

editorial opinion

Park gets underway

Residents living near Waldrum Park in Farmington Hills are finding the experience is alternating from pleasant to unpleasant, as the little park takes shape.

The park is unique and pioneering, something not appreciated by some residents because it is too little and too late.

It is unique in that it is the first time the Hills, or formerly the township, has attempted to provide park facilities for the residents.

But the effort is giving the community some valuable experience.

When plans were first announced, they were warmly received.

Financed about 80 percent from state and federal money, the park was planned as a neighborhood recreation center in an area mainly lacking this type of facility.

LAND ACQUISITION dragged, and it is to the credit of Robert McConnell, then supervisor of Farmington Township, that the whole package was put together.

A change in direction

Students returning to school this fall in Farmington will probably not notice an enormous change.

Kindergartners will find a couple of kids more in their room. Elementary students will have fewer choices of classes and, of course, former Bond Elementary students will be bused to a new building.

The loose ceiling tiles in the gym at Farmington Junior High will still be there, and one doubts a 12 year old will be conscious of the missing teachers.

Which is the problem. The changes wrought by the defeat of millage aren't dramatic. What has happened is a change in direction.

Instead of growth, there is reduction.

Unfortunately, the vacant area proved an attractive nuisance, a gathering place for loitering young people and a collector of litter.

About the time this kind of activity was generating a feeling that maybe the park wasn't such a good idea after all, some positive steps were taken.

Most prominent is the work of the Hills police department and the personal interest of Capt. Russel Conway.

The captain and other volunteers spent weekends working with youth in the area on a cleanup campaign which both spruced up the area and changed the attitude of many of the same kids formerly labeled "nuisance."

While construction on the tennis facilities, picnic benches and the rest of the improvements which will eventually make it a "real park" is not yet underway, the most important groundwork has been laid.

When it is finished, it will be a small tribute to the energies and the community spirit which made it possible.

Instead of small improvements, there are small things which will be worse.

Is this a temporary setback? A natural reaction to one of the worst years for the average man trying to make a living in recent history?

One hopes so.

If belt tightening is mandated by the voters, a public institution must respond.

One can only hope it is not a trend, a long-term direction.

Moves towards excellence in education are subtle, made slowly over a period of years.

The road the other way can be just as slow, but the important thing is not the speed, but the direction.

Eccentricities

by HENRY M. HOGAN, JR.



The call to arms

Amnesty is in the headlines. President Ford said to the Veterans of Foreign Wars that those who left the country to evade the draft should be permitted somehow to work themselves home.

Apparently his thoughts are that those people who left to avoid military service should be permitted to return if they, in turn, spend a certain length of time doing public service.

But amnesty is not a simple issue. We have people in Canada and Sweden who left this country rather than register for the draft, and there are people who left after they were drafted but before they reported for military service, and there are those people who actually deserted after they were members of the armed services. Obviously, all three of these classes of men must be treated differently.

THE EXCUSE for amnesty seems to be that the Vietnam war was different from other wars we have waged. Apparently it was an immoral war and all of the other wars we have been involved in have been moral wars.

The difference somewhat eludes me because war is killing and is usually the result of some power

struggle on the parts of the heads of state. It is really very difficult for me to imagine what could be called a moral war.

On top of that, if society is to remain intact, certain rules must be followed by those who want to be protected by society.

Men started living together in a community, which was the first step of society, because they found that as a group they could better protect themselves from outside elements, like wild animals.

AS PART OF banding together, an obligation was created to serve when one was called to arms to defend the community.

If people are called to arms, but are not willing to serve and run away, or if others are called to arms and run away while they are serving and then are forgiven, there is no need for anyone ever to answer the call to arms.

Today, it looks like a kind, humane thing to be forgiving of those who were not willing to stand up for their country, but it would set a precedent. In the future we would have difficulty defending ourselves if people knew they can run away and merely get a slap on the wrist for it.

Observation Point

by PHILIP H. POWER



Arrogance, avarice and oil

Perhaps you saw last week's newspaper article about the gas station guy in Oak Park who is being pressured by his oil company to quit doing car repairs and start pumping more gas.

According to the terms of the lease from Total-Leonard Gasoline Co. to Jerry Marx, he's supposed to be out of the car repair field by the end of June. Marx doesn't want to, since he makes 75 percent of the \$30,000 he clears per year from his servicing business. His customers don't want him to quit, either, and they've petitioned the Oak Park City Council to find a way to keep Marx in the repair business.

Total-Leonard says that eliminating car maintenance service at gas stations is "the only way to be competitive with the brand leaders. The whole basis of the switch is to sell more gas and give faster, more efficient driveway service... Every little factor can't be taken into consideration. This new marketing concept... is impersonal, obviously."

YOU'RE DARNED tootin' it's impersonal. And it's just that impersonality of new marketing concepts that's at the heart of much that's wrong with the country.

As far as the oil companies seem to perceive the world, the entire point is to sell more gas to make more money. Little things like making sure the gas-consuming automobiles are running properly have very little to do with the great goal of increasing sales.

After all, this "new marketing concept" is only one in a steady stream of concepts of dubious worth from those friendly fellows in the oil industry who manipulated the gas shortage, bumped prices unmercifully, and then had the gall to tell the public that high gas prices and skyrocketing oil company profits were necessary to the public good so yet more oil could be discovered and produced.

"**IT'S IMPERSONAL**" does sum up in a neat way the arrogance and avarice of the oil industry.

One reason for the attitude is the enormously powerful and concentrated structure of the oil industry, in which companies own rights to produce oil, pipe the oil, refine it, and sell the oil to their own branded outlets. The economists call it "vertical integration," and its effect is to give individual companies almost total power within their operations.

This excessive power is the reason Michigan's Sen. Philip Hart is holding hearings on the extent and effects of concentration of power in large corporations. The oil industry is one of the targets of these hearings. It should be.

Hart's point is to "restate a basic credo of this country since it's inception: Too much power in too few hands is incompatible with democracy."

I'll bet Jerry Marx—and his customers—agree.

From our readers

Respect forgotten

To the Editor: I am writing this letter to all managers and coaches of Little League baseball teams I am amazed that in your relationships with your players, you have forgotten the most important quality that one person can have for another: that is respect.

One of the definitions of respect is "to show esteem, regard or consideration for," yet I have seen boys who are 10 or 11 put under great pressure, ridiculed and embarrassed in front of teammates and parents.

I can understand criticism in a positive manner, but not constant yelling under the guise of teaching the boys to play baseball better.

The purpose of Little League baseball games I am sure must include the fun yet none of the games we have seen have been very concerned about this.

As I have seen them, parents who feel as do I that their sons who feel as we do and win we do. The ends do not justify the means.

I am afraid that the managers and coaches who see nothing wrong with shoving as a way to show respect for their players, yet win in spite of their yelling, will continue in the same manner.

I think that you are wrong.

You are hurting our sons, not helping them.

A Concerned Parent

Southfield

July 19, 1974

the three Republican candidates for state representative spent in excess of \$19,000, while in the 8th State Senatorial District race a total of \$28,554.83 was spent by the incumbents and three challengers.

To further your effort for public disclosure of campaign finances, I think you should as carefully report the contributions and expenditures of the Republican candidates, just as you did mine, particularly since their campaigns involved far larger sums of money.

My expenditures were noteworthy, primarily, because they indicated that for the first time there is a serious Democratic candidate in the 65th District for state representative.

Dorothy Becker
Candidate for State Representative, 65th District

Aug. 27, 1974

Proud of field

To the Editor: In a recent article about George Maskin by reporter Jackie Klein, George was described as "too sincere to be a PR bull shooter." Since he is an accurate description of George Maskin, but I must take issue with the implication that PR people are "bull shooters."

As president of the 325 member Public Relations Society of America here in Michigan, I take too much pride in my profession and the manner in which I and my colleagues earn a living to be referred to as a "bull shooter." I'm confident George Maskin... is an outstanding publicist... must have shuddered when he read it himself.

A Concerned Parent
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July 19, 1974

Serious candidate

To the Editor:

In your Aug. 22 edition, you had an article headed "Becker Reports Most Spending." While your figures were essentially correct, I feel you gave an erroneous impression of campaign costs in this area.

In the neighboring 63rd District

I was honored to have your paper do an extensive article on my public relations firm, Anthony M. Franco, Inc., on March 28. It is a proud fact that I ended up with 24 others, three ex-Executive staff.

None of them nor any other professional public relations practitioner, could possibly buy Jackie Klein's flip reference to our field.

I strongly suggest that the term "bull shooter" is not only not in keeping with your excellent paper, an inaccurate reference to the profession of public relations but, more importantly, totally out of place in a nice article about a nice guy.

Anthony M. Franco
President-Detroit Chapter
Public Relations Society of America

Aug. 23, 1974

Courage or compromise

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responsible for much of the price increase, and a rollback here would be very easy for a new president.

The House, of course, took care of one bad bit of legislation by removing the mandatory interlock requirement, but it is still possible that more of the mandated auto requirements ought to be scrapped. Engineers can build better and safer cars than politicians.

MR. FORD'S recommendation for leniency toward draft evaders and draft dodgers was most frightening. In some future emergency it would make defense difficult if we imposed it, if we had men decide for themselves to judge whether they like the war or not and take refuge abroad with the full assurance that after they have made their sacrifices they will be slapped on the wrist and allowed to benefit by the freedoms for which our fathers fought.

We shall see what we shall see in the battle against inflation. First, again, will the government allow the already inflated postal rates to rise another whopping 30 percent on first class mail?

Since mail is something everybody uses, the mounting mail rates have been more responsible for the inflationary spiral than any other single factor.

The truth is that an administration can do what it has the courage to do. The murder in cold blood of a United States Government official representative should certainly be a very lasting reminder about the immediate cessation of foreign aid to both belligerents.

One cannot make a judgment on Mr. Ford so soon, but nothing he has said or done thus far points to a strong administration. Let's hope the signs are wrong.

Carl G. Womberger

Birmingham

Aug. 22, 1974

Watch for bikes

To the Editor:

While safety engineers are trying to protect motorists against their own follies, the need for alertness, while driving, increases.

The sidewalk curb cuts are being installed under state law to be put to use to benefit the physically disabled who are confined to wheelchairs and similar facilities for which an eight or nine-inch curb represents the end of the world.

That purpose is good! The gradient for the blind (White Cane) because they may have trouble recognizing the curbline. Blind persons with leader dogs should have less trouble when their dogs are properly trained.

These ramps may present a problem for the blind (White Cane) because they may have trouble recognizing the curbline. Blind persons with leader dogs should have less trouble when their dogs are properly trained.

Two views may be expressed—no problem, it may be more trouble to train the dogs. However the problem of the blind are worked out, the motorists should practice alertness when crossing an intersection.

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