

editorial opinion



Interested residents discuss park system.

Eccentricities

by HANK HOGAN



One man's opinion

Over the years, the automobile companies have been the marvel of the merchandising world. Through advertising they created a demand for their products far in excess of an individual's need to have four wheels to take him someplace. The industry built up snob appeal so that successful people wouldn't be caught dead driving the low-end of the line type of vehicle, even though it was adequate for one's needs. A successful man was marked by the larger automobile he drove.

They built in planned obsolescence, not by making cars fall apart, but by demand. They made you feel guilty if your car was more than two years old because everybody else in the neighborhood was driving a new car.

IN 1972 THEY sold about 10 1/2 million passenger vehicles, which is unheard of in any other nation in the world.

Unfortunately for Detroit, foreign cars entered the market. These cars were sold on reverse snobism. They didn't change their models often. Their ads told people how economical they were and how you could drive one for years and years without having to replace it. The Volkswagen Beetle became the symbol of reverse snobism.

The American automobile industry ignored foreign competition for a while, but the cars made greater and greater inroads until they were taking between 15 and 20 per cent of the market.

I THINK, at that point, the American automobile industry made a mistake and decided to try to meet competition.

People can blame 1974 and 1975 car sales on the energy crisis and the recession. But I think it goes deeper than that.

When the American automobile industry decided to build smaller cars which didn't change radically as often, to save costs, and toned down the announcement hoopla by introducing the cars in the middle of the year, they told the American people they really didn't need to have a new car every year, and therefore they cut the demand they had been so successful in creating.

In the 1975 model year, sales will probably amount to 6 1/2 million passenger cars, a drop of some four million sales.

A GOOD PORTION of this drop in sales is because people have found they can drive their cars three, four and five years and still have a very serviceable product. If this trend continues, then the only way the four-million car loss can be recaptured is by the population increasing.

This does not bode well for the Detroit area's economy, since it is based on successful car sales.

While 1976 will probably be a better car year—because the people who didn't buy in '74 and '75 eventually have to replace their automobiles—we really can't look for many years to come for great automobile sales years, as in the past.

Somehow, the great marvel of the merchandising world, by altering its methods and meeting competition, became its own worst enemy.

Parks system should be a major campaign issue

We agree with Farmington Hills council candidate Joanne Smith when she says the city needs a "vision and a plan" concerning development of a park system.

The six candidates for the legislative body seem to be frogging around for a concrete issue on which to base a campaign. Hopefully, the park system will be that issue.

Frankly, time is running out. For years residents have been debating the pros and cons of a park system. While the debate goes on and on, valuable land needed for the parks is being eaten away by subdivision after subdivision.

A sad aspect is that the city still doesn't have concrete plans for a park system. Oftentimes one hears the excuse that the city is only two years old and there hasn't been enough time for such plans. That isn't good enough.

SINCE TOWNSHIP DAYS various individuals and groups have been fighting to establish some sort of plan, but to no avail.

There always seem to be excuses. Either the location is wrong or enough police wouldn't be available to patrol the area and parks might attract the "wrong" type of persons.

At last week's candidates' night, the

question of park development arose, and it was obvious that most candidates didn't have a firm grasp of what could be done. Only Councilwoman Jan Dolan seemed to have any inkling of what should be done.

Mayor Earl Oppenheimer argues that a park system should be built around the school system. While he may be well-intentioned, we feel he is confused over the differences between a park and a playground. Playgrounds are nice places for little kids to go and swing and play on the slide, but a park is much more.

A LARGE PARK in Farmington Hills would exemplify the residents' concern for preserving a bit of nature for their youngsters and themselves, for that matter. Parks are where persons can get away from the tension of a congested society. Families can use parks to spend a day together.

For some reason, many Hills' residents are under the impression that vacant land always will surround their subdivisions. Meanwhile the congestion grows. If some land isn't set aside for park development soon, Hills' residents will be socked into a concrete jungle.

If you care about park development, let the candidates know.



Be safety conscious

Labor Day has traditionally been a time to enjoy life. Don't end the tradition through careless driving.

Traffic bulldozes wrong game

Well, it's kick-off time Saturday for professional football in Oakland County as the Detroit Lions take their act to the new Pontiac Metropolitan Stadium.

But the real line play, to steal a game description, may not be on the artificial turf marked off in 10-yard increments, but rather it is likely to be on those narrow ribbons of asphalt and concrete called Oakland County highways.

We're not all that sure that players in the mad game of traffic bulldozing that is

likely to take place will use the same professional discipline that the football players may use. But we hope so, because one can only guess that patience is going to be required until Oakland County authorities and motorists alike learn to cope with the new stadium and traffic patterns.

Meanwhile, all we can do is hope for good weather, a Lion victory, and that not too many stadium-bound fans run out of bounds by crisscrossing the many subdivisions that may loom as short cuts.

Your ecology calendar

Ecology-minded persons who wish to save cans, bottles or newspapers for recycling may use these facilities:

To prepare glass, thoroughly wash the containers, remove all metal caps and rings from the glass and separate the glass by color.

To prepare cans, clean only. Paper need not be removed.

Newspapers should be tied in bundles with heavy string or rope or secured in heavy paper bags.

•FARMINGTON—A glass recycling center, operates on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon at the west end of the Farmington Hills city hall parking lot. The city hall is at 11 Mile and Orchard Lake. Glass must be separated by color, cleaned and all metals removed.

•PONTIAC—Oakland County Recycling Center, 550 S. Telegraph, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. every Saturday. Groups bringing in more than 500 lbs. of glass

will receive \$10 per ton for glass.

•ROCHESTER—Bottles are collected at Jayco's Recycling Center Mill Street, under the bridge, the first and third Saturdays, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Separate colors into brown, green and white—no plate glass or light bulbs.

•BIRMINGHAM—Daily newspaper pickup with regular trash. Newspapers must be banded separately.

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