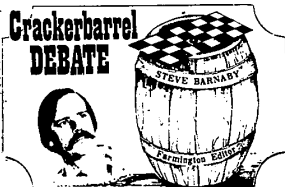


editorial opinion



Where is the leadership?

Leadership is a valuable quality. On the Farmington Hills City Council, it's damn near extinct.

Harsh words, I admit. But it is time to stop kidding ourselves. Since January, the Hills council has wallowed in its own ineptness, unable to make cogent decisions. The likes of Bob McConnell, Fred Lichtman and Joan Dudler are sorely missed.

Much time has been spent by the present council in feeling out each other's political temperatures. Even more disheartening is that the council, in what always proves to be a vain attempt, is trying to satisfy all the people all the time.

You name a significant issue and I'll show you a council which has vacillated and tabled it and adjourned more times than you can count. I'll show you a council which needlessly debates for hours at a stretch and still come away without a decision.

I'll show you a city which has been stalled in its tracks.

TAKE DUST control, for instance. The general feeling among councilmembers is that residents should face the obligation of paying for calcium chloride to keep dust down on unpaved roads.

In previous years, the city paid for it. But money is needed for more essential matters. Of course, many residents are complaining because they are going to get hit with an assessment.

In its typical manner, the council is backing off and straining under the necessity of making a decision. It's not an overwhelming issue, but it is one which demonstrates the council's weakness.

This isn't to say the potential for leadership is nonexistent. But no one has stepped in to fill the void left by previous councilmembers.

Farmington Hills has important challenges facing it. Money is short and needs are many. Tough decisions will have to be made. The council needs to get hold of itself so it can make those crucial decisions.

Transit sense

Eleven years ago, the seven-county Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) was created to consolidate all public and private bus systems into one and to bring to the region some version of rapid transit.

Since then, certain elected politicians have behaved as if they, not SEMTA, were calling the shots, as if SEMTA were their toy.

Only after SEMTA itself seemed to be coming apart at the seams did the politicians come to their senses. Last week, Detroit Mayor Coleman A. Young, whose bull-headed insistence on as many miles of expensive subway as possible for Detroit alone almost wrecked SEMTA, said, "Let's let the experts do their jobs and not hamper them with political pre-demands."

Young, finally, is absolutely right. We hope those suburban politicians who have bull-headedly opposed any subway will rise to the same level. Let SEMTA do its job. If its sophisticated, computerized analyses show the region needs one block, one mile or 20 miles of subway, then that is what should be built.

The facts are that downtown Detroit has traffic and construction problems that may require some subway, but a subway costs 10 times as much per mile as surface rail rapid transit. The "political pre-demands" as Young aptly dubbed them, have caused years of city-suburban poison. Enough. Let SEMTA do its job.



Soccer means continuous action — few timeouts, no delays — and new opportunities for athletes who aren't hulking brutes. (Staff photo)

Soccer, pro and prep, draws new, young crowd

In the old days, a young man aspired to be captain of his high school football team because it was a sign of manhood and there were always many female admirers vying for his attention.

Football, as we know it, is purely an American game, and when people from other countries talk about "football," they really mean soccer.

Soccer has made great strides in our country in the last several years. It's an action game, the rules aren't too complicated, and you don't have to be a big hulk of a brute to play it.

Where several years ago it wasn't even a high school varsity sport, we now have intra-city and inter-city youth soccer leagues, and every year more and more people are playing the game.

Today in some high schools, the captain of the soccer team is a more sought-after position than the captain of the football team.

PROFESSIONAL SOCCER has now come back to Detroit. We had a team a decade ago, but it passed into oblivion because of lack of spectator interest.

The new Detroit Express team opened its home season last Sunday in the Pontiac Silverdome and drew more than 28,000 spectators. Apparently it only takes 15,000 to 18,000 spectators a game to break even, so if the first game is any bellwether of things to come, the team should have a successful future.

For spectators, soccer has a lot of appeal over other professional sports.

The game has two 40-minute halves.

Because there are few timeouts, a regular game doesn't last more than two hours. It is continuous action from the time the starting whistle blows, with no delays between plays.

The soccer field is a little longer and a little wider than a football field, and it takes a darn good athlete to keep running up and down that

Eccentricities

by HANA HOGAN



field for 40 minutes at a crack. There are very few substitutions in professional soccer.

It's not as violent as football, and the players look smaller because they are not wearing all the protective equipment that football players have to wear.

IN THE OPENING game Sunday, the audience was different from the normal pro football crowd. It was made up of families with a heavy representation from the younger set. Because it has not been a sport of the older generation, the kids seem to have a better grasp of the game.

The Express had won their first two games on the road, so you would have expected the spectators to be all hepped up. Instead, they were quite quiet. Those 28,000 persons don't make much of a dent in a huge, 80,000-seat stadium, and the quiet was almost spooky.

An organ played throughout the game, which was distracting, and that also covered up the fans' outbursts. It reminded you of a roller skating rink.

Unfortunately, the home team lost a close battle but fielded a fine defensive team. Let's hope the English striker whom the Express has acquired for the latter part of the season will add that offensive spark that will make their first season a winner.

Detroit is a great sports town, and it deserves to have all professional sports represented here. But new sports survive only when fans support them.

Study sneezing for a safer America

through bifocals



As far as I know, the sneeze has yet to benefit from a philanthropic appropriation for scientific research. However, I hope you agree that it's a subject which merits deep consideration, particularly a study of the sneeze as a traffic hazard.

If you're not a chronic sneezer yourself, or if you're not married to one, the ritual of a resounding series of sneezes may be foreign to you. The real problem is with the person who lets go with a hearty sneeze while behind the wheel of an automobile barreling down the expressway.

MOST PEOPLE, so it is said, close their eyes when they kiss. There's a school of thought which says this allows participants to create a better image of those they would rather be with, but damned if I'll believe it.

All people close their eyes when they sneeze. If you don't think so, try keeping 'em open next time you pop out with one of those explosive exhalations.

This is where the sneeze ties in as a traffic hazard. Scoff if you must, as some police officials do in a chuckling sort of way. But if this study doesn't deserve a federal subsidy (under my direction), what does?

DR. MILES TAYLOR, a clinical professor at Wayne State University's Medical School, told me a few days ago, "There's a half-second or so when a sneezing motorist is almost completely incapacitated."

This, again, is because of that involuntary reflex which causes the eyes to shut.

"If a driver feels a sneeze coming on, he should take some precautionary action," suggested Dr. Taylor, who specializes in nose ailments. His advice is to slow down and grip the wheel firmly, being sure that forward movement is free of obstruction.

Most popular methods of inhibiting a sneeze are by pressing a finger against the upper lip, or rubbing the tip of the nose. I've tried both and at best they only delay the inevitable.

CHARLES WILMOTH, police chief of Garden City, doesn't know Dr. Taylor from second base. Yet Wilmoth told me, "If I anticipate a sneeze while driving, I'll take my foot off the gas, slow down, and get ready to brake."

He admits he never has heard of a sneeze being used as an excuse for an accident, but concedes "it probably has happened."

Rochester Chief Robert Werth had a smile in his voice when he said, "I've heard of plenty of strange situations, but I've never come across that one." The point is, he didn't say it couldn't happen.

Chief Timothy Ford of Plymouth turned scholar, as is his wont, and lost me when he started using words like culpability. After talking about feet per second, time consumed by a sneeze, and what constitutes a voluntary criminal act, he veered to snapping turtles.

It seems that when Tim was chief cop at Gibraltar these guys were driving home from fishing the Detroit River. A snapping turtle in their catch got loose, crawled into the front seat and wanted the

driver for lunch. Yes, there was an accident.

There are more tales from other police authorities about bee stings, distraction in lighting a cigarette, love-making, et cetera. They all are unspoken votes for a congressional study grant.

IF YOU'RE ONE of those who wonders why you get those sneezing attacks shortly after awak-

ening, Dr. Taylor says you probably are afflicted with vasomotor rhinitis. That means there's a swelling in the nose membrane due to a chemical change.

Personally, I have a theory that when snoring ceases, sneezing begins. When I mentioned it, Dr. Taylor himself turned scoffer.

Then he told me how to bring on a sneeze.

Look at a bright light and blink your eyes. That's all. If you feel the urge developing, look at a bright light, blink, and faster than you can say ker-choo, you'll experience the violent expiratory effort desired.

In an era when do-it-yourselfism prevails, it can be suggested that automotive sneezers equip themselves with a kit which would include: a) a light bulb; b) a long extension cord; c) an automated forefinger for lip pressing and nose rubbing.

It's this corner's contribution to the cause of highway safety.



Tim Richard

Teach photography on TV

"Karen, stand up straight. Kevin, look over here. Now smile. Smile."

The kids stood in front of the waterfall in the Florida tourist attraction and squinted into the sun at their camera-toting mother. Shadows dripped from their noses and chins like melted chocolate ice cream. The family had come 1,200 miles from Michigan to have an off-season vacation, and by golly, mom was going to get everything into one snapshot.

The entire scene reminded me of the Listerine case. No, not because the pictures would stink.

In the Listerine case, one bureau or another of our friendly federal government decided the mouthwash manufacturer had gone much too far, over the years, advertising the product as a cold preventive measure. So the bureaucracy sent the company to running corrective advertising—that is, TV commercials admitting the product would have little or no impact on the number of colds one would come down with in a year.

Perhaps the Listerine case will drag out, but the principle is important and could be well applied elsewhere.

PARTICULARLY in cameras. Virtually all TV advertising is aimed at pushing brand names, overcoming sales resistance and showing glorious snapshots that can result.

In one case, the TV commercials lie. They show a simple snapshot camera producing a studio-quality portrait of a child's head. There's no way the camera can produce that kind of closeup unless the snapshotter stands two feet away from the child, and then the picture will be out of focus.

But such out-and-out falsehoods are very rare in TV commercials for the photography industry. What's so genuinely sad about the commercials is that the industry is missing a tremendous opportunity—an opportunity to teach people how to take more interesting, attractive and cherishable pictures.

Consider, especially in the two months prior to Christmas, how many camera commercials you see from Polaroid and Kodak, along with film

commercials from GAF. Now, consider how many devote even a single second to showing you how to take better pictures. Probably none.

The products are good. Modern cameras and films are so easy to use, compared to the products of 20-40 years ago, that it's next to impossible for a person with even the slimmest knowledge to make a technical mistake.

YET HOW MANY persons have ever been told it's ridiculous to pop off a flash cube at a night football or baseball game when you're 100 feet from the event?

How many persons know how to translate one-100th of a second at f/8 to one-50th of a second at f/11?

When has the photography industry ever told the public you get better landscape scenic shots early in the morning or later in the afternoon, when the sun is coming from an angle, than at mid-day when the sun casts harsh shadows from overhead?

How many albums are filled with pictures of squinting kids when a fill-in flash would have provided natural lighting?

When has the industry ever showed people visually you'll be happier with one good shot of a waterfall and one closeup of the kids rather than the kids, the waterfall and half the park in a single shot?

THERE ARE magazines and other printed media which can attack the job. But no medium except television, with its ability to show dozens of visual images in a one-minute commercial, has the opportunity to teach so much about photography so quickly to so many millions.

It's an opportunity the photography industry is wasting.

I don't suppose a federal agency will ever see fit to crack down on the photography industry and require it to spend some time teaching folks to use the ingenious equipment they buy. But a few simple snapshot lessons would enrich the quality of American life far more than corrective commercials about the antiseptic non-qualities of Listerine.

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