

Impact of Sept. 11 will be with us for a long time

Two experiences over the weekend convinced me the impact of the September 11 terrorist attacks will be profound, not immediately apparent and certainly not confined to New York or Washington, D.C.

Over the weekend, I flew to New York and back to Detroit to visit a dear friend suffering from brain cancer. The most noticeable change,

compared to previous trips, was the enormously increased number of security people at Detroit Metropolitan and LaGuardia airports. In New York, there seemed to be security guards everywhere I went.

During the flight, I fell into conversation with a woman from Birmingham who works on the 35th floor of the Renaissance Center. "I'm a little worried," she said at one point. "The Ren Cen is just too big and makes too big a target. I'm seriously thinking of getting a different job in a smaller building."

Both episodes got me to thinking about what's going on just under the surface of all the daily news reports of bombing and Afghanistan and anthrax.

A ton of security guards are being hired just now all over the country. In airports. In and around Washington. In lobbies of tall buildings. At drug companies and mailrooms and federal, state and local government installations of all kinds. I have no idea how many people are being hired and/or assigned to security duties around the country, but it must number in the many, many thousands.

Of course, hiring lots of security personnel makes great sense just now.

The threat of terrorism is real and people are anxious and jumpy. But what's really taking place under the surface is a shift in the allocation of resources in the economy from increasing productivity to increasing overall security. Instead of hiring well-trained technicians to

improve complex manufacturing processes, companies and the government are hiring security guards and buying sophisticated X-ray machines and metal detectors to be used at airports.

So on the margin, the proportions of labor hours and capital expenditure devoted to security is increasing. Hence the growth in overall productivity — the output per hour of all persons in the labor force — is almost certain to decline. This is serious, because it has been the remarkable increase in productivity — averaging more than 2 percent for the past decade — that has been behind the non-inflationary good times we have experienced over the past 10 years.

Similarly, both businesses and individuals are beginning to reassess the tendency toward centralizing economic activity in enormous cities and gigantic buildings. I have long suspected that the Internet, the cell phone, the laptop computer and the palm pilot together have been contributing to a decentralizing tendency in our society. More and more people seem to have been choosing to live and work in smaller communities or at home, and fewer and fewer people have seen either the desirability or necessity of working in big buildings in big cities.

The destruction of the World Trade Center almost surely will accelerate this trend. I doubt very much if we'll ever see again 100-story plus buildings being built. And, like my seatmate who is thinking about working closer to home, I wouldn't be surprised to see people hesitating to go to work in the Sears Tower or the Empire State Building.

Admittedly, I don't now have hard data to go with these twin notions. But I do know economists already are wondering about how much growth in productivity will decelerate and I know folks in commercial real estate who are remarking on deteriorating demand for Class 1 office space in tall buildings in the middle of big cities.

But I have a strong impression that both changes are taking place in our society, only temporarily obscured by the froth of daily news events. And I think the consequences will be with us for a long, long time.

Phil Power is chairman of HomeTown Communications Network Inc., the company that owns this newspaper. He welcomes your comments, either by voice mail at (734) 953-2047, Ext. 1880, or by e-mail at ppower@homecomm.net.

LETTERS

■ Endorsement?

In reading your endorsement for mayor, I am struck with the your comment that Ron Oliverio has "said many of the right things." Also, "We like his ideas about citizens advisory councils on controversial issues" is in your endorsement.

Did I miss something here? It seems that, indirectly, you are giving Ron Oliverio an endorsement too.

In your endorsement, you call our current mayor a "well spoken ambassador." Where was this "ambassador" last fall when now President Bush visited our city? Surely the mayor or a representative from her office would have seen fit to represent our city.

Your endorsement for mayor is a disappointment, but more glaring is the timing of your endorsement. In past elections, the Observer waits until a week or so before the election to announce.

The residents will make the right choice if they want our city to move forward and they know it is time for a change from the usual "suspects" in City Hall. And I am confident the final choice will be Ron Oliverio as our new Mayor.

Bill Smith
Farmington Hills

Editor's Note: All Observer editors were urged this year to publish their endorsements as close as possible to when absentee ballots were distributed.

■ For Massey

The Farmington Hills Police Officers Association is pleased to announce their endorsement of Ken Massey in the Nov. 6 election for Farmington Hills City Council. We believe candidate Massey possesses the right combination of personal characteristics that make him well quali-

fied for a position on the council.

Ken Massey's education (Ph.D.) background and experience in emergency medical services and enthusiasm for the city give him the tools necessary to serve the citizens of Farmington Hills. We believe he will bring new ideas and perspective to the city council which will ensure all members of the community will have a voice.

The FHPOA encourages all eligible voters to exercise their right on Nov. 6 and support Ken Massey for City Council.

Wayne Beerbower,
President, Farmington Hills Police Officers Association

■ New mayor

I really think that we need some new faces on the City Council. Furthermore, my belief is that effective change has to start at the top.

The Observer had a chance to be an instrument of forward and progressive thinking, but your, mayoral endorsement was received with a return to yesterday, stale bread, tastes like cardboard flavor. Do you wish to be seen as a truly independent paper, or merely political sycophants of an entrenched establishment? I hope you do a better job with your City Council endorsements.

Meanwhile... Speaking only for myself, I'm going to stand up for Ron Oliverio in this race. I'm going to vote for Ron, I'm going to tell my friends to vote for Ron, and I sincerely want everyone reading this to vote for Ron.

Christopher M. Cummins
Farmington Hills

■ Supports Bates

Residents of Farmington Hills who are seeking a viable candidate for mayor need look no further than our current Mayor,

Nancy Bates.

During recent crises in our city, gas drilling, the Village Green proposed development, and road racket from I-275, she has strongly supported and extended our efforts to maintain a desirable quality of life.

Mayor Nancy Bates represents Farmington Hills with competence and integrity. Let's keep her in office.

David and Jeannette Sharpe, Farmington Hills

■ City, community

Do you want to live in a city or a community? To me there is a big difference. A city is borders, buildings and streets. A community is a bond between citizens, businesses and public servants.

A city provides public safety. A community has neighborhood watch, emergency medical service, community policing and open houses at the police and fire departments.

A city has schools. A community has PTA's and PTO's, working with educators, administrators and municipal officials to provide the best education and nurturing environment for its young people.

A city only has to provide basic services. A community provides programming for seniors and youth, art, music, cultural events and parades.

A city is where you file complaints. A community is where you work out your problems and differences.

A city is a destination. A community is a place where you want to go.

A city is a place on a map. A community is where you live. Please remember to vote Nov. 6, to keep Farmington Hills the best community in Michigan.

Barry L. Bricker
Farmington Hills
Council Member

Do you have a news tip or a story idea? Call the Observer, 477-5450.

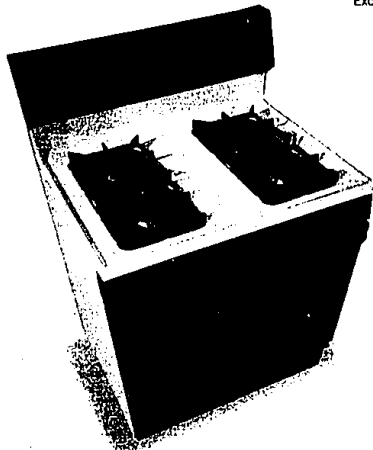
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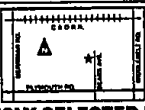
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PC 35ct J/I	\$432	\$129	PS 27ct FVS2	\$1,813	\$2,315
EC 31ct H/I	\$409	\$146	RD 27ct GVS2	\$7,441	\$3,548
RD 48ct GSI	\$1,526	\$534	RD 110ct H/I	\$6,739	\$3,369
RD 48ct J/SI	\$2,207	\$642	EC 177ct DVS1	\$20,555	\$8,143
RD 58ct J/SI	\$1,992	\$697	RD 158ct HVVS1	\$26,236	\$11,806
RD 48ct J/SI	\$1,890	\$756	CR 218ct GSI	\$38,520	\$13,734

LAKE ORION LOCATION					
Diamond	Retail Value	NOTE	Diamond	Retail Value	NOTE
RD 25ct HVVS1	\$412	\$126	PC 27ct GVS2	\$6,387	\$2,514
RD 26ct FVS1	\$962	\$306	RD 109ct H/I	\$6,486	\$2,918
RD 48ct GSI	\$1,488	\$466	PC 101ct J/SI	\$7,007	\$3,563
RD 53ct J/SI	\$2,290	\$687	TR 134ct F/SI	\$15,400	\$6,180
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