

editorial opinion

Commendable action by city fathers

The Farmington City Council should be commended for its action to continue and expand the senior citizen special cab service.

Starting today (Thursday), senior citizens and handicapped persons will be able to use the local cab service at reduced rates. As an added service, they may take the cab to the Botsford Hospital emergency room in Farmington Hills at a reduced rate.

Under the system, senior citizens pay 50 cents for any destination in the City of Farmington, Botsford Hospital and the Farmington Community Center in the Hills. The city picks up the remainder of the bill.

WHILE MANY communities have sat

back and waited to develop a seemingly more sophisticated transportation system for their senior citizens, the City of Farmington has taken action.

Too many times senior citizens are forgotten by the younger members of society.

But Farmington city fathers have seen fit to recognize the needs of those in the community who have contributed in past years. Not only does the subsidized cab program provide a needed service, but it keeps senior citizens active members of the community.

To ensure that the system continues to run, the city has included funds in its plans for what it receives from a federal community development block grant.

THE BEST thing is that the service works, and works well. While a previous survey indicated some problems, city fathers persevered and continued the service. A second survey indicated that the problems had been ironed out.

Thanks to the hard work of City Manager Bob Deadman and his staff, in cooperation with Vern Foster of Suburban Checker Cab Service, the city has a workable program which will continue for many years.

Senior citizens can feel confident that their city leaders haven't forgotten them. The City of Farmington can be proud of this contribution.

STEVE BARNABY

"The real significance of the wilderness is a cultural matter... it has to do with the human spirit."

S.T. OLSON

SEAFARER

Seafarer vs the untouched woods

Somehow it seems that around this time of year, everybody I know in the suburbs decamps for the north country to go deer hunting. On a trip to the Upper Peninsula over the Thanksgiving weekend, I ran into all kinds of people from this area who were in search of their bucks.

Judging from the numbers of deer fastened to vehicles coming south, it was a good season, although members of one hunting party said the rain over the weekend spoilt tracking in the last hours of the season.

Most people, like me, experience, who go in search of their deer do so as much for the overall feeling of getting out into the woods as for getting venison on the table for the winter.

THAT'S WHAT brings a big government program called Seafarer to mind.

Seafarer is an idea to string more than 1,000 miles of cable across the UP to establish a communications system with our submarines when they are under the water anywhere in the world. It is being promoted by the Navy as an important part of our defense system as well as a project which would provide lots of jobs for the economically troubled area.

What troubles the people in the UP is that the project might very well destroy massive amounts of the wilderness that make the UP the remarkable natural resource it is. Linked to this is a growing question about just how many jobs the project would really create, together with a persistent suspicion that the project would constitute a public health hazard.

FIRST, the jobs. Those backing Seafarer estimate the construction phase would provide 1,000 to 2,000 jobs, but these will only last for a year or two. Manning for the project afterward is now estimated at 200 to 300 men, most of whom would be Navy technicians imported from outside the state.

Not effect on the economy of our state: Little of lasting importance.

Next, health hazards. Navy experts have been assuring state officials that Seafarer would pose no health risk for people in the area, on the grounds that the extremely low frequency waves that the system would generate have not been proven harmful to humans or animals.

But over the weekend, the Detroit Free Press broke a story claiming that a report saying that Seafarer might cause harm to human life had been hushed up by the Navy. At the same time, a UP group opposed to the project demanded that Gov. Milliken order the Navy to stop further work on Seafarer.

Observation Point

By PHILIP H. POWER



At present, the best that can be said is that the project might be risky, and that all information on the risks should be promptly released to the public.

THIS BRINGS us to the environmental questions.

The Navy says that the project involves burying cables under ground, with only 25 feet of cleared area to the sides of each cable, together with monitoring stations here and there. By implication, the Navy is arguing that in the countless miles of UP wilderness, a few 25 foot strips of clearing will hardly make much difference to the environment.

In strictly mechanical terms, this is probably so.

But what such a line of argument neglects is that the woods are a fragile, interconnected system of land and trees and animals, all functioning together. When you slash 1,000 miles of cable through the wildest parts of the UP in a grid, you inevitably destroy that interconnection.

As one UP opponent of Seafarer said recently, "Somewhere else there are higher mountains, bigger trees and tall waterfalls. But here they're all come together — and that's what really makes this peninsula."

And that's just why Seafarer would be the first step toward ruining and toward ruining the thrill of the sport and the calm of the wilderness for all of us in the suburbs who see the UP as one of the greatest, untouched resources of our state.

The project will provide little economic benefit for Michigan; it may pose a health hazard; it surely will ruin some of the very little wilderness area we have left. Seafarer should be stopped, pronto.

A pattern of local violence

By Tim Richard writes

were from Skandia, in the backwoods of Marquette County between Harvey and Kiva. Ober shiners came from Rapid River, Indian River, Onaway, Flint, Ann Arbor and Midland.

In other words, a disproportionate number came from the rural hamlets of the state.

Felows caught keeping undersized fish were from Vassar, Wellston, Grawn (two), Hales Corners, Wis., and Delton, Ill. Vassar is a village in Tuscola County. Wellston is in the backwoods of Manistee County. Grawn is about 15 miles from the aforementioned Skandia, and the two non-Michigan residents were hardly city slickers.

THERE WERE TWO cases of illegal possession of deer—one chap from Wayne and the other from Mikado, which is in the boondocks of Alcona County between Glenne and Greenbush. Last one jump to the conclusion that our law enforcement officers are tougher on the country boys than the city boys. Let it here be noted that the violator from Wayne was fined \$200 and the one from Mikado \$30.

The foregoing are matters of public record. It doesn't tell the stories of the outdoorsmen who do other unsportsmanlike things and get away with it...

Like the rural landowner who puts out a salt lick for months so the deer get into the habit of using it, and then has the unmatchable skill to pick off his buck the moment of opening day.

Or like the clever fellow who follows the DNR trucks to the streams and finds out where the traps are being stocked, then proceeds to "slaughter" them, taking his limit once or twice or three a day, while the supply lasts.

Now you know why I shudder when I hear that song, "Thank God I'm a Country Boy."

Eccentricities



By HENRY M. HOGAN, JR.

The academics in perspective

A friend of mine claims he received the following letter.

Dear Mother & Dad

It has now been three months since I left for college. I have been remiss in writing and I am very sorry for my thoughtlessness in not having written before.

I will bring you up to date now, but before you read on, please sit down. You are not to read any further unless you are sitting down. Okay?

Well, then... I am getting along pretty well now. The skull fracture I got when I jumped out of the window of my dormitory when it caught fire shortly after my arrival is pretty well healed now. I only spent two weeks in the hospital, and I can see almost normally and only get those sick headaches once a day.

FORTUNATELY, the fire in the dormitory and my jump was witnessed by an attendant at the gas station near the dorm, and he was the one who called the fire department and the ambulance.

He also visited me at the hospital, and since I had nowhere to live because of the burn-out dormitory, he was kind enough to invite me to share his apartment with him. It's really a basement room, but it's kind of cute.

He is a very fine boy, and we have fallen deeply in love and are planning to get married. We haven't set the exact date yet, but it will be before my pregnancy begins to show.

I know how much you are looking forward to being grandparents and I know you will welcome the baby and give it the same love and devotion and tender care you gave me when I was a child.

I also know you will welcome my friend into our family with open arms. He is kind and, although not well educated, is ambitious. Although he is of a different race and religion than ours, I know your oft-expressed tolerance will not permit you to be bothered by the fact that his skin color is somewhat darker than ours.

I am sure you will love him as I do. His family background is good, too, for I am told that his father is an important gunbearer in the village in Africa from which he comes.

NOW THAT I have brought you up to date, I want to tell you that there was no dormitory fire. I did not have a skull fracture. I was not in the hospital. I am not pregnant. I am not married. And there is no Schwarze in my life. However, I am getting a D in history and an E in science, and I wanted you to see those marks in the proper perspective.

Your loving daughter,
Becky

We're a poor first in one business

When government takes an action affecting the economy, it's much like a chemical used on a tree—it sets off a chain reaction of effects that change the total environment for miles around.

And so it seems to be with the new Michigan business privilege tax. The case was put rather well this week by Arthur Pulte, president of Pulte Construction Co. and also of the Association of General Contractors in metropolitan Detroit.

Keep in mind, to begin with, that construction is an ailing industry with a jobless rate of 25 percent, pretty bad even in our slumping economy. Now hear Mr. Pulte.

Supposedly, this law would encourage capital intensive industries to expand present plant and office facilities. But in talking with representatives of auto companies (autos being a capital intensive industry), I find they are apparently no plans to do so.

That's probably because auto firms have unused capacity. They'll put folks back to work in the plants they have now before they expand to any great extent.

Pulte goes on: "Even if capital intensive industries initiated a program of expansion, any gains in tax credits under the new law would be offset by tax increases to contractors under the new law—which would be passed along to the owner in the form of increased building costs."

In other words, the state eases up on capital intensive industries so they can expand, then seeks it to a labor intensive industry that's supposed to construct the expanded facilities. Construction costs rise, putting a damper on expansion plans of expanding industries.

And we're right back where we started.

"Additional costs of doing business are now being considered by our State Legislature," Pulte observes, "in the form of new unemployment compensation and workers' compensation laws. Yes, Michigan will be able to say, 'We're No. 1—but unfortunately, No. 1 in the cost of doing business.'

Sense And Nonsense

On Nov. 26, Hon. Thomas M. Holcomb (D-Lansing) arose on the floor of the august House of Representatives of the Michigan Legislature and intoned the following invocation:

"Almighty God, we pray today for wisdom, for knowledge, for patience and for accurate budget figures. Be with us, Lord, in our deliberations in this chamber today and Lord, if it be Thy will, that Saturday in Ann Arbor, let us have roses instead of oranges. Amen."

The Lord heard him not, for none of the prayers was answered.