

editorial opinion

Hors d'oeuvres by Lynn Orr Warm weather woes

My mother often has accused me of being a crepe-paper hanger, otherwise known as a pessimist. She says I inherited the disease from my paternal grandmother who could supposedly find a cloud in every silver lining. However, I believe I can truthfully legitimize why I'm writing black in the midst of all this recent sunshine. Warm weather has its disadvantages, and if you're in the Farmington area, it's a good bet you're coping with one.

The annual spring plague of beetles is upon our heads, or more precisely, into many a Farmington pantry.

I'm talking about the invasion of big, black ants that is currently the talk of the town. The ant invasion is a common occurrence in our subdivision every spring, but the insidious creatures have infiltrated our sub with a never-before-experienced ferocity this year. And the usual measures have little impact on the hordes surfacing in my kitchen.

Yesterday, for example, I managed to do some cleaning before dinner and had evoked a pleasant sensibility about the shape of the house—it wouldn't meet with my grandmother's approval, but the general condition was satisfactory for the middle of the week. I decided to empty the dishwasher while waiting for the stove to do its thing, and there inside a sealed appliance, which has never sprung a leak, were the ants. Apparently they ran up through the drains after the cycle is completed.

But if the siege continues, there's no telling how long I can hold out. I'm not enough of a pessimist, despite my mother's accusations, to wish for cold weather, so I'm about to test my readership. If anyone out there can come to my assistance, this is the one time being a columnist might prove beneficial to my welfare. "HELLO!" and address all correspondence to "Be-steged."

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The auto repair people are not the real villains and I'm sick and tired of having this segment of the business world held up to continuous and most unwarranted censure.

I operate a taxicab service in the city of Southfield and have been dealing with auto repair and service people for many years and have found the vast majority of persons with whom I have dealt to be conscientious, considerate, competent, anxious to be of service and highly ethical.

that catches moths in their hands and runs to the door to set them free. We're all delighting in squashing every ant that crosses our path.

Actually self defense motivates the killings—we're afraid they might carry us off one-by-one if we don't mount a frontal attack.

MY RATIONALE for disposing of insects has always been that when they stay in their place—outside—they can continue to live in peace and harmony. Capital punishment comes into play when they enter the confines of my home. My son believes insects can plead ignorance of the law, but that's no excuse as far as I'm concerned. I seldom stray into their domain, and they have no right to be in mine. Since I'm considerably larger and certainly more powerful, the argument is moot, but this year the quantities and intractability of the creatures are threatening my sanity.

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Now let's discuss the real vermin, the parasitic bloodsuckers who bleed consumers white. They are lawyers, insurance companies (both casualty and life companies), a substantial segment of the medical profession, the

amount the landlord is deducting from your damage deposit to pay for it.

• If you agree with the landlord's damage assessment, there is no problem. He simply will deduct the indicated amount and return the balance of your damage deposit, if any, to you. But, if you disagree with him, you must tell him so in writing within seven days of receiving his letter.

• If you disagree with the landlord, he has two options. He can either take you to court and sue you to pay for the damages that you claim aren't your responsibility. Or, he can return your entire damage deposit to you. And he must do one or the other within 45 days of the termination of your lease. If he fails to act within this 45-day period, he loses his legal right to claim any damages from you, and can be required in court to give you back double your security deposit.

• It is the tenant's responsibility to leave a forwarding address and to respond to the landlord's notice of damage. Failure to respond to such a notice is legally treated as a tenant's agreement to the amount of damages listed by the landlord.

QUESTION: When I finally decide to move out of my apartment, what should I do to make sure I get my damage deposit back?

ANSWER: Several years ago, Michigan passed a Tenants Rights Act that spelled out a procedure for dealing with damage deposits designed to protect both tenants and landlords. This is how it works.

• Within 30 days of the termination of your lease, the landlord must check your apartment for damage, and mail you a list of the damages found and

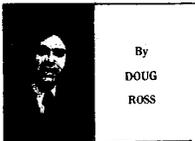
make sure that the landlord will not keep my deposit to pay for this damage that was done by a former tenant?

ANSWER: As soon as you move in, the landlord must supply you with two copies of an inventory check list. Write down every bit of existing damage you can find in the apartment. Then return one copy of the list to the landlord within seven days. Keep the other copy. It's your protection against the landlord later trying to keep all or part of your deposit to pay for damages done by someone else.

QUESTION: I know that all apartments require security deposits before you move in. But how large can a security deposit be?

ANSWER: In addition to requiring that you prepay your rent, a landlord can require a security deposit equal to as much as 1 1/2 months rent. Legal uses of that deposit are to reimburse the landlord for actual damages to the apartment, past due rent payments, rent owed as a result of a tenant breaking a lease and to pay utility bills not paid by the tenant.

QUESTION: What if I notice that the apartment I'm moving into already has some damage? How can I



By DOUG ROSS

Citizens Can Win

Landlord vs. tenant: \$ at stake

And what can the landlord use the deposit for?

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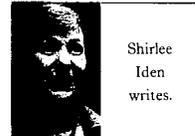
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April winds and Bobby



Shirley Iden writes.

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trinkering around

by LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Anything for ratings

Tommy Carvet knew his career as a television talk show host had hit the skids but he refused to admit that at the less than awesome age of 36 he was a has-been. After all, could he help it if he fell asleep on the job? He knew he shouldn't have accepted it. After all, what was a night person doing hosting an early morning wake-up program?

Could he be held responsible if he fell asleep while reading the 6:30 a.m. news? Who in the world watches television at that hour?

Unfortunately, the station manager took quite a different view of the situation.

"How could anyone fall asleep while reporting on the latest mid-East crisis?" thundered McBird, the station manager.

When Carvet began to snore into the microphone that fateful morning, McBird covered up by running an episode of an Our Gang comedy.

No one noticed. Seizing an opportunity to get rid of that erstwhile talk show host and save money at the same time, McBird handed Carvet a hastily typewritten note of dismissal.

It was about that time that Carvet decided he needed a new gimmick—something that would make people sit up in bed and watch Carvet instead of Johnny-whats-his-name. ONLY CARVET couldn't think of a new gimmick. He was lost. One afternoon, as he sat in his apartment, contemplating a warning notice from his landlord to pay his rent or move, a stranger dressed in a polyester leisure suit walked out from behind the television set. Carvet was shocked.

Was he an agent from the FBI, CIA, IRS or Phillip Morris?

"Well, Carvet, I'm here to make a deal," the stranger began. Carvet's little black dog began to whine and hid under the couch.

"I have a perfect gimmick for your next talk show," the man in the blue polyester leisure suit continued.

"Who are you," asked Carvet, noticing the man's neatly polished patent leather loafers and the carefully turned up cuffs of his jacket.

"Please allow me to introduce myself. As you can see, I'm a man of wealth and taste." Said the most visitor.

"Most of my acquaintances call me Mephistopheles. Mephisto isn't so bad a name, either," the man said.

It took some persuading to convince Carvet but finally he asked his visitor, "If you're the devil, how come you're not wearing a black opera cape. Where are your cloven hooves?"

"PROPAGANDA," Mephisto answered in sulfur tones. "I mean that man Goethe the same offer. It'll be making you and he refused. On top of that, he wrote that disgusting story I should have seen."

"As he paced up and down the room Mephisto showed off his leers ure suit. "I like to keep up with the times. Opera capes are out. Leisure suits are in."

"That's hellish taste," commented Carvet, before he realized what he was saying.

"Thank you," said Mephisto, obviously pleased. "Now, let's make a deal. In return for your soul, I will give you earthy life as long as you please. And I will allow you to sum up anyone from my quarter of the hereafter to appear on your talk show."

"A gimmick. I'll take it," said Carvet, jumping up and down, clapping his hands and hugging Mephisto.

"And since you want people like politicians, writers and other celebrities, you could probably summon up anyone you wanted. Just go easy on the humanitarians. They're a little touchy about their image and would cause trouble for me. I have enough discontent on my hands as it is," Mephisto advised.

AND SO, A NEW business partnership was formed. Carvet wasn't too concerned about selling his soul. After all, the first payment wasn't due for a long time. He could always delay it. Besides, he wasn't altogether sure if he really did believe in the devil.

The next day, Carvet hit the streets with his new gimmick. He went to the Big Networks. But they didn't believe in the devil. Worse yet, they didn't believe in Tommy Carvet. So Carvet,

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YMCA lauds story on Invest in Youth

Editor: Thanks so very much to Loraine McClish for the great article in a recent Observer regarding the YMCAs invest in Youth campaign. She did a marvelous re-write job. We had a number of calls regarding the fund drive and I think everyone remarked on the good article so we gave Ms. McClish credit for it. We are greatly appreciative of your generous help.

So, from the YMCA staff, the Board of Directors and all the kids who benefit from the Invest in Youth, many thanks,

RTA MISSEHAMER
General Chairman,
Invest in Youth,
Farmington

READERS' FORUM

Letters must be original, copies and contain the signature and address of the sender.
Limit letters to 300 words.

The State of Michigan has a consumer services department at 1200 Sixth in Detroit. This agency is supposed to assist citizens who have legitimate complaints against insurance companies and is headed by an inspired, do-nothing bureaucrat named Harold Hendrick who should be ashamed to take the \$27,000 annual salary he is paid.

I had a very serious complaint which I filed with Hendrick against Great American Insurance Co. of Cincinnati, Ohio in June of 1976 and the matter has never received any meaningful attention from Hendrick. Come on and lend me a hand Doug Ross and I'll give you a consumer gripe to sink your chops into.

LEONARD LOWENSTEIN
Southfield