observer.

from our readers

He supports Alexander

To the editor: Denise Alexander. Remember her name on Tuesday, Nov. 6. She will hold her foot to the fire for us.

Look at your future. Think about your children's future. When you vote for Denise Alexander, you know you'll be well represented. She will not turn her back on us.

Vernon C. Klepinski, Farmington Hills

THRO them out, he says

To the editor: Citizens who are fed up with the ineptitude of senators and representatives are encouraged to support efforts to change the composition of the present Congress.

We encourage them to join THRO ("Throw the Hypocritical Rascals Out"), 4127 W. Cypress, Tampa, Fla. 33607. This organization is attempting to balance the overwhelming power of incumbents with new blood

in upcoming elections. One incentive to act is the projected cost of the S & L Bailout that Congress has passed on to every American family. Another, more recent, is the budget games being played at a time when serious decision making is needed.

Voters need to join and act when it's time to vote.

Don Nichols, Farmington

Are changes needed on the commission?

To the editor: If our Oakland County Commissioners are so confident and willing to spend \$500 million of Oakland County taxpayer money on their solid waste plan, a plan which includes a massive incinerator, why weren't they confident and willing to provide a representative to debate the incinerator issue Oct. 8 at the people's request?

Concerned citizens invited a nationally known waste management expert, Dr. Paul Connitt, and the county commissioners to debate the incinerator issue and the alternatives. The citizens attended hoping to hear both sides of the issue.

The commissioners chose not to represent themselves in the debate. Why? If they really believe that the incinerator was a good plan for Oakland County, I would think they would jump at the chance to defend their position and inform the people.

Very few commissioners even attended Dr. Connitt's presentation. Don't they want to know the other side of the story? Don't they care? Roy Rewold, chairperson of the commissioners, did not even attend. What type of leadership do we have in Oakland County?

Who stands to benefit from this incinerator? I know who will be paying for it. If the incinerator is built, taxpayers will be committed to repaying the bond issue for the next 20 years. Dr. Connitt stated in no uncertain terms that there are much safer, less expensive alternatives to incineration.

A change in leadership may be our first alternative. Carefully consider your vote for county commissioner Nov. 6. Call 858-0100 to speak with your commissioner about his/her views relative to the incinerator and the bond issue. The future of Oakland County depends on it.

Bruce Kennedy, Rochester Hills

Columnist's logic flawed

To the editor: This regards columnist Jack Gladson's Oct. 8 comment that a person who is pro-life is illogical if he advocates capital punishment. Agreed — but an abortion advocate who is against capital punishment is far more illogical. The person who warrants capital punishment has committed a crime — the baby killed with abortion has done nothing to deserve punishment. How about following through on your logic?

Germaine Allen, Livonia

Don't dignify noise gripes

To the editor: The Women of North Farmington has been a vibrant organization in our community for over 33 years. It is a non-profit organization with a primary mission to raise funds to support local deserving institutions.

Our members have raised and donated thousands of dollars to many worthy organizations in support of their activities, which are important to the well-being of our whole community.

One of the deserving institutions we have frequently supported is the Farmington Community Center, itself a non-profit organization dedicated to and serving all members of our community educationally, socially and culturally.

We believe that the center and its director, Dorothy Pfaff, have performed its functions with great distinction under difficult circumstances.

For several months, our members have followed the efforts of a self-centered "Johnny-come-lately" in this community to harass and scuttle the commendable efforts of the center and its director by making complaints of noise concerning the musical concerts, and of other center activities which entertain and enhance the culture of a large number of our residents.

OUR MEMBERS deplore these tactics and the lack of consideration for others. We are repulsed by the malignment of Pfaff, who was charged with disturbing the peace and exposed to negative media publicity on several occasions by your shallow understanding of what constitutes news.

We believe you would have served the interests of this area by refusing to dignify these "charges" and give recognition to the selfish individual, who is obviously motivated by the desire for publicity and self-esteem, and uncaring about the multitude of people who find the concerts and other activities of the center socially and culturally rewarding.

At our last meeting, the Women of North Farmington asked me to express to you our unrelenting dedicated support of the Community Center for its activities and Pfaff, and our disdain for the government and legal process, which unreasonably allows a selfish individual or individuals to harass the center's mission to serve the vast majority of the people of this community.

We hope these attitudes are not extended to the parades that liven our civic spirit, and the church bells that sound to remind us of our heritage. Will they be the next to go? God forbid.

Elaine Rousseau, president, Women of North Farmington

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