

Power outages Edison needs to turn on light

Anytime there's a big storm — and even not so big a storm — there is one certainty we can all count on. Someone, somewhere in Farmington Hills will be without electrical power. It's as certain as daylight.

And the power outages and blackouts aren't just little flickers that dim the lights. These are major. Residents go days without power. And they are rightly sick and tired of it.

Occasional inconveniences are one thing. A way of life in Farmington Hills is another.

It is high time Detroit Edison concentrated its efforts in the Farmington area and resolve some of the continually nagging problems that plague this community.

What happens to the residents of this community — with or without a storm — is reprehensible. Resident Mark Talia, who spoke at Monday's Farmington Hills City Council meeting, exposed a bit of reality: "If we're not paying the bill, I'm sure they'd come out and shut off the power."

It's time Detroit Edison realized that customer service is more than receiving timely payment for their electrical services. Do residents get a refund when their power remains off for days? Do they get compensated for all the costly refrigerated and frozen foods they lose? Will Edison help pay the bill when residents feel forced to buy generators for their homes?

Residents and city officials have long complained about the outages. Sure, Edison has responded and spent money in the communi-

ty. But major outages continue.

Residents and city officials were right to lambaste Edison Monday night. And they should continue doing so.

The city council is also on target for its requests to the utility that include among other things payment for spoiled foods.

The city council should look into providing shelter for residents during extended blackouts. And Detroit Edison should foot the bill.

Let's be mindful that many of these outages occur when the heat and humidity pushes above 90 degrees. This is of particular concern for senior adults and children.

The way residents are forced to live under Edison's rule is unacceptable.

For too long Edison has complained about the trees in Farmington Hills and the difficulty they cause electrical lines. And every spring and summer the utility has contractors here trimming away.

Surely Edison does not believe that outages in this community won't occur if the treed roadways are paved over.

Yet another resident, Charles Ruben, brought the problem into bright focus Monday night: "We send men up to the moon. We do such great things. And, yet with Detroit Edison, we can't get to first base."

How true. We expect Detroit Edison to turn on a few lights of its own and get to the bottom of the electrical problems in this area.

Do we need another mall?

There is a stretch of M-14 between Plymouth Township and Ann Arbor that's a visual oasis from our urban clutter of housing developments, mega-malls and office complexes.

In summer the groves of trees are thick, deep green. Between the trees you can see a few aging farm buildings and in the open areas you're likely to see cattle, sheep and horses grazing. In the fall the trees turn brilliant — fiery reds, glowing yellows, deep umbers. And when winter comes and the stiff winds blow across the highway, the landscape after a fresh snow has a stark beauty.

In September, Salem Township officials will consider a proposal for bringing water and sewer services to this area. Mall developer Al Taubman recently bought 200 acres at the M-14-Golfredson interchange as a possible site for a new shopping center. Others also have designs on developing that area. For many this rush to development is inevitable, the onward march of progress.

It is hard for a newspaper to argue against development. We benefit in many ways. More housing means more circulation. More stores mean potentially more advertising.

We understand that new construction means jobs. We know that as the population grows, we need new housing.

We understand that land owners expect and deserve a fair market return on the land they own.

But we also know that once green land is lost, it's lost forever. We know that we pay a high price as a society when we take away that greenbelt.

Al Taubman has been a generous steward of his fortune. He has recently been a major benefactor to the Detroit Institute of Arts and the University of Michigan, where his donations will particularly strengthen their architecture program.

The paintings at the DIA are spectacular, but the greatest landscape painting pales

beside that stretch of M-14 in all its autumn glory.

And sometimes the best architecture in the world is no architecture at all — as many forward-thinking architects have argued for decades. We need open spaces, trees to reinvigorate the air, farm land to separate urban areas, parks that are left natural. Some cities, such as Portland, Ore., have even factored greenbelts into their regional planning.

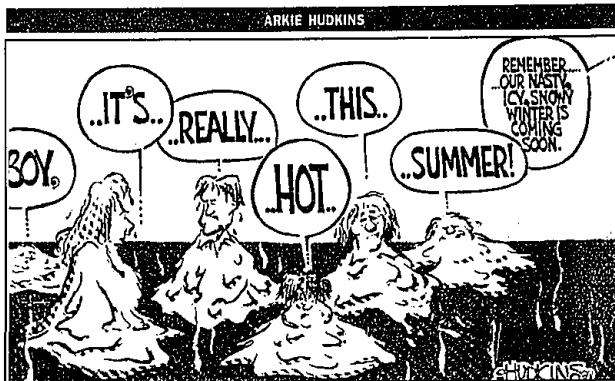
Do we really need yet another unattractive shopping mall with acres of blacktopped parking, surrounded, as inevitably it would be, by one lookalike housing development after another. Briarwood, Laurel Park, Westland, Wonderland, Twelve Oaks and a seemingly endless string of strip malls seem to provide more shopping than we really need, though we're sure that the Taubman company has marketing studies that show otherwise. They're the most successful mall developers in the world, and they know where the profits are. But at what a cost, to the greenbelt and to the urban areas left behind.

While we move over westward and northward, the central city and the older suburbs are being left to decline. There are still areas in these cities for development and redevelopment. There is a great opportunity for designing and building new urban centers, not over farm and park land but within the older cities themselves.

Perhaps development is inevitable, perhaps we can never escape the famous Joni Mitchell line in "The Big Yellow Taxi." They've paved paradise and put up a parking lot.

But we ask the Salem Township officials to consider all the ramifications of what they are, almost certainly, about to do. We ask that they consider the lifestyle they now enjoy for themselves and the special quality enhancement their rural area provides for those who are lucky enough to drive through.

Understand clearly what you and we are about to lose.



ARKIE HUDKINS

LETTERS

Opinions are to be shared: We welcome your ideas, that's why we offer this space for your opinions. We will help by editing for clarity. To assure authenticity we ask that you provide a contact telephone number and if mailing or faxing a letter, please sign it. Letters can be mailed to Joanne Maliszewski, 33411 Grand River, Farmington, MI 48335, faxed to Joanne at (734) 459-2700 or e-mailed to jmaliszewski@oe.homecomm.net

Cheers for the city

Many, many thanks to Greg Hohler and his family who have owned and maintained the Civic Theatre for the past 59 years, especially in the face of stiff competition in recent years from multiplexes owned by huge corporations.

How much nicer and more fun it is to be able to go a short distance to a familiar, safe place where we can park close by and don't have to fight a crowd to buy our tickets.

Where the entertainment is always wholesome, the popcorn is always fresh and delicious, we are served with a smile, and the environment is clean.

If we feel we must have "stadium seating," we simply choose whatever is playing in the balcony theater. Our fellow audience members are hometown folks who are friendly and courteous, sometimes even someone we know. We are grateful to the Hohlers for keeping this experience available for us. Low ticket prices are "frothing on the cake."

Three cheers to the Farmington city fathers who realize the value of keeping "our" theater going for all of us who call Farmington and Farmington Hills home, and figuring a way to make that happen and to improve upon what's already there, as well. Let's make sure they are never sorry for that brave decision by continuing to support the Civic by frequent attendance!

Bea Scaglione
Farmington Hills

Do what's right

The "Helmet law put on hold" article in the Sunday July 11, Farmington Observer reminds me of this story.

A man named Bob was caught in a flood. As the water rose to the level of his porch, a man in a boat came to rescue him. Bob refused to leave. He said "No, I will stay here. The Lord will provide."

The water kept rising and Bob sat on the roof. Another boat came but Bob refused to budge. Again he said, "No thanks. The Lord will provide."

The water rose even higher and Bob had to sit on top of his chimney. A helicopter came by to rescue him, but once again he said, "I'm staying here. The Lord will provide."

The water kept rising and Bob drowned. As he entered the pearly gates, Bob said to St. Peter, "All my life I was a devout Christian. I prayed to the Lord and kept the faith. Why then did the Lord not save me?"

St. Peter answered, "My son, he sent two

boats and a helicopter. What more did you want?"

"Parental rights" are important. But isn't it more important, as parents, to try to do what's right for our children? "He" sent bicycle helmets. Why not use them?

Betsy Best
Farmington Hills

Become Involved

This letter is aimed at those 18 to 50-55 years of age. The Saturday Meals on Wheels program needs some younger volunteers.

We oldersters-retirees can cover the Monday through Friday meal deliveries but we need an infusion of younger bodies to provide a much-needed service to the physically deprived.

If you are mentally down from your week's work, an hour-and-a-half's volunteerism with the smiles and thank-yous you receive will certainly restore your inner satisfaction and peace.

You might have the opportunity to deliver a meal to a delightful blind lady who will ask you to assist in setting out the meal. You definitely will leave with a lighter step than when you entered the apartment. The day will have become much brighter.

Become involved; please call Diane at 473-1825 for more details and to put your name on the call sheet.

Dick Carvell
Farmington

Protect freedoms

Immediately following high-profile crimes committed by gun-toting vermin, emotional clamoring for more gun restrictions drown out reason and liberals attack pro-liberty individuals as "gun nuts."

In response, our government willingly passes laws trampling on personal freedoms. This scenario has played out many times in the last 20 years, turning guns into the most regulated product in the United States. Today, it is harder to acquire a gun legally than at any other point in our country's history and law-abiding citizens are at the mercy of armed criminals wandering our streets. When will this perpetual cycle of failed laws end?

If insanity is the act of doing the same thing over and over but expecting a different result, perhaps we need to re-evaluate who the "nuts" are in this debate.

Steve Sutton
Farmington

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:

How do you think the Detroit Lions will do this year without Barry Sanders?

We asked this question of the football coaching staff at Harrison High School.



"I think they'll be improved. They are improved defensively. With the acquisition of Claiborne they'll be better."

Billy Stobin



"Not very good. It's not because of Barry. Defense isn't very good. Could be a long year."

Steve Dollaway



"They'll win more games than they did last year."

John Harrington
head coach



"They will be better. I think last year they put the focus on Barry. They'll spread out their defense."

Brian Lee

Farmington Observer

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— Philip Power