

Opinion

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14A(F) O&E Thursday, August 29, 1991

School's in! Mental adjustments needed

THERE ARE some big changes in Farmington-area neighborhoods and subdivisions this week. School is in, and the kids are out, en masse, mornings and afternoons.

The first day of classes was Tuesday for students in the Farmington School District, and school hallways were filled for the first time Wednesday in the Clarenceville District.

The opening of school marks a number of pedestrian and transportation changes from patterns firmly established over the summer months. Some of these changes are obvious, others more subtle. And many of the changes require adjustments by motorists.

ONE OF the more obvious changes will be the emergence of yellow large and mid-size school buses and vans on major thoroughfares.

The mental adjustment for motorists will be to remember to stop when the bus lights are flashing to notify drivers that it is stopping to pick up students.

Remember to stop and wait until the flashing lights are turned off before proceeding. If you are an impatient motorist who gets worked up by having to wait, seek out an alternate route used by fewer school buses.

Another of the changes will be the appearance of safety patrolers at school sites and of crossing guards at locations where students cross busy streets while walking to school.

For the first couple of weeks in September, motorists should consciously look forward a block or two for a crossing guard stepping into the roadway with a sign.

Be prepared to slow down and stop. Don't be caught unaware. Crossing guards are careful about not stepping into traffic without allowing plenty of advance time for cars to stop; but the caution of crossing guards does not relieve motorists of their responsibility to drive defensively.

Special care also is needed by motorists when making turning movements at school site intersections staffed by safety patrolers. Make sure you come to a complete stop and visually survey the intersection before making a turn.

Use turn signals so patrolers are aware of your intentions. Remain stopped if a patroler steps out onto the roadway where you plan to

turn; otherwise proceed slowly with an eye on students.

If students dash out in front of you in the excitement of the moment, make sure you are prepared to stop.

THE RETURN to school also involves a change in pedestrian habits in your neighborhood.

This summer children may have slept in for an hour, eaten their breakfast cereal at a more leisurely pace and watched morning television cartoons before going outside.

By that time, most neighbors had left for work and the presence of youngsters on the streets posed less of a problem.

Now these same children will be getting up earlier, having a quicker breakfast, rushing out the door and running across the street to meet a friend — at a much earlier hour when many motorists in the neighborhood will be leaving for work.

Motorists need to drive more defensively to compensate for the exuberance and impulsiveness of youth.

Smart, defensive drivers also will remember that the opening of school marks a highlight in the lives of a new crop of 5-year-olds. This week and next a number of little ones will be attending school for the first time. They will be less street-smart than older students and yet, have received all the safety training students get at school.

Younger children especially are prone to unpredictable behavior while walking to school or to the bus stop. Street-smart drivers like yourself need to drive defensively and be ready for unpredictable actions of younger children.

The first few days of school mom or dad might walk to school with the kindergarten class of 1991, but in the days ahead when they're on their own, motorists must continue to be alert. And remember, too, that some kindergartners have afternoon sessions and are en route to school at mid-day.

When school bells and other reminders ring in our minds as we get behind the wheels this week and in the weeks ahead, make your mental adjustments before shifting gears and this will be a safe school year for all of us.

New stadium Don't plan on private funding

THE AMERICAN tradition embodied in baseball has challenged us all in our deliberation over the future of the present Tiger Stadium and financing of an alternative stadium.

In these days of tenuous economics, sentiment is a faulty gauge by which to measure the future. This newspaper staff, like many fans who have enjoyed the special atmosphere of Tiger Stadium over the decades, has struggled with the issue.

BUT SOUND thinking dictates several obvious conclusions.

• A proposed 5-percent tax on hotels is unjust to an industry that is struggling to survive. At present many hotels aren't renting enough rooms and face bankruptcy. We need hotel rooms to attract convention revenue. An extra tax to attract nothing to fulfill the need.

• The Tiger organization's favored Briggs site would be too expensive to acquire and would just destroy another neighborhood in a city with too few viable neighborhoods.

• Maintaining the Detroit Tigers within the city limits has a value, but the value does have a ceiling. We believe the ceiling is lower than our emotions would otherwise allow us to admit.

• Finally, public financing is out of the question. Few industries really benefit from the Tigers presence. We have passed the golden decades when governmental bodies could afford to throw fiscal responsibility to the wind to subsidize sports franchise to the detriment of the taxpayers.

IN TRUTH, the Silverdome did nothing to revive Pontiac, and a new Tiger Stadium within Detroit city limits would do little to help that municipality.

Pizza magnate and Tiger owner Tom Monaghan is living the American dream. He has prospered after building one of the largest pizza franchises in America. He has millions of dollars at his disposal to obtain credit to build a new stadium if he pleases.

It can be done. The new Robbie Stadium in Miami was built with private money. So can the new Tiger Stadium.

He also has the right to build the stadium where he believes he can gain the most profit. Detroit very well may not be that place. Only market research can determine whether it would be best for the stadium to be in Detroit, western Wayne County, Washtenaw County or in Tampa, Fla.

We all will miss the famous old ball yard. It has provided us with decades of great entertainment.

But the possibility of new life is being breathed into the old stadium. A local businessman is negotiating to bring a football team to play for the Canadian Football League into Tiger Stadium.

May sound crazy. But just imagine, an alternative to the Detroit Lions and their losing ways really does exist.



cessful in balancing the interests of the minority with the wishes of the majority. For example, the promise of the new land was not extended to Native Americans who were here first or to African-Americans brought here against their will.

Time and again, however, the wrong has been righted; as Martin Luther King Jr. exhorted it to do, the nation has risen up "to live out the true meaning of its creed."

Together with the subsequent amendments and those rights contained in the original Constitution, the Bill of Rights articulates the fundamental ideas of liberty, justice and equality.

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



Bridge over troubled waters

A drainage ditch turned into a raging river on both sides of Eight Mile during recent rains, leaving home and apartment owners wringing their hands over continuing problems with

flooding. Areas affected include newer subdivisions in Livonia, and Farmington Hills alone has spent \$6 million on flooding abatement measures.

Lessons are learned in light of economy

WHILE MICHIGAN'S old guard, politicians and business tycoons alike, has been patching up an economic system that is in need of major surgery, some entrepreneurial spirits have been taking action.

A recent report on the growth of Michigan's publicly held companies reveals that the non-auto-dependent manufacturing sector is prospering. Unfortunately most of the power brokers in this state have been reluctant to admit we need a major supplement to the auto industry in order to regain our economic stamina.

For decades, the auto industry has been good for us. But times are changing, and other opportunities exist.

The report, authored by the Durocher and Co. public relations firm and BDO Seidman, uncovers some hopeful stories in an otherwise bleak economic scenario.

SOME NAMES are familiar. One of the biggest success stories continues to be Inacom Computer Centers of Troy, which ranked 10th among the 10 fastest-growing companies. Based on five-year compound annual rates of revenue growth through 1990, Inacom checked in at 29.27 percent.

But other success stories are about under banners that are far less recognizable to the general public.

The big headline goes to Wilcom-based Secom General, which experienced a whopping five-year compound annual rate of revenue growth

'In the past, aside from a few well-established science-based, high-tech companies, most seemed to be little more than gallons of potential swimming in quarts of red ink, but at least now their revenue rates demonstrate that there may be markets for their inventions.'

— Donald Durocher
president
Durocher & Co.

of 110.02 percent. The precision tool manufacturer recorded \$87,000 in 1988 and managed to build that kitty up to \$9.3 million in 1990.

Nearly 70 percent of its business is non-auto related.

Rising stars include OIS Optical Imaging Systems of Troy, which made the top 10 with a 39.35-percent growth rate. Other local firms include MLX of Troy at 36.17 percent and Buffalo Don's Artesian Wells of Plymouth at 32.71 percent.

Four of this year's 10 fastest-growing companies in revenue also ranked among the 10 fastest-growing in net income rates through 1990. These include: Randers Group of



Steve Barnaby

Muskegon Heights, 49.65 percent; International Controls of Kalamazoo, 35.59 percent; MEDSTAT Systems of Ann Arbor, at 20.35 percent; and Inacom, 47.88 percent.

"THE LONG-AWAITED maturing of the state's young scientific and medical high-tech publicly traded companies seems to be arriving," according to Donald Durocher, Michigan Growth 100 study co-author and president of Durocher & Co.

"In the past, aside from a few well-established science-based, high-tech companies, most seemed to be little more than gallons of potential swimming in quarts of red ink, but at least now their revenue rates demonstrate that there may be markets for their inventions," he says.

Lessons are to be learned from these hopeful glimmers of light in an otherwise bleak economic scene. New industry means new jobs and more revenue to pay for badly needed services.

The challenge for every Michigan resident is to work on our leaders to help them see the light.

from our readers

Painting was not censored

To the editor:

Plymouth's 11th annual "Art in the Park" is over, but literary, philosophical, historical, critical and emotional reactions linger on. Over a month has passed since Dianne Quinn's very successful art show ended, but computers are still humming at editors, staff writers and citizens continue to react to the allegations of censorship by Livonia artist Judy Gibbs. Her painting entitled "Mourning Moslems" has provoked discussions on everything from the pros and cons of the war in the Gulf to asking Plymouth residents to "look at the world with both eyes open" and stating that "even here, in the liberal mecca of Plymouth, censorship lives in a dark cobwebbed corner, waiting for a new victim."

In short, a brief dialogue between show officials and the artist has been dissected, interpreted and spit out from many different perspectives. Simply put, as one of the employees charged with running the show, my job dictated that I tell Ms. Gibbs what was being said. The conversation included informing her that comments had been made that her painting was emotional and that it caused folks to feel sad and depressed. I further suggested that she might sell more (her other work was floral and scenic in nature) and in-

crease the traffic within her booth if she moved the painting to an inside location.

After all, as an exhibitor at "Art in the Park," she had paid for her booth. It can certainly be assumed that she wished to achieve a return on her investment. There is no doubt on the 13th and 14th of July 1991, the primary agenda was to earn money and gain public recognition.

IT IS disturbing that "passing comments from a few people" can provoke written responses that level complaints against an entire community. Why is it that each newspaper article written presents a specific viewpoint and then instructs readers to re-evaluate their thinking? Doesn't America provide an arena for each of us to hold pro and con positions? Isn't it OK for someone to say they don't like something? Was the artist removed as an exhibitor? Not Was the artist ordered to move her painting? Not Did censorship occur? Not Was the artist's painting loved by all? Probably not, most things aren't.

Why didn't she maintain the courage of her convictions, exercise her rights as an American and leave the painting on the front wall of her booth?

Because of Ms. Quinn's "Art in the Park," over 287 talented individuals from across the United States and Canada displayed their works and sold their creations. It is estimated that over 70,000 individuals attended this two-day yearly event. Plymouth merchants, taxpayers and resi-

dents alike derived social, economic and cultural benefits.

The 20th Century brings new and exciting challenges. Like our ancestors before us, we are all doing the best that we can. It isn't difficult to understand the unrest in the world when one looks at the amount of controversy generated over this one conversation between two human beings. We cordially invite all 1991 exhibitors to return in 1992. Plymouth is a great community and "Art in the Park" is a great art show which has enhanced freedom of expression for the past 11 years. I am proud to be a part of this dynamic organization.

James Miller,
Plymouth

Column was right on!

To the editor:

Kudos to Steve Barnaby for his piece "Censorship Can't Mask Real Tragedies of War" in the Aug. 15 edition of the Observer & Eccentric. It released a huge block of feeling I've been harboring since Bush's push for yet another dirty war, complete with censorship.

There must be a very large number of us, standing silently and idly by while more and more of our rights are being smothered. Why is this happening and what will break the dam?

Mary Ellen Quigley
Birmingham

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