

# Opinion

21898 Farmington Road/Farmington, MI 48336

Tom Baer editor/477-5450

18A(F)

O&amp;E Thursday, November 28, 1991

## Dig deeper

### Let us not forget the needy

SAVE THIS editorial.

Clip it out. Tuck it into your wallet. Post it on your refrigerator. Pin it to your bulletin board.

Some of our neighbors need help. It's not just the homeless, though God knows their numbers seem to be growing every day.

With the recession lingering and good jobs shrinking, more and more people are finding it harder to make ends meet.

Some are even going hungry. Food banks say food is there, but it's going fast.

LISTEN TO what Gleaners Community Food Bank president Gene Gonya says:

"There's enough food through Christmas, but for March and April we can't say."

That's why we're urging you to give as generously as you can this holiday season — and to remember the needy in the coming year, too.

We all hope for a happy 1992. Some say the economy is already improving, but they usually aren't the ones who deal with our area's needy on a day-to-day basis.

"From what we're seeing," said Salvation Army Major Robert Thomson, "I'd say things are going to get worse in the New Year."

EVEN IF THE recession is over, it's over for economists — not for those in line at the MESC office, or for those sweating out whether they'll have a job come next year.

We're not just talking about the thousands of Michigan residents dumped off general assistance welfare. We're talking about thousands of hard working men and women, white and blue collar alike, who find themselves in a bind.

With the holidays coming, we could trot out all the old arguments for helping others — peace on earth, goodwill to men and all that. And those arguments are still valid.

This year, however, we're asking people to dig a little deeper. Don't just remember those in need during the holidays. Remember them all throughout the year.

That's why we asked you to save this editorial.

We know times are tough. Many people find their budgets stretched almost to the limit just in meeting their own family needs.

But it doesn't take much. A \$5 bill, an old coat, even a can of food will help.

GLEANERS AND area grocers are offering cases of food, from baby formula to canned stew, at wholesale prices. You buy the case, then donate it to Gleaners.

Prices range from \$7.20 for a case of baby food to \$18 for a case of peanut butter to \$40 for a case of canned tuna. Call 923-3535 for details.

Worthy as that project is, Gleaners isn't the only agency that helps the needy. Contributions can also be made to the following local agencies.

Whatever you do, we urge you to keep the spirit of holiday generosity alive, when the wrapping paper, tinsel and glitter are just memories.

Remember, the winds of February blow just as cold as those of December.

Here's two local agencies that could use your help:

The Salvation Army  
27500 Shawwassee  
Farmington Hills 48336  
477-1153

Needed: Food, coats, toys, blankets.

The Farmington-Area Goodfellows  
c/o Farmington/Farmington Chamber of Commerce  
33411 Grand River  
Farmington 48335  
474-3440

Needed: Food (canned goods), clothing, toys.



FILE PHOTO

The homeless are sometimes forced to carry their belongings wherever they go, as this homeless woman in Birmingham had to do.

## As bus service declines, we become more isolated

EVERYTIME I ride west on Warren Road crossing Westland's boundary a small smile comes across my mind, especially when I pass by Cowan Road and the old red school house.

Everytime it's a trip back to another time and another way of thinking. Naturally it seems like yesterday.

From the solitude of my car, my thoughts wander back to the times when I used to jump on a bus on Warren and Greenfield (that's in Detroit, for those who are unaware).

Riding the bus was always an adventure when you were a young teenager, especially when it was going to take you miles away to a community which was more similar to a farming community than anything we understood to be a city. That bus would careen past what seemed like miles of open fields before coming to the brand new shopping center on the corner of Wayne and Warren, Westland Center.

WE WERE already familiar with that intersection because across the street was the Algiers Drive-In Theater.

Later, to us it made sense for the drive in to be located in the middle of nowhere. After all, the drive in the country was part of the fun in going to the movies on a Friday night.

But to plunk down an entire shopping mall halfway between Ann Arbor and Detroit just didn't make sense from our limited view.

So we would pile on the Warren bus, go to the mall, just so we could tell our friends we had been.

The red school house, still there, was a landmark, indicating that we had just a short distance to go.

Later that landmark became an even more significant personal symbol. Cowan Road, dirt then, was where I learned to drive. My mother would make me drive up and down that road, probably a thousand times, shifting that three speed station wagon, again and again, until the car no longer lurched and stalled. Patiently she braced herself until feeling confident that I was ready for the main mean streets.

The transition seemed natural. Little did I know that along with me, millions of Americans were participating in one of the biggest social



Steve Barnaby

transformations this country would experience.

Mass transit, once so handy, so sensible was soon to become as outmoded in the Middle West as was that little red school house. Today most people under 40 have never ridden on a bus, probably never will.

Now the suburban bus system (SMART) is about to go under, further cutting off the center city from its suburban appendages. Suburban governments have expressed an unwillingness to financially support a merger between SMART and Detroit's transportation system.

Isolation is a frightening concept, one which leads to even more fear and prejudice than exists today.

Perhaps buses have outlived their usefulness. If so we must be more innovative than ever ensuring that we continue to strive toward being a people united, in touch one with another.

Steve Barnaby is managing editor for Observer & Eccentric newspapers.

## Resource

### We must preserve our parks

LOOKING AT the Michigan state park numbers, you might wonder if there isn't a sinister plot, a secret political agenda.

Certainly none of the past three governors ever stood up in a State of the State address and suggested, "Let's let this resource rot."

Yet that is what is happening, by design or neglect, in the last 10 years.

General fund support of the parks and recreation areas has slipped from 70 percent to 30 percent.

User fees have risen faster than inflation. A Legislature afraid to raise taxes has no trouble raising fees and licenses.

One-third of the Department of Natural Resources parks division has been laid off or attritioned out.

Currently, a lot of middle management jobs are being eliminated as the parks system shifts to "cluster" administration. That sounds efficient. Last summer beach guards were laid off. That isn't efficient.

Michigan, one of the top 10 states in population, ranks 10th in park attendance — and 39th in the amount of tax dollars it puts into its parks system.

THAT'S NOT what Michiganians want.

Just three years ago, 63 percent of us voted for a recreation bond issue which provided millions for parks roads, electrical systems, sewage systems and new park sites.

Bond money, however, can't be used for operations.

The trend that started under Bill Milliken and

continued under Jim Blanchard becomes particularly alarming, however, under John Engler. His administration has talked openly of contracting out the operations of some parks.

In the background are mutterings of anti-government hardliners about "privatizing" parks, or even getting the state out of parks. Certainly Engler's own agenda of "less government" now is interpreted to mean less support of our parks.

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE can't handle state parks, which are a resource.

Businesses must generate a cash flow. Private campgrounds pack units close together without foliage. They provide heated pools, coin laundries, game rooms, candy machines. That's fine for those who like camping in a city. But you don't get close to the Creator in a KOA.

State parks provide wider-spaced camping, natural areas, woods, trails, beaches, more birds and animals. Recreation areas provide more rustic camping, longer trails and hunting. They provide cheap vacations for families.

It's disheartening, therefore, to find that DNR is considering generating revenue through sales of sweatshirts and nature books. We say nuts to "businessizing" state parks.

"It's our intention not to close state parks," the chief of the 71-park system told lawmakers. Obviously, though, DNR is thinking it might happen one day.

The hidden trend is being exposed. It will be up to Engler's budget people and our legislative watchdogs to save our state parks.

Particularly our legislative watchdogs.

## Eisenhower made proposal to give vote to 18-year-olds

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER is best remembered for his leadership of the Allied Troops in World War II and for an eight-year presidency of peace and prosperity.

Eisenhower (1890-1969) is less remembered for his support of the most recent amendment to the Constitution, the 26th, giving the vote to citizens 18 years of age or older.

Eisenhower's long military career and his tenure as president of Columbia University had given him a faith in the potential of younger Ameri-

cans and a desire to involve them more fully in the political process.

In his 1954 State of the Union message, Eisenhower declared that "for years our citizens between the ages of 18 and 21 have, in time of peril, been summoned to fight for America. They should participate in the political process that produces this fateful summons."

Congress introduced a proposed amendment, but it failed. Nearly two decades later, in 1971, it passed.

Eisenhower did not live to see the expansion of voting rights he had helped to inspire.



## from our readers

### Fox was done wrong

To the editor:  
After watching the Farmington City Council proceedings of Nov. 18, I was saddened that a majority of our representatives chose not to re-appoint Jean Fox to a non-voting position on the Peltz-MDOT Ad Hoc Committee.

As a lifelong member of this community, I have been most favorably impressed with Fox's indefatigable, highly noteworthy contribution to the quality of life in Farmington Hills.

As a former city council member, mayor, sole founder of our historic preservation movement, and a long-time member of the County Parks Commission, she is uniquely well-qualified for the position.

In addition, this appointment would have allowed the city to thank her, in a small way, for her years of dedication.

Unfortunately, citing a "time for rest," along with other direct and implied assaults on her — or anyone's character, for that matter, certainly destroys the public's perception of some of our current leaders and was in extremely poor taste.

Clearly, these very individuals should themselves take a rest, which might hopefully allow them the opportunity to reflect on their elected responsibilities as well as their manors.

Since Fox continues to be widely admired by many in the community,

please join me in requesting that our council issue an immediate, public apology.

Don Barnett,  
Farmington Hills

### Let judges earn the pay

To the editor:  
The last thing this town needs is to vote more money to make room for a third judge.

What we do need is for the present two judges to start earning their \$94,000 salaries by working a 40-hour week.

It's bad enough the court hours are designed for 35 hours a week but when you come in late, take long lunches and go home early (if you came back from lunch at all), you've shaved another 10 hours off the week.

Then we're paying three magistrates because the judges can't be bothered with justice after 4:30 p.m. or on weekends.

But the city councils have continued to grant them all the maximum, supplemental pay they're allowed.

Voters, do your homework. Be informed. The state court administrators' office has the figures to show that other courts are handling bigger caseloads with less staff. Plymouth is an example.

The court covers five communities with two judges and one part time magistrate. They start more cases and they finish more cases be-

cause their judges work an eight hour day and sometimes eat lunch in.

Our court can utilize time and money better too. But let's wait until next year when Judge Scheffer has to be replaced and elect someone who knows the law and loves the law, days, nights and weekends. Elect someone whose performance will shame Judge Harris into shape.

We're paying their wages, retirement and lifelong benefits. Make them accountable for it.

Howard Aldrich,  
Farmington Hills

## Opinions are to be shared

Opinions and ideas are best when shared with others.

Submitting a letter to the editor for publication is easy. Letters should be typewritten or printed legibly and kept to 300 words. Letters must be signed and include the address of the sender.

Names will be withheld only for the best of reasons, and the decision to do so will be made by the editor.

Letters should be mailed to the editor, The Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336.

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