

editorial opinion

Childrens' safety issue in Shiawassee crosswalk row

An innocent person was caught in the middle of a problem that belongs in the lap of city and school officials. It's a question of how best to get the youngsters who attend Shiawassee school to their homes south of Nine Mile.

Parents are concerned because their children cross at a busy corner. School and city officials have been trying to find a route for them once they cross Nine Mile and Shiawassee where there is a crossing guard on duty.

For years the field on the south side of Nine Mile was the route. For logical safety reasons, the lot owner cut the trees in the orchard and fenced a portion of his back lot line. There is plenty of space not fenced the youngsters can walk through. But, closer to many of the Grand River Subdivision homes, there is a narrow pass-way.

The point is, however, that children should not have to cross private property to go to and from school. There are longer, and undoubtedly safer routes.

William Prisk, Farmington schools business manager, is concerned. So is Floyd Cairns, Farm-

ington Hills city manager. They have been working on solutions to the problem. Undoubtedly they will come up with a satisfactory one. It will probably be the use of the easement through the vacated Shiawassee. This means the children will be walking along the south side of Nine Mile between 100 and 200 feet further than before.

Speaking of the property owner, Prisk says, "A good man was caught in the middle. He has been most cooperative and he is a good friend to the city and the schools."

He is right. It is not the responsibility of a private property owner to provide walkways for school children.

As the solutions are explored, those most directly concerned warrant special consideration. It is the nature of a child, yours, mine, everyone's to take the shortest distance between two points—especially coming to and from school. Some may be easily talked into taking the safe route of almost a mile and a half, others will short-cut

It's a problem that will be solved when everyone concerned, school officials, parents, city officials and youngsters, all understand what is involved.

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Psychiatrist tells his story

Psychiatrist Dr. Bruce Danto has long been associated with suicide and drug abuse prevention. Now he's known as the "shrink who hypnotized those guys about Hoffa."

"For openers when he spoke at a Southfield Parent Youth Guidance seminar last week, he announced, 'I didn't kill Jimmy Hoffa.'" He then reported "crowds make me nervous" and said he would take a free-wheeling approach to the problems and pleasures of parent-child relationships.

Danto is a crowd-pleaser, as well as a fount of human knowledge, and he has the ability to make one gasp, giggle or groan.

"See this nose," he said pointing to his crooked, flattened proboscis.

"I got it playing football and I used to love it. But when government pulls money away from special education and mental health facilities for an air-floated dome on the Pontiac stadium, I never hated football as much as I do now."

IF YOU HAPPEN to be in a certain age category, you'll appreciate Danto's wise observation that it was easier to be a parent in 1945 than it is in 1975.

"Kids accepted the establishment and respected their parents in 1945," he reflected. "There was no social relief—you either worked or starved. Nobody lived in the suburbs. It was fun to go downtown on a streetcar."

In fact, Danto recalled, he first became interested in psychiatry on a six-cent streetcar ride. He got a free course in psychoanalysis and people-watching. Now people are afraid to go downtown and they have big dogs and burglar alarm systems to protect them from society.

Other Dantisms are:

• "What we don't know about kids would fill more than one book. What about drugs, alcohol, wheezing, violence, learning disorders and sex pervasions? If your son comes home from college with a boyfriend, you may have a problem coming up with grandchildren."

• "Death is an extremely difficult thing for children to accept. They feel invincible and immortal. If mom and dad are in love, the dog is smiling and the sun is shining, the kid thinks it's because he's loveable and makes the world go around like General Motors."

• "If there's a divorce or death in the family or the dog gets senile and runs away, a kid thinks it's because he isn't loveable enough. Par-

ents have trouble facing death too. They don't die, they simply change addresses."

• "A child's adjustment to death depends on the honesty and encouragement of his parents. 'Grief counselors,' the new name for undertakers, have a relaxed attitude about death. Kids should be involved in the bereavement process."

• "Growing violence among women reflects impotence, lack of power and a determination to find their own direction in life. Most of us feel like government employees."

• "Violence is an issue that can't be solved with concrete answers. Human behavior can't be dealt with simply. I deal with a lot of violent people and I don't want to get killed. Who will treat them?"

• "My wife went back to school and I told my kids they were getting rid of mom the schleppler. She used to schlep, carry the kids to the barber shop, dance lessons, to the drug store for school supplies and everywhere. Many women suffer from schleppey."

• "Political and social schizos haven't come to terms with effective living. If there were no Watergate, we never would have discovered the Constitution and our viable form of government. It's important to get involved in the structure."

• "Camping is the best family togetherness activity I know. I never met a camper I didn't like."

• "Don't be afraid to tell your kids what you think it's right for them to do. Example: when someone gives you a present you write a thank you note. Another example, if you like walking, stay up late and miss the bus tomorrow. But don't expect me to drive you to school."

• "If he wants his kids to respect him, dad doesn't drag race, buy off cops or cheat on his income tax or his wife. He can be counted on."

• "If your kid needs help, don't tell him you're sending him to the purple people eater shrink. Tell him you all have problems and you all need a shrink to fix your relationship. Don't make one family member the patient or the culprit."

• "Don't allow your kids to be your only reason for existing. You can function without them some of the time if you all have lives of your own and privacy. But don't be afraid of emotional commitments and intimacy in the other extreme."

Bringing up kids in 1975 is no picnic. But it's a challenge and a worthwhile one if you make it so. You just saved \$30 on a psychiatrist and that's not a "Dantism."

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Committee will give awards

The sixth annual "Keep Farmington Beautiful" awards luncheon will be held on noon, Oct. 8, in the Salem United Church of Christ. This luncheon is co-sponsored by the City of Farmington Beautification Committee and the Farmington Exchange Club.

The yearly luncheon is held to honor various industries, businesses, auto service facilities, apartments and com-

muniments and churches. More than 40 awards are given on many beautification and renovation projects judged by the committee during the last year.

Projects throughout the city have been judged three times since fall 1974 on the basis of general appearance, cleanliness, signs and general maintenance.

The beautification committee works to promote beautification projects and activities throughout the city all year long. Main projects in 1974-75 included a May promotion for "Keep Farmington Beautiful" month, designing and planting the masonic temple corner, decorating fire hydrants for bicentennial celebrations; and designing and building a float for the Farmington Founders Festival.

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