

points of view

People still have to eat (out)

IT'S HARD TO KNOW if it's just us, double income empty nesters (DIENS?), who are eating out — and taking out — more often or if it's everyone.

Take Thanksgiving for instance. No, we didn't go out for Thanksgiving dinner (roast turkey is one of the few foods that is truly better when homecooked than when prepared by the most elegant restaurant).

But over the four-day weekend — except for one lunch of leftovers (so turkey, young relatives ate it all) and one brunch of cream cheese and bagels (no, we don't make eggs any more) all other meals were either eaten out (Zingerman's, Eagle Tavern at Greenfield Village, Norm's Diner) or brought in (Chinese food).

That may be extreme but my sense is that everyone is eating out more, because even in this doldrum economy, restaurants are opening or reopening left and right in our suburbs — and my husband and I simply can't keep them open all by ourselves.

A common thread winds through this new batch of eateries — they

have a theme, are reasonably priced and aim for a noisy, convivial atmosphere.

First comes to mind is the back to the '80s but with a nod to the new health-consciousness Norm's Diner which opened in late summer on 12 Mile just east of Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills.

THIS TIME, Norm and Bonnie LePage (Nifty Normans, Elton Street Station, etc.) feature fluorescent-as-is juke-box-colors, waitpersons doing the hand jive and a menu ranging from milk shakes to caesar salad. The diner offers something for everyone as whole families line up for Sunday night dinner and groups of young people fill it up on Friday and Saturday nights.

A way up Orchard Lake Road in the restaurant haven of West Bloomfield, Detroit Pistons coach Chuck Daly soon will feature, you guessed it, a basketball theme sports bar — Chuck Daly's Great Northern.

Taking over from the Sign of the Beef Carver, which for at least 20



Judith Doner Berne

years has been the well-known "early bird special" haunt of area senior citizens, the restaurant reportedly will contain a basketball court and still be run by the Troy-based Sign of the Beef Carver chain.

It's the third sports bar to open within a quarter mile area in the last months (Mr. B's Bloomfield) and (Chuck Muer's WB Pals — replacing Bloomfield City) When I questioned West Bloomfield editor Phil Sherman as to where the seniors will go now, he suggested they learn to like basketball.

SOUTHFIELD, ALSO no slouch on the cuisine scene, recently welcomed Mike Illich (Little Caesars) and Jimmy Schmidt's (Rattlesnake Club)

southwestern-style bistro, Cocina del Sol on Northwestern Highway.

No basketball court, no juke box, but a reflecting pool, fountains and moderately priced menu featuring dishes such as Norwegian salmon glazed with red chile honey served with corn spoon bread and chocolate velvet ice cream in spicy coca dust served with butter-milk tequila sauce.

Again, the thrust is for a noisy good time and the unusual dishes prompt some sharing (if you don't like it maybe someone else will or if you do like it, someone else should enjoy it, too).

These restaurants all are operated by established restaurateurs who obviously have the backing to open even in a down economy. Let's hope for their sake, for the sake of their employees and in the interest of our palates, they have the menu for continued success.

Judith Doner Berne is assistant managing editor for the Oakland County editions of the Observer & Eccentric.

Public transit is a real trip

IF THEY "reorganize" public transit any more, they'll be back where they started.

Every few years, someone decides we need better public transit in southeastern Michigan, and the way to provide it is to reorganize the service governmentally.

Never does anyone suggest a tax source for these wonderful services for job seekers, the young, the elderly and the handicapped. Perish the thought! We've got to reorganize!

THE LATEST call came last month when SMART (the first three letters stand for Suburban Mobility Authority, and I forget the rest) announced it would be broke by May, and maybe it ought to seek a merger with Detroit's DOT bus system.

In 1969, the state Legislature gave birth to a seven-county system called SEMTA (Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority). Its missions were to absorb a half-dozen private bus companies, negotiate a merger with D-DOT, set up an integrated system, and maybe even build rapid rail transit.

It had no tax powers, of course. SEMTA had a board of 15, most picked by the SEMCOG, the regional planning agency, and some by the governor. The board had a regional outlook and many women members. (Two-thirds of public transit users are female.)

MUCH WENT wrong, but I'll hit only the high points.

The mayor of Detroit nixed a merger because Detroit had tax money to subsidize its farebox revenues, and SEMTA had none. The mayor didn't want his town's service diluted. Coleman Young was 1,000 percent correct.

In 1976 came a "reorganization" cry. SEMCOG was out the window as an important appointing authority. The mayor of Detroit and the counties became the heavy hitters. That was doubly bad for the suburbs. Regional thinkers on the board were replaced by county politicians, and the women members were browbeaten.

In the mid-1980s, SEMTA got



Tim Richard

into trouble with cost overruns on the downtown Detroit People Mover. Millions were diverted from suburban buses to the DPM. Out of money, SEMTA turned over the project to Young, who put his name on it. Ride the DPM today, and you'll see no acknowledgment that SEMTA contributed a dime.

THREE YEARS ago, SEMTA was reorganized into a suburban bus service called SMART. Now the county executives were supposed to be the heavy hitters.

The first thing the new SMART board began talking about was "privatizing" bus service. Hey, wasn't that what we had when SEMTA was birthed in 1969?

And now they're talking about a merger with D-DOT. Hey, wasn't that what SEMTA was supposed to do?

Meanwhile, after 22 years of lethargy, SEMCOG, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, is springing to life to halt "urban sprawl" issue — the paving over of farmlands, woodlots and wetlands for malls and condos, with an essentially stagnant population.

Part of SEMCOG's thinking is the need for public transportation to get folks from the left-behind, older urban areas to jobs, doctors and stores in the hinterlands.

Hey, wasn't that supposed to be SEMCOG's mission when it was organized in 1968?

CLEARLY THIS seven-county region has come full circle. In 1991 we are talking about precisely the same issues we were talking about in 1969 — saving older cities, halting urban sprawl, providing regional public transit.

Tim Richard covered the births of both SEMTA and SEMCOG.

Answer case study in chauvinism

AM I A MALE chauvinist? You tell me. (I don't mean in the alleged Clarence Thomas per Anita Hill sense. Chauvinism can be manifested in ways far subtler than sexual harassment.)

In a graduate-level course I'm teaching in leadership theory at Oakland University, I selected male class members to lead analyses of the first three case studies, and near the close of the third discussion analysis, I mused to myself that I'd better choose a woman to lead the fourth one.

This concern was confirmed as entirely viable when one of my male students told me he had overheard a female student remark that I hadn't selected a woman to lead an analysis yet. The idea that I might be viewed as (stodgy) chauvinistic by some of my students caused me to promptly write up the incident in case-study form and have the class discuss it. I chose a woman as discussion leader.

IN THE WRITTEN case study — whose protagonist was a thinly disguised version of myself whom I named "Professor Prestwick" — I



John Telford

Included defensive data purported to quickly quash all sentiment that I might be any kind of chauvinist, e.g. the fact that I have long been famous for my egalitarian instincts and that I hired or promoted women in five directorships, nine principalships and six assistant principalships in Rochester.

In Plymouth-Canton I installed one of the state's first female administrators in a middle school; in Berkley I chose the state's first female to coordinate boys' and girls' athletics; and that I have often encouraged my daughter, Katherine, in traditionally non-female pursuits.

I stated in the study that the discussion would either confirm the professor as the non-chauvinistic

"Prestwick" he regarded himself to be, or he'd learn something about himself that needed correcting, and the class would get a valuable and entertaining learning experience on egalitarianism.

I had the professor mutter to himself that maybe he really was something of a chauvinist. Here's how this emerging self-doubt was further characterized in the case study: "Prestwick knew too many of his old-guard brethren who, like him, had ascended to high administrative positions via the athlete-coach-athletic director route, and who were indeed as chauvinistic as the devil and undoubtedly would continue to be until their dying days.

"PERHAPS," HE mused, "since I came up with them, and I was trained and coached by men like them to be like them, and for years I worked with men who chronically exhibited mutually reinforcing male chauvinism, I'm thus still more like them than I want to believe."

This written case study concluded with Prestwick resolving to redouble

his vigilance in monitoring himself. Then I gave the leader these questions to address in the discussion: Can we be chauvinistic without being aware of it? Is it possible to "see" chauvinism that isn't there? Was it chauvinistic of Prestwick to choose men to lead the first three discussions? How can people guard against chauvinistic thinking?

As you might imagine, class debate was lively, to say the least! I know you're wondering whether or not the discussion exonerated me of any "male chauvinist" charge, but I'm not telling you yet. That would be too easy. Instead I'm going to let you be the judge. You can call or write me in Rochester Hills (I'm in the phone book), or write me in care of this newspaper. I may run your best analyses, and then I'll tell you how the class ruled, too!

John Telford, a Rochester Hills resident, recently was assistant superintendent in the Rochester School District. He previously was executive director for secondary education in the Plymouth Canton district.

JUST THE RIGHT PIECE, JUST THE RIGHT PRICE!

25%-35% Off
Decorative
Accessories

20%-30% Off
Lamps And
Up To 40% Off
Tables

Up To 35% Off
Rugs

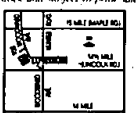
Up To 50% Off Sofas, Sleepers,
Sectionals, Chairs

Our Floor Sample
Sale Will
Floor You!

Right now you can save like never before on every selected floor sample in store. Pick from choice Expressions furniture, accessories—even rugs, tables & lamps.

They're the finest floor samples in town, but they're marked down to move quickly, so it's first come—first served!

*In stock and subject to prior sale



Come Quick & Pick From Expressions' Choice Floor Samples!*

950 S. Woodward • Birmingham • 647-8882

holiday 1991

IN THE TALBOTS TRADITION

Join Talbots and Toys for Tots
in making the holidays happier...



Please help us to make the holidays merry and bright for less fortunate Detroit-area children by donating unwrapped toys for boys and girls, up to age 12, at the Perry Nursery School, Prospect Place Family Shelter, and Safe House. The Junior League of Ann Arbor will wrap and deliver all new, and used toys brought to our four Detroit-area stores now through Tuesday, December 24.

Thank you and happy holidays!

Talbots
Talbots is the classics

Ann Arbor, 514 East Washington Street, Tel. 994-8686
Birmingham, 255 South Woodward Avenue, Tel. 258-9696
Grosse Pointe, 17015 Kercheval Street, Tel. 884-5595
Twelve Oaks Mall, Novi, Tel. 349-6500