

# editorial opinion



Dignity—what most of us work a lifetime to gain

Photographed by Gary Friedman

## One short final ride

For many elderly people, the trip to the nursing home with only a handful of the possessions collected over a long lifetime is the final ride.

For some, there is comfort in knowing there will be medical care, hot meals and people to talk to.

For others, it is a totally dehumanizing experience, a final wrenching from the home ties that provided identity.

American thinking on care for the elderly has gone through several phases. Once, the elderly were cared for at home by the family. Later, society changed to highly mobile, three bedroom brick colonial dwellers who, as one foreign exchange student commented, "sell their homes as fast as their cars," and institutional care for the elderly was considered the answer. Seldom was there room for ailing parents who suffered as the family moved from town to town and state to state.

The rest or nursing home was the satisfactory answer for everyone except the person most directly concerned. Many went quietly because the guilt of "being a burden" lay heavy on their stooped shoulders.

NOW FORTUNATELY, we are moving toward another phase — direct concern for the people involved and a desire to have them remain a part of the total community.

A bill recently introduced into the U.S. House of Representatives would provide health care for the elderly in their own homes.

U.S. Rep. William D. Ford (D-Taylor, 15th District) is co-sponsor of the proposed home health care act which offers an alternative to institutional care. Those who wish to remain in their own homes could receive medical attention and someone to check on them regularly.

Ford says elderly persons' expenses would be reduced by nearly half and thou-

sands of unemployed could be trained for new jobs in the health care program.

A similar bill has been introduced in the Senate, and hearings are being scheduled for both houses.

IF ENACTED, the bill would be one more step of several that have had proven success.

Many communities such as Livonia and Westland offer hot lunch programs for seniors at nominal charges. The lunch program is subsidized by federal and county funds.

Meals-on-Wheels gets the hot meal to the home if the person is unable to come to a central point.

Senior activity centers are thriving, providing not only social activities, but other services as well.

Southfield's senior citizen center has regular times when a county public health nurse is on duty to check blood pressure and counsel on health and nutrition problems.

Communities such as Farmington offer transportation at reduced rates at certain times for seniors. Farmington taxi companies started the one day a week senior special last fall.

Birmingham and Redford Township are considering variations of the Dial-A-Ride plan which, while not exclusively for seniors, would provide an easy, safe and inexpensive way to get around the city.

Senior housing developments, such as McNamara Towers in Eivonia and Tonquish Creek Manor in Plymouth, combine the best of both worlds for those who wish to keep their identity, but shed some of the responsibilities of maintaining a home and yard.

With choices come freedom, with freedom, dignity; and dignity is what most of us work a lifetime to gain. It's a shame to lose it all on one short final ride.

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### Farmington Observer & Eccentric

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## Eccentricities

by HANK HOGAN



Motherhood and cleanliness has scored another victory. A Detroit court has ordered the closing and padlocking for a year of several movie houses showing films the court has ruled pornographic.

There's no question that the films involved are not the type that should be shown at a Saturday afternoon children's matinee, but the court's remedy does seem a bit harsh. It's like saying that if you are caught speeding, the court should take your car away for a year in case you might decide to speed again.

The real question goes deeper. What is pornography and who should be protected against it?

Everyone in America has different values. These are derived from one's environment, education and upbringing. Thus pornography is different strokes for different folks.

MANY PEOPLE over 40 in this country have been brought up under a puritanical, Victorian, prudish morality. They think sex is dirty, not natural, and try to pretend it doesn't exist.

If these little old ladies in gym shoes, who only represent a portion of the population, are able to set the standards of what is good and what is bad, then the rest of the population is deprived of free choice.

And if the rest of the population thinks sex is dirty, why is Hugh Hefner's magazine the largest-selling magazine in this country?

## Observation Point

by PHILIP H. POWER



County government reform in Oakland and Wayne counties has been in the news a lot these days, especially the notion of an elected or appointed county executive.

Now most of the arguments used by proponents of county government are well-intended but unrealistic.

A county executive probably will not provide much better administration than Oakland County's new organization has now, for example. Or a county executive very likely will have little effect on county road commissions or boards of auditors, which in practice in Wayne County are separate field offices coordinating with overall county policy only by chance if at all.

A COUNTY executive — especially an elected one — will, however, have two important effects:

- He or she will be a highly visible public figure, clearly identified with the county in question. Press coverage of the county's public attention will tend to focus on the county executive and thereby on what the county is or is not doing to spend the taxpayers' money wisely.

- The county executive will be an important political figure in his or her own right — a figure rivaling in importance in this area Detroit's Mayor Coleman Young.

Add to this fact the sour observation that governmental improvement usually happens only if some politician or interest group with clout find it in their interest to make it happen, and you see why those who are interested in reform of county government generally advocate a county executive.

## 'See no evil . . .'

Because younger people are still in the process of forming values, they should be guided and protected from excessive exposure to the rawer side of life, hence they should be protected from pornography, whatever that is.

But under present law and practice they already are excluded from movie theaters showing supposedly "dirty films."

NO ONE IS forced to go to a theater. Everyone who goes to an X-rated movie freely makes that decision. Those who don't like that type of film do not have to patronize theaters that show them.

But censorship or closing theaters because some people, who wouldn't patronize them in the first place, don't want others to enjoy themselves is a form of forcing their values on others who don't share those values.

I haven't personally seen any of the films in question, but I object strenuously when other people tell me what is good or bad for me.

If the courts can tell adults what kind of movie they can see, what is to stop them from telling them how they must act in any other given situation?

It seems to me that America was formed by people who were trying to escape from being told how they must think and how they must act.

## A new head honcho

He'll be a new head honcho, with real power; and maybe he'll find it in his interest to sort out the operations of county government — which in Wayne County at least have been pretty dismal over the past years.

ONLY THIS week hopes to get some real steam behind county government reform got a big boost in Wayne County. Robert FitzPatrick, chairman of the county board, finally worked out an agreement with the UAW and other groups that may well result in referendum on a county executive being on the ballot his fall.

With the help of State Sen. Carl Pursell, who represents Plymouth, Livonia and Redford Township, legislation will be introduced allowing a vote this November on the overall question of a county executive, with a subsequent vote in 1976 on various individual candidates. This timetable then probably will get a favorable vote from the county board.

As FitzPatrick said, "It was better to compromise on when things were to be voted on rather than lose the whole issue for several more years."

Fitz is right, and he deserves a real pat on the back for sticking to his guns in getting a vote this fall on county government reform.

His actions could help Wayne County join Oakland, which already has an appointed county executive in Daniel T. Murphy, Jr., and will vote this fall on whether the county executive will be elected or appointed.

Strange but true; we just might have a real chance for reform in local government in the suburbs this fall.

## From our readers

### Ostrichlike

To the Editor:

Your Hank Hogan is entitled to his opinions and is provided with a sounding board to pan them off on the readers of your paper, but he is not entitled to make facts out of half truths.

Richard Nixon's taxes were audited by the Internal Revenue Service as well as by a joint congressional committee and I have never before heard the IRS referred to as a political group.

Repeating two sentences in Hogan's column, "Nixon has become an enigma to me" — "I don't really believe he has been guilty of anything," makes me believe that a picture of an ostrich with his head buried in the sand would be even more appropriate than the picture with which you caption this article.

Warren M. Klein Franklin

April 18, 1974

### Reduce litter

To the Editor:

Ah, spring! No more snow. In its place, an unobscured view of roadside litter. Every year, Michigan taxpayers spend \$600,000 for litter cleanup on state roads — local cleanup bills swell the total cost additionally. By volume, 62 percent of this litter consists of beverage containers, cans and bottles. HB 4926, a bill which places a 10-cent deposit on most pop and beer containers, would provide strong incentive for beverage consumers to stop littering. (In Oregon, a similar law has resulted in a 90 percent drop in the number of beverage containers found in roadside litter.) This bill will come to a vote soon: Citizens who wish to reduce litter and cleanup expenses

should write to their Lansing representative now.

April 25, 1974

Betty Wolfe Birmingham

### Compassionate

To the Editor:

I am sending a donation to the Michigan Humane Society in honor of a young man and woman who, on Sat., April 20, at approximately 6 p.m., between Oakland and Oak on northbound Hunter in Birmingham, came to the aid of a young German Shepherd badly injured by a hit-run driver.

Without an instant's hesitation they were out of their car. The young woman protected the dog from oncoming traffic and the young man carefully drew the helpless animal to the edge of the road. The dog could and did wag his tail at them but was unable to stand or help himself in any way.

They gently maneuvered him onto a blanket or rug from their car and put him into the car to take him to the nearest veterinarian.

There are those of us who destroy and don't care and many more of us, I suppose, who care but stand paralyzed by horror for the short minute when the chance to help comes and quickly goes. Therefore, those who unthinkingly take swift, faultless and compassionate action seem to me to be entirely admirable.

I can think of no way to thank them, other than this.

J.C. Boyle Birmingham

April 21, 1974

### Crime statistics

To the Editor:

We are waiting with bated breath to see who is right: The state police official who asserted that crime in Birmingham has

risen 125 percent or the chief of Birmingham's police who says it has dropped 3 percent.

If the state official is right, the matter has not registered with those of us who live here. I still feel safe roaming our streets at night; I have never seen a mugging, and there appear to be no more break-ins than occurred in other recent years.

My own impression is that our own chief is probably right, but I should not think that either The Observer & Eccentric or the city commission would feel about the matter until some responsible survey is made.

The Detroit papers, of course, lapped up the 125 percent story, to take the heat off the appalling Detroit murder record and the sad demise of the STRESS unit destroyed by a politically oriented mayor.

Perhaps the papers hoped that when the mayor urged the hoodlums of Detroit to move beyond the Eight Mile Road they would do as he wished.

Carl G. Wonnberger Birmingham

April 26, 1974

## f.y.i.\*

### Don't spell as we spell

The spelling list originally handed out to spelling contestants at Farmington Junior High contained at least three misspelled words.

An alert mother noticed the mistakes and notified the school, worried the students might be eliminated for spelling the words correctly. The list was corrected before the contest began.