

editorial opinion

Issues are what count in senior housing flap

Let's get something straight about this senior housing debate raging in Farmington Hills. Some folks have what I consider to be disturbing ideas about the nature of this squabble and public debate in general.

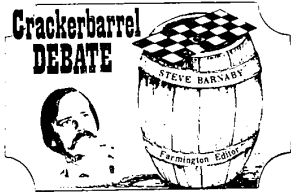
There's nothing I enjoy more than a healthy political battle. Open public debate stimulates interest in the community's welfare and usually leads to a solution with which everyone can live—displeased as some residents may be.

Unfortunately, some folks around town mistakenly believe I've got some kind of personal vendetta against Council of Homeowner activists Norb Bartos and Joe Alkateeb—and that's untrue.

I strongly disagree with the Homeowners Council stand and I will continue to fight against their proposed petition. My goal is to see senior citizen housing in Farmington Hills.

On the other hand, it isn't my goal to destroy the personal reputations of Bartos and Alkateeb. They have taken their stand, and I have taken mine. I respect their initiative in being interested in an issue, although I disagree with some of their literature, particularly the flyer depicting Farmington Hills as being overrun in 10 years with high-rise buildings.

SPEAKING OF literature. Alkateeb and Bartos deny they are responsible for distributing the cut up version of an analysis written by me which I referred to in last week's Crackerbarrel. If that's



true, I apologize for casting stones in the wrong direction.

But my main concern is that residents judge the issues on their merits and how the issues are publicly presented, rather than judging on how they personally perceive the cast of characters involved.

My criticism of the pair is based solely on their public stands, not their personal lives. I'm not dubbing the pair saints, but neither am I labeling them as disciples of the devil.

So now that we've got that issue cleared up, I'll be eagerly awaiting what the dynamic duo will be up to next, and rest assured, readers will be reading of their exploits again.

Right, Joe?

Parkway--a starting point

The "Lakeland Parkway" proposed by Oakland County Executive Daniel Murphy provides a good basis for discussion of the traffic future in the semideveloped portion of Michigan's second largest county.

At this writing—just prior to the State Highway Commission's hearing on alternatives to the cancelled M-275—there is no way of knowing what kinks may be exposed in the Murphy proposal, or what other alternatives a thoughtful public will suggest.

In a nutshell, Murphy proposed a four-lane, divided, 24-mile parkway from the intersection of I-75 and I-696 on the border of Novi and Farmington Hills; it would follow existing routes and reach I-75 at Holly. It deserves consideration as the starting point for future road planning because it seems to meet most of the important arguments people made on one side or the other of the M-275 controversy.

CONSIDER:

• The pro-freeway people argued that something had to carry local traffic in the growing townships, villages and new cities of western Oakland County. Lakeland Parkway's capacity would be geared for local traffic.

• Anti-freeway people argued that US-23 was capable of carrying northbound intercity traffic. A driver wiser headed for Flint or the north woods from eastern Oakland or Wayne counties would logically avoid Lakeland Parkway and use US-23.

• Anti-freeway forces had objected that some parkland would have been taken by M-275, and that a freeway, with its wide right-of-way and drainage impact, would endanger the headwaters of the Huron and Clinton rivers. Lakeland Parkway, with its at-grade intersections and narrower right-of-way, would have considerably less impact.

WHAT'S A LITTLE puzzling is the impact a Lakeland Parkway would have on the long-proposed extension of Northwestern Highway into the interior of West Bloomfield Township and points west.

The Northwestern extension would have tied into M-275. Eliminating M-275 was supposed to mean there was no need for the Northwestern extension. A Lakeland Parkway might keep hopes for the Northwestern extension alive.

Murphy's proposal assumes construction of the Northwestern extension. Whether that assumption is valid will have to be tested by state highway engineers, who made a staff report in favor of dropping Northwestern after M-275 was cancelled.

Murphy's proposal to widen Orchard Lake Road from I-696 to Farmington Hills to Telegraph Road in Pontiac, making that narrow path a state trunkline, also seems to make a great deal of sense.

MURPHY'S DEFT compromise offer should appeal to most persons concerned with Oakland County's lifestyle and environment.

The most die-hard, fanatic supporters of freeways won't like it. Indeed, the Oakland County Road Commission is telling scare stories about how the road work "needed" to replace M-275 will cost more and do more damage to the environment, than the freeway would have. The road commission's list of so-called "alternatives" is nowhere near as clever a public relations gimmick as was its light-rail transit plan.

The most die-hard, fanatic no-growth people will also likely refuse to consider the county executive's compromise offer.

How commercial people who would have benefited from M-275 will react is a question. The freeway would have meant some lucrative commercial developments. Lakeland Parkway, as Murphy envisions it, would not allow for "strip" commercial development.

Whatever the commercial implications, Murphy deserves credit for offering an agenda for serious discussion of Oakland's future. It reminds one of Alastair Cooke's first three rules of American politics: "Compromise, compromise, compromise."

Energy 'crisis'--much room for politics

I believe there is an energy crisis today. I question whether there is an energy shortage.

There is an earth enough natural gas, oil and coal already discovered or identified to last for at least 100 years.

If we continue to use it up at the present rate, we are going to deprive our grandchildren of the way of life we have been accustomed to. We should conserve energy and seriously look for alternative sources.

There is a crisis today because the energy supplies are politically not where we want them to be. Our national leaders do not want us to be put in a position of relying on the Mideast nations who can cut us off if we do not act according to their political wishes. This is a serious problem.

To cure this political problem, the American people, if President Jimmy Carter has his way, will be penalized into conservation because we all know that voluntary conservation can only work on a temporary basis.

Energy is used every day by individuals and businesses all over the country. The president's plan singles out Detroit as the culprit.

The price of gasoline will go up a nickel. We've seen it go up twice that in the last year and it has not reduced consumption.

HE WANTS TO TAX gas-guzzling automobiles, which is what the American people are buying today, to force them into cars that they are staying away from in droves.

The automotive industry contributes eight percent to the gross national product. It's the biggest single industry in our economy. The president's plan will hurt this industry be-

"MOMMY, LOOK WHAT I FOUND! CAN I KEEP IT IF I TAKE CARE OF IT?"



Waste, waste, waste!

A wise man once pointed out that only an overwhelming crisis will make a democracy take rational action.

President Jimmie Carter, to his credit, is trying to prove this false. His argument is that an energy crisis is inevitable and that unless we take action now it surely will overwhelm us later.

His specific proposals are aimed at reducing current use of energy sources which are in limited supply. The proposals are supposed to give the nation breathing room until technology brings on stream other, more plentiful sources of energy, such as coal, the sun and the atom.

He aims to reduce use of gasoline by driving up both its price and that of gas-inefficient cars, slash wasteful use of natural gas by increasing its price, provide incentives for industry and public utilities to convert to other fuels, and cut demand for fuel oil by making it worthwhile for people to insulate their homes better.

MOST OF these proposals make sense because they attack, in ways both concrete and indirect, the real cause of our energy problems: Wastefulness.

As a nation, we waste more resources than any other people in history. Our attitudes toward waste so thoroughly permeate our society that it is not going too far to suggest that wastefulness is virtually a national trait.

You see it in small things such as not turning off the lights as you leave the room or setting the thermostat at 75 rather than 68. You see it in swimming pools that are heated with scarce natural gas and in lawns in the West that are kept green with even scarcer water.

You can see our wastefulness in big things, too. We build buildings with windows which you can't open, thereby requiring energy to run heating, cooling and ventilating systems even when the weather outside is fine. Our economy is geared to produce new products in a never ending stream, many of which can only be sold by convincing people that the old one (which is working perfectly well or can easily be repaired) is somehow out of date.

Everybody can produce examples of the degree to which wastefulness is a national habit.

WHAT BROUGHT our waste habits home to me

Observation Point

by PHILIP H. POWERS



in a very direct way was spending a month in mainland China last year.

China is a poor country; everything is used, nothing thrown out.

When my wife and I returned home, we settled with pleasure back into our ordinary household routine. After two or three days, the big wastebasket in the kitchen was filled up, and so I carried it out to the garbage can. As I watched the stream of rubbish fall into the plastic bag, I suddenly realized that I was watching a stream of incredibly rich waste.

The Chinese would have refilled the glass bottles we were throwing out. They would have smashed the tin cans we were disposing into flat sheet metal and made them into something else. They simply would not have the pretty packages our breakfast cereal came in. Paper towels? The Chinese would have used cloth, washed them when they got dirty, and reused them.

In less than a week, I realized, we were throwing out as rubbish a vast variety of things that a simpler, less wasteful society would have put to good use.

THAT'S called wastefulness.

I don't for a moment advocate that we adopt the Chinese system. The United States is an economically advanced nation and China is not; their economy is one of scarcity and ours is not.

For years, we have gotten into the habit of waste quite simply because things like glass bottles and cans and paper towels and gas and fuel oil were so cheap we could use them and waste them without thinking much about their cost.

Times are changing. The era in which we could use stuff and then convert into waste rubbish is coming to an end.

Carter realizes this, and I hope we all start to realize it, too.



by HANK HOGAN

cause it will up the price on cars people want and lower it on cars people don't want. Who is going to convince them they should now want small cars?

Under the president's rebate plan, the cars which get fewer than 18 miles to a gallon will be taxed. The cars getting more than 18 miles a gallon will get a rebate.

We all know that small foreign cars get the best mileage so our government will star subsidizing the sale of foreign cars. I'm sure workers in metropolitan Detroit who become unemployed will cheer this particular part of the program.

Because it is only a matter of time until we run out of our existing natural energy sources, the real hope for energy in the future is nuclear energy. But some now environmentalists have convinced the president that it is dangerous.

Those of us who have been getting nuclear-powered electricity up north at our cottages for years do not share the president's concern. But then if we really wanted to solve the long-run energy shortage, everyone knows that conservation only delays the inevitable for a few years.

Why then is the president's energy policy based on raising oil prices through tax increases on oil and increased taxes on larger cars?

If he really wanted conservation, he could have ordered rationing and not had to change tax laws to provide for the return of part of the money collected to the taxpayers through tax credits.

After all, this is another loophole in the tax laws, and the president campaigned that he was going to reform the tax laws, not complicate them.

The answer seems to be that the energy program is in fact a tax generator.

According to James Schlesinger, on Face the Nation Sunday, the proceeds of the energy plan will allow us to work on welfare and tax reform.

THE ADDITIONAL planned \$75 billion a year in tax collections, by the mid 1980s, will "mesh together quite conveniently" the energy plan and the president's tax proposals.

The answer is, just as former president Richard Nixon used the Mideast energy crisis to try to take attention away from his Watergate problem, Carter is going to use his energy plan to balance the budget.

This will be all at the expense of our home industry—the auto industry.

Another hunting plot

They're out to keep the city feller from hunting again.

It used to be that rural counties, under the influence of farmers and big landowners, banned Sunday hunting, the effect of which was to cut the city hunter's season by half. Last year state Atty. Gen. Frank Kelley ruled that bans on Sunday hunting couldn't be applied to state-owned land, and so the city hunter got a break.

The latest plot is coming from farmers who want to change the blind-draw system so they can get more antlerless deer permits. They're asking the Michigan Natural Resources Commission to rig the system so that farmers and other landowners can get a bigger proportion of the antlerless permits.

One argument is that in areas where large numbers of applications are received, fewer than 10 per cent of the applicants receive permits. Many owners get sore when city fellers get such permits and they don't, so they close their land to all hunting, or else permit only close friends and relatives to hunt.

Another argument is that on agricultural lands with high deer populations, there is a problem of harvesting enough deer to keep crop damage at acceptable levels.

On their face, the farmers' and landowners' arguments appear to make sense, but the net effect would be to have two sets of rules, with the city hunter's permits set on the grounds of the state's plot.

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