

Opinion

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The big 1-2-5

A celebration is on the way

A RICH VEIN of history runs through the community we know as Farmington. We all are fortunate to have so many fine people willing to mine for it.

That was our thinking upon hearing that plans are well under way for the celebration of the 125th anniversary of Farmington's incorporation as a village.

That's right: Farmington hits the big one-two-five next year. Villagehood came in May 1867, and thanks to Mayor Shirley Richardson and many others that event won't go unheralded.

As was reported in the July 25 Farmington Observer, dozens of volunteers are already planning events. We'll be looking forward to:

- An invitation-only kickoff reception May 6 at the Farmington Historical Museum to honor living descendants of Farmington's founders.

- Dedication of a commemorative quilt hand-made by members of the community. It will be presented to the city council at the kickoff.

- A "family day" with old-fashioned activities like square dancing and a chicken barbecue in Shawassaw Park in August.

- An "1867" day at the Farmington Community Center sometime during the summer. An art show or strawberry festival may be part of it.

- Tours of historic homes during the fall.

ONE NICE THING about this months-long whoop-de-doo in Farmington is that it dovetails nicely into two longstanding traditions — Michigan Week (May 16-23) and the local Founders Festival (July whenever).

Michigan Week seems to have atrophied to almost nothing in recent years. Some cities still observe "Mayor Exchange Day" and local participants tell us it's truly worth the effort. But, overall, recent Michigan Weeks really haven't been worth celebrating.

Next May, however, Farmington store window displays and a school poster contest will be encouraged to commemorate not only the state's history, but Farmington's as well.

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The Founders Festival (let's see... this will be the 28th-annual) is our old standby of small-town merrymaking. For a week in early July, the festival rages through the streets and parking lots of downtown Farmington and environs.

THE ORIGINAL intent of the festival was to honor the community's storied past as the state's first Quaker settlement. But, as we've said in this space before, the historical flavor seems to have faded.

Sure, there are beauty queens, ox roasts, parades, softball tournaments, crafters, and sales that keep the cash registers ringing and the merchants smiling. But, let's face it, there is very little of the history of the community associated with recent festivals.

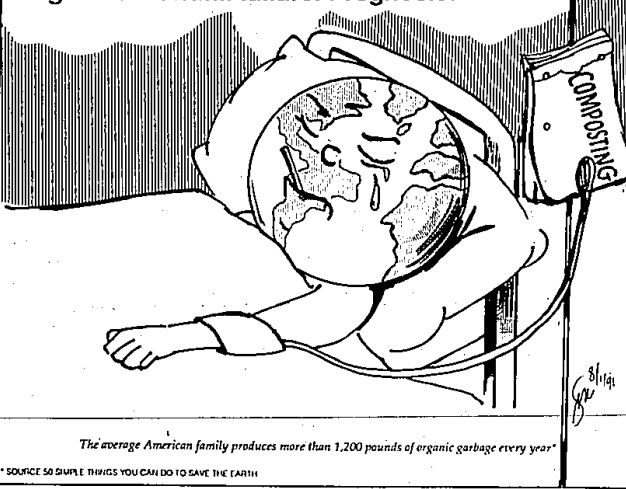
But the 1992 Founders Festival will revolve around the 125th anniversary (or will it be the other way around?) and organizers of the anniversary are seeking a group to sponsor a float highlighting the theme.

Good show. It's going to be the Summer of Farmington in 1992 and we're looking forward to it.

Even though the sparkplugs of the anniversary celebration seem to be from Farmington (city of), we're sure there's also a lot of interest in Farmington Hills. We hope that that interest is taken advantage of, so the celebration can be truly communitywide.

Let the plans go forward...

Diagnosis: Landfill failure. Prognosis: ?



* SOURCE: 50 SIMPLE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO SAVE THE EARTH

History, Champagne marked growth at OU

JOE CHAMPAGNE, president of Oakland University, gets up at 5 a.m. With his family still asleep, Champagne goes to the kitchen, pours himself a cup of scalding black coffee.

Then he sits silently in the still dark living room for an hour, thinking and planning, experiencing "my time with me."

Being president of a large, public university is probably the toughest job in America. Between the competing demands of students and faculty, business and politicians, pure research and craft convincing Joe Champagne's day has precious little time for himself or his family.

Maybe he'll have more. He will leave Oakland this week to be the new president of Crittenton Hospital. Since managing large hospitals is arguably the second toughest job in America, you've got to conclude that Champagne is either a glutton for punishment or supremely self-confident.

TALK FOR A few moments to Champagne and you get a sharp first impression. Dynamic. Self-possessed. Compelling. Wonderful salesman.

Maybe first impressions are close to the mark, because in his 10 years at Oakland he fundamentally changed the university — "brought it into the 21st century," in his words.

He realized shortly after arriving in 1981 that "the 1-75 corridor" — where we already have thousands of acres of land, gas lines in, water

main in and everything here, along with the university" — would make a magnificent research park development.

The key was to bring "the users of knowledge into close proximity with the creators of knowledge" by engaging in a new kind of academic real estate development.

The Oakland Technology Park was thus conceived, to be born two years later when Comerica Bank bought the original 210-acre parcel and started a \$40 million operations and computer center that now employs 1,800.

TODAY THE PARK covers 1,500 acres with more than 5 million feet of office space in use or under construction, including the Chrysler Technology Center and a string of Fortune 500 corporate tenants.

The tech center is at the core of Oakland County's ambitious plan to become the center of a high-tech business in southeastern Michigan. And the linkages between OU's science, engineering and technology activities and the world of business have hardened the university's reputation.

Champagne acknowledges that at first it was a hard sell, especially with humanists who feared business interests would dominate the university. Today, however, he says most professors agree that "our faculty will be better off for being directly in contact with the real world."



Philip Power

UNIVERSITIES around the nation today are under assault for being too self-absorbed, too expensive and too other-worldly.

OU will likely not be the target of such criticism. Champagne cites as his happiest moment as president a review committee's finding that cited OU as being, in his words, "a model university for the 21st century, blending the traditions of academia with the realities of the future."

His saddest moment was to have decided to freeze OU's enrollment at a little more than 12,000 students. "We had to deny access to a fine university to a lot of kids," he said, "but we had to choose between a good education and a mediocre one."

History, and Joe Champagne's successors, will determine whether he drove the university in the right direction. But certainly his presidency marked a fundamental change in direction for OU and a significant push for the region.

Phil Power is chairman of the company that owns this newspaper. His award-winning column will appear periodically.

Concern

Thomas: Do the right thing

THERE'S BEEN an extraordinary amount of talk, nationally and locally, among politicians and NAACP chapters, about the president's choice of Clarence Thomas to take Thurgood Marshall's seat on the court. Much doubt already has been cast on the candidate because of his very conservative nature and whether he is a quota appointment.

"I'm concerned," said Robert L. Willis who is associated with the South Oakland County Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. "I worry about his views on abortion and affirmative action."

Willis added that he opposed "stacking the court" with liberals or conservatives.

Given that Bush will not appoint a liberal like former Michigan Supreme Court Justice Dennis Archer to the court, it's important to step back and take an intelligent look at Thomas.

MORE and more opinions written by Thomas are unearthed daily. He was against busing to accomplish desegregation; he let expire without recourse 13,000 complaints of age discrimination while head of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; he has publicly praised Louis Farrakhan.

But, Willis said, "the jury is still out on Thomas."

Disagreement with his decisions is not a good enough reason to keep him off the court. Disagreeing is a fundamental right in this country. A thorough grilling by the Senate should be encouraged to insure that any potential problems are uncovered and weighed. Beyond that, there isn't much more to be done.

THE NAACP was unsure of Thomas and de-

layed endorsing or denouncing him. This week it voted in opposition to him.

Their care in making an endorsement was admirable, except on one front: Some members were concerned that if they fought and defeated Thomas, Bush would nominate someone worse and the NAACP wouldn't be able to mount another successful challenge.

That's bad reasoning. If the NAACP believes Thomas is not worthy of becoming a Supreme Court justice, then it should fight the nomination on its merits. That's better than justifying inactivity because of what might, or might not, happen.

And there's really no accurate, certain way of knowing whether Thomas is a quota appointment. Bush said he was going after the best candidate and came up with Thomas. Others say the anti-affirmative action president is contradicting his own beliefs and making a quota appointment.

Speculation is worthless; so-called expert analysis is tiresome and rarely correct. Unless Bush himself cares to step forward and reveal why he chose Thomas, no one will know.

So let's look at the positive side. Inheriting Thurgood Marshall's legacy as a champion of civil rights is a weighty gift. Other Supreme Court nominees, once seated on the Court, have veered off their stated courses and voted in direct contradiction to their stated positions, often to the dismay of the presidents who nominated them.

Perhaps when seated Thomas will rethink his position, realize his opportunity and widen the path blazed for him by Marshall.

Assembly, petition are deeply-rooted freedoms

RECALL, STOP the war, no more toxic waste dumps — when Americans don't like something, they take to the streets. Protest, assembly and petition are deeply rooted freedoms. A century and a half ago, Alexis de Tocqueville, the French observer of American life, commented on the inclination of Americans to form voluntary associations to solve common problems.

When the First Congress under the Constitution debated the Bill of Rights in 1789, Rep. Theodore Sedgwick argued that the proposed assembly and petition clause was "trifling" when com-

pared with other rights. Rep. John Page of Virginia disagreed, saying that if people could be deprived "of the power of assembling under any pretext whatsoever, they might be deprived of every other privilege" in the First Amendment.

These two rights have afforded protection for many reform movements, and also nurtured American labor in its long struggle to create unions and to undertake collective bargaining.

This is another in a continuing series of commentaries marking the anniversary of the Bill of Rights.



from our readers

One-sided article is misleading

To the editor:

I am writing this letter with regard to the three articles which appeared in the Suburban Life edition of July 4, 1991, with regard to the Politics of Breast Cancer.

As a general surgeon in practice, who sees a large number of patients with breast cancer, I am certainly in favor of any informative article that will help American women to realize the extent of the problem that we are all dealing with.

Certainly, the sad plight of the two women described by Loraine McClain illustrates the critical need for women to become active participants in the direction of their own medical care.

The article authored by Carolyn DeMarco regarding the paucity of funds for breast cancer research was also very informative. However, I must take issue with the article by Ms. Iden with regard to the malpractice activities of the attorneys, Stern with regard to breast cancer.

I felt that this article was very misleading and one-sided, and failed to adequately inform your reader-

ship with regard to the issues at hand.

I find it very curious that Ms. Iden would refer to the fact that 10 times as much money was spent on AIDS research (\$1.1 billion), as will be on breast cancer research. Further on, in the same article she includes a litany of complaint by Kenneth Stern against physicians who are not carrying malpractice insurance.

Nowhere is mention made of the fact that malpractice insurance premiums cost \$4.2 billion dollars in 1988. If you were to add the cost of defending frivolous and non-meritorious law suits to this, you can see that physicians in this country are spending an incredible amount of money for malpractice defense.

If even only a modest decrease in the number of frivolous and non-meritorious suits could be achieved by liability reform, there would be an incredible amount of money freed up for other uses such as breast cancer research.

I know of no physician that would be willing to go without malpractice liability insurance in order to deprive injured patients of compensation. However, I know of many physicians who can no longer afford astronomical premiums for inadequate liability insurance.

I would also take issue with the very misleading statement that Attorney Elliot Stern made with regard to the fact that 20 percent of

mammograms are wrong or misread.

I am well aware of Dr. Stern's dual training in medicine and law. However, it is very apparent that he has no clinical experience in the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer. If he had, he would be aware of the fact that mammograms only detect 40 percent of solid breast tumors.

This is not due to being inadequately performed or misread. However, it is due to the fact that a mammogram may miss a breast tumor depending upon the relative density of the breast tissue with regard to the tumor, the size of the breast with regard to the tumor and the location of the tumor within the breast.

It is only through the diligent combination of patient self breast examination, experienced physician breast examination and skilled mammography that we can ever hope to achieve the early detection and treatment of breast cancers.

I felt that this article was very one-sided and, therefore, misleading to the public. A much more balanced article could have been obtained by interviewing physicians who treat breast cancer, as well as interviewing attorneys who attempt to demonstrate their mistakes.

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