

## POINTS OF VIEW

# Super Kmart's effects wouldn't be all negative

I would like to respond to Andrew Nicklehoff's guest editorial in the Aug. 12 issue of the Farmington Observer.

Mr. Nicklehoff has stated his opposition to the planned unit development for a Super Kmart at Northwestern and 14 Mile. However, he fails to mention the fact that development would replace a long-neglected residential subdivision of wells, septic systems, and unpaved roads dating back to a semi-rural period in Farmington Hills' history.

Our residential subdivision, which Mr. Nicklehoff fails to mention, has been isolated by the recent, rapid commercial development along Northwest.

That same development, which extends West Bloomfield, has made our small subdivision one of the last parcels of residential land in a burgeoning commercial center.

As such, the area has become less and less desirable for residential living as we become immersed in a cauldron of commercial office buildings, restaurants, and shopping centers. To add to these problems are a host of environmental concerns such as poor drainage and high water tables that cause endless difficulties for the residents

throughout the year.

As a resident of the Glen Acres subdivision, I have addressed the Farmington Hills Zoning Committee once already about the failure of my own septic system to function properly during spring thaws and heavy, continuous rains.

My septic system fails, because the ground does not drain during heavy snow melt or continuous rainy periods. Perk testing would prove that bad drainage characteristics exist in the residential lots in this subdivision.

However, as I have inquired of the Oakland County Water Department, and to my knowledge, there are no perk records which date back to the main development period of the Glen Acres subdivision (1964).

One may speculate that the perk testing of the soil was not a strict requirement during that period of time, and this may explain how the contractor built this subdivision. However, it does not remedy toilets that refuse to flush during rainy/snowy periods of this year.

The other problem with Clairview Court is the storm water drain system. During the year, water drains down the Clairview Court culverts to find its way eventually to a creek on the perimeter of the Glen Oaks Golf Course.

**The area has become less and less desirable for residential living as we become immersed in a cauldron of commercial office buildings, restaurants, and shopping centers.**

The source of this continuous drainage is a 24-hour-a-day, 365-days-a-year pumping operation from basement sump pumps. I have measured the rate of flow from our subdivision, and during the summer, it is approximately two gallons/minute.

If Mr. Nicklehoff uses his math, that works out to roughly 3,000 gallons of water a day. This continuous drainage of water causes the easements of many lots in Clairview Court to become swamp-like during the spring and summer.

However, the biggest problems occur during the winter months when the drainpipe under Clairview Drive freezes. Once this happens, as it does every winter, the water accumulates in the culvert at the end of Clairview until the overflow spills onto the road, where,

by, it freezes over and becomes a slushy frozen mess that extends across the frontage of Clairview Drive and inward on Clairview Court by at least 100 feet.

DPW records should show that the Clairview subdivision has had annual winter ice removal at the apex of Clairview Road facing the golf course. In retrospect, I do not understand why a subdivision would have been built to accommodate easements on land that requires such high drainage rates.

Many of the aforementioned problems have been reported time and again, by many residents, to the city. But no remedies short of a total upgrade to the infrastructure (sewer, water, and storm-water drainage) exist. This would require the residents to shoulder the entire cost of upgrading the area.

The homeowners of Clairview and Highview would have to bear a bill that is probably half the state equalized valuation of their homes. To many of the residents that make up this middle-class community of lower-price houses (relative to Farmington Hills), the cost of upgrades to the infrastructure would be prohibitive and make no economic sense.

Of course, Mr. Nicklehoff and his small band of supporters really don't

care about the residents of this area and their quality of life.

Furthermore, even if the PUD is shelved, commercial development along Northwestern will probably continue unabated in one form or another. This is the area where businesses want to locate, and one way or another, they will fully develop what is left of the area. Conversely, Kmart which already has a store next to the planned site — would probably build its development close to the same area, but not necessarily in Farmington Hills (i.e. West Bloomfield).

If that happens, Farmington Hills would lose the added tax revenues, as well as inherit any problems that might be generated from not having a say in the project.

Instead of this, Farmington Hills could seize the opportunity to supervise the development of this area, maximize the benefit to its infrastructure and tax base, and minimize the impact, if any, to the community. This, I am told, is the reason planned unit developments were developed by city governments.

John M. Gantchar, a Ford Motor Company engineer, is a 14-year resident of Farmington Hills.

## Bonds deserves chance to take one day at a time

Easy Does It.

It was painted across the front of the white Ford pickup moving steadily north along Orchard Lake Road in West Bloomfield one day last week.

People familiar with Alcoholics Anonymous recognize it as a catch phrase that denotes the owner of that truck as a recovering alcoholic.

My thoughts immediately switched to Bill Bonds.

Bonds, the opinionated TV anchor man and area resident, had taken the same Orchard Lake Road route, although far less steadily, in his Jaguar a few nights ago. He was later arrested for his uneven, drunken driving on Commerce Road — near where his daughter had died in an alcohol-related crash 13 years before.

I wondered if Bonds had ever had the courage to paint "Easy Does It" on his car would he be in the situation he's in today.

Because treatment for alcoholism, a progressive disease, is just the begin-

ning. For most successful recovering alcoholics, aftercare and regular participation in Alcoholics Anonymous is key.

"Someone who really works with AA realizes the support it takes to rebuild what the disease has destroyed," says Renee Gerger, a clinical social worker with an extensive background in helping chemical dependent people and their families.

Gerger, whose office serves as the help line for the Michigan State Bar Lawyers and Judges, says prominent, high-powered people with alcohol and drug problems may have an added burden in the following areas:

■ **Ego:** "They lack humility. You can go to treatment 50,000 times," she says, "but until you see that you are powerless over this disease" there is no real change in behavior.

■ **Enabling:** As we've seen in the case of Bonds, police leniency through the years plus knowing that his job was secure, may have kept him from hitting bottom.



JUDITH DWYER BERNE

"Obviously there are economics involved," Gerger says. "The people (those setting the ground rules) didn't really understand alcoholism. If the disease is not arrested it's going to get worse."

■ **Easy Does It:** They go right from treatment back into the fray.

"Once you're out of treatment, you really must have the time to integrate the skills that you learn into your life," Gerger says.

But Bonds is not one to give up on. "I have seen people that are so sick that you would say, no chance," Gerger says. "And they have been able to go into recovery and maintain it."

I have never enjoyed watching Bonds on the air. He is supposed to be a presenter of news, yet he consistently crosses the line to inject opinion.

During past discussions of Bonds' style in the newsroom, editor Sandra Armbruster has always defended him. Nearly 30 years ago he was her instructor of radio and TV news writing

at the University of Detroit.

"He made just such an impact on my career," Armbruster says. "He was the one who taught me how to conduct a good interview and to phrase a good question. I owe him a lot for that."

"We all go through problems," Armbruster says. "He's not someone to be thrown away because he's an alcoholic."

Of this latest bout of alcoholic behavior, she says: "I'm disappointed, but I'm not going to write him off my list."

In fact, Bonds may have his best chance ever. He is reported to be at a clinic that specializes in treating high-powered people.

We sincerely wish you One Day At A Time, Bill.

## Mud-slinging diverts focus from state's pressing needs

We associate western Michigan with fruit-growing, fishing and furniture production. Lately it has turned into the site of a mud-slinging festival that contaminates the air.

Even Republicans from the southeastern arm of the state are to blame, it seems. The mud comes from the 1990 amendments to the federal Clean Air Act.

Here, quickly, is the background: A decade ago, the feds found three counties — Wayne, Oakland and Macomb — guilty of having dirty air. Major solution: annual automobile emissions tests (AETs) for \$10 before we can buy our vehicle tags.

Under the 1990 act, the feds found three western Michigan counties in non-compliance: Kent (Grand Rapids), Ottawa and Muskegon. I suspect their west-side pride is damaged more than their pocketbooks. Now they are in the same category as the money-sucking slums of Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.

Gov. John Engler, up for re-election, has joined the fray, threatening "aggressive action" against the feds. Echoing the official Grand Rapids line, Engler said:

"Michigan is not to blame. West Michigan is being punished for air pollution that area companies and residents did not cause. West Michigan is responsible for only 4 percent of the problem. The lion's share of the problem travels to Michigan from other areas, like Milwaukee, Gary and Chicago."

Engler's campaign manager, Dan Pero, thickened the slurriness by declaring Democratic gubernatorial Howard Wolpe was to blame. As a congressman, Wolpe co-sponsored the Clean Air Act amendments. Pero called Wolpe "a liberal Washington Democrat who is out of touch with Michigan" and a "liberal environmental extremist."

Gary Corbin, Democratic state chair, shoved the mud back in the GOP's face. "Every Republican member of Congress from Michigan cast a vote identical to Wolpe's," said Corbin, pointing to former congressmen Bill Broomfield, R-Lake Orion, Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth, and



TIM RICHARD

**The mud comes from the 1990 amendments to the federal Clean Air Act.**

even west-siders like Fred Upton, Guy Vander Jagt and the late Paul Henry.

Looking at a map and aerial photographs, the dispassionate observer must conclude the Grand Rapids gang and Engler have it wrong. Kent, Ottawa and Muskegon counties can't be blameless for their "non-attainment status" (dirty air).

Why don't Bridgman, St. Joseph and Benton Harbor have dirty air? They're directly in the path of the prevailing southwest winds emanating from the steel mills of Gary, Ind. Why aren't Van Buren, Allegan, Oceana and Mason counties on the dirt list? What about Manistee, Benzie and pristine Leelanau?

Face it: Grand Rapids, Muskegon and environs are in the big time. Engler will accomplish little except full employment for lawyers by fighting their dirty-air status. Moreover, the mud bath takes attention away from genuinely pressing issues: potholed roads, rising tuition rates, weed-grown parks, workplace safety, court funding. . .

Et cetera.

Tim Richard reports regularly on the local implications of state and regional events. You can leave a message for him by calling (313) 953-2047, mailbox 1881.

# WHAT AUGUST SHOULD BE..

**A BOOT SCOOTIN' GRAND OL' TIME!**

**WIN A TRIP FOR 2 TO NASHVILLE!**

Entry blanks available at all mall stores August 19-28. See Information Booth for details.

**Join us at Oakland Mall for some two-steppin', toe-tappin', boot scootin' country fun!**

• Fri., Aug. 19 7 p.m.	Those Fussy Little People (costume characters)
• Sat., Aug. 21 noon-1 p.m.	Country Music Artist <b>BRUCE CLARK</b>
• Tues., Aug. 23 7 p.m.	Dan & Loco (country line dance demonstrations)
• Thurs., Aug. 25 7 p.m.	Main Street Cloggers (clog dance demonstrations)
• Fri., Aug. 26 8-9 p.m.	Hot-A-Lug Boogie (litter-walking runway show)
• Sat., Aug. 28 2-4 p.m.	Diamond Back Dancers

**OAKLAND MALL**  
WHAT SHOPPING SHOULD BE

Hudson's, JCPenney, Sears and over 120 great stores and services. • Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m.-9 p.m. • Sun. noon - 6 p.m.

WHAT AUGUST SHOULD BE... WHAT SHOPPING SHOULD BE... WHAT AUGUST SHOULD BE...