

# Public is urged to 'see themselves' as seniors

By Casey Hans  
staff writer

State legislators visiting Farmington Hills Thursday were challenged to do something about our aging population, especially with the Baby Boomer generation approaching late middle age.

"The time to address this is now, before the avalanche the census predicts hits us," said Robert McQuaid, executive director of Detroit Baptist Manor in Farmington Hills. "We must be awakened from this sleepwalk of the youth culture."

"The public must develop a new view of our elderly," he added; saying younger people must "see ourselves" in the faces of today's elderly.

McQuaid was one of about 70 people — seniors and those who handle senior services in Southeast Michi-

gan — who packed a meeting room at the Farmington Hills library for a public hearing by the state House Republican Task Force on Senior Policy. The hearing was the first to be taken outside of Lansing, where the task force has been meeting for the past year.

The group will compile all testimony to determine future state policies for seniors.

THE GROUP, which includes state Rep. Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, heard about the horrors of Alzheimer's Disease, the problems facing the elderly poor and the change in lifestyle which is forcing the elderly to care for each other at home with little help.

Many of the complaints were about declining services because of budget cuts, at a time when the population is aging at a rapid pace.

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— Robert McQuaid  
Detroit Baptist Manor

One resident told the committee of his family's experience with his father-in-law's Alzheimer's Disease. "It's sad. It's frightening. It's very disturbing," he said. "Society has to have a responsibility for these people. We collectively have to come to grips with the problems."

Another woman told of the huge expenses — hundreds of dollars per

month — that she and her family paid out while her husband was ill with the same disease.

Michigan has the ninth largest number of seniors 60 and older compared with other states, according to information presented Thursday. Forty-two percent of today's seniors are impoverished, while 64 percent use Social Security as their main

source of income.

Those who work with seniors see those numbers growing daily.

"I think what we have are two extremes (rich and poor) and not much in the middle," said Dan Potter, director of special services for the city of Farmington Hills, whose department has a Senior Adult Division.

HE NOTED ALSO that more people today are caring for parents instead of children, and that many of those children are seniors themselves.

"We are no longer that younger society we grew up with," he added.

Another Hills official pointed out that seniors face a multitude of needs. "If a senior needs one service, they have multiple needs," added Maggie Lorias, senior adult specialist for the city. "Our agency is being called on to provide multiple, multiple services in many areas."

"The community becomes the care-giver."

Aldene Ditter, in telling about her experience with her now-deceased husband's Alzheimer's, asked why there couldn't be more help. "Why is it people over 65 years old always have to be the one to bite the bullet?" she asked.

## Misdemeanor charges filed after Little League fight

Continued from Page 1

One of the attackers got off the coach and punched the state trooper in the ear.

With his ear heavily bleeding, the trooper left to seek medical attention. That's when another five to 10 adults who were watching the game joined the fracas to help the coach.

When the fight ended, the two men who began the fight shouted obscenities as they left the game, according to the police report.

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## State agrees; house to get safety wall

Continued from Page 1

just a bit south of Nine Mile, and across a nearby bridge over Nine Mile, would now cost at least \$225,000, DeFraine said.

MDOT also has a rule that a minimum of four houses must benefit from a noise barrier. Barber's house is the only residence in that area affected by I-375. And costs cannot exceed about \$15,000 per house.

Barber, however, sees things differently. "This is a good home. Homes like

this (historical) cannot be considered disposable. This is a residential area. We should have received more protection. The state is not adequately protecting us," she said.

The Barber house — originally owned by relatives of Barber's husband, Bob — is a family heirloom. Built in 1924, the house, which is in the state historical register, has remained — except for a brief time in the Depression — in the Barber family.

"It's part of the history of this state. And it shouldn't be brushed away as though it doesn't count."

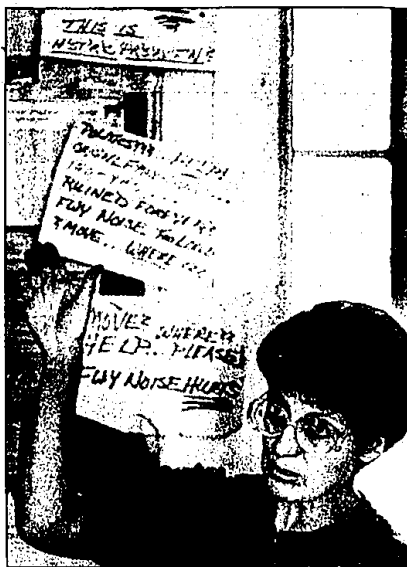
Barber has consistently reminded state officials that historic preservation laws preceded regulations for noise barriers. But Barber chalks up her lack of success with the state to numbers.

"They (state officials) don't have a problem with spending \$7,500-\$10,000 for each light fixture for the (state) Capitol building (that's being restored). But they can't spend that for homes they want preserved," she said.

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Joan Barber of Farmington Hills hasn't given up her fight for a noise barrier to buffer her historic home that sits 130 feet from I-275 even though the state plans to provide her with a five-foot tall safety barrier.

## March Tire Co. GOODYEAR

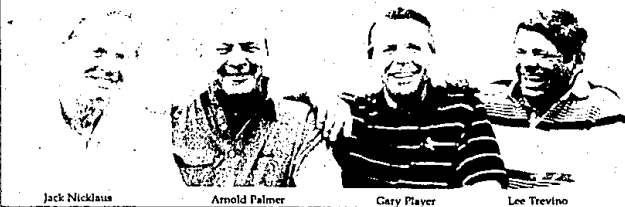
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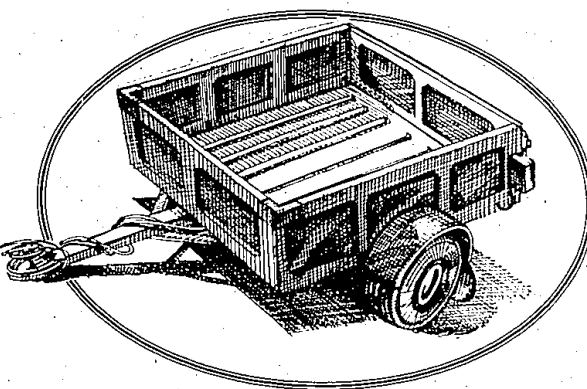
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