

## Consumer mailbag

# Visual pollution all around us

Our guest columnist is Pamela Fruci, a member of Concern, Inc., Detroit's Board of Directors. Ms. Fruci has actively worked on Michigan's billboard issue for several months and can best answer your question on this environmental problem.

I have heard the term "visual pollution" used to describe billboards. I think I agree, but what is being done to stop this form of pollution? Edward R., Detroit

Perhaps Ogden Nash said it best:

"I think that I shall never see  
A billboard lovely as a tree.  
Perhaps unless the billboards fall,  
I'll never see a tree at all."

The gigantic commercial billboards taking over our open space, selling cigarettes, bread, booze, and banking services are certainly visual pollution.

The Department of Transportation admits it issued more permits to erect billboards last year than to remove them.

The culprit is the Highway Advertising Act of 1972, which was to rid the state of non-conforming billboards. However, it was written by the attorney for Eller Advertising. Back then only a small protesting group, a committee called Design — raised any objection.

The bill calls for the removal of illegal signs of those less than 650 feet from the road and those in rural areas. We've paid out \$15 million to remove a billboard, only to have it re-erected elsewhere — a giant checkerboard game. They are legal a mile outside a city or town, so our entrances to towns and cities become billboard alleys. They're made in gigantic proportions so they're visible 650 feet from the roadside.

Last year a state committee steered by Michigan United Conservation Clubs (those that spearheaded the Battle 350) wrote an amendment to the Highway Advertising Act. HB 6343 was intro-

duced to the state legislature in 1978 by Lynn Jondahl. It died in the Committee on Roads and Bridges. It will be re-introduced this legislative year.

Serving on the committee are Helen Miliken (who objects to the billboard alley at the entrance to her hometown of Traverse City) Peter Fletcher, a former chairman of the Highway Commission; a board member of Keep Michigan Beautiful; the Ann Arbor attorney who is chairman of De-sign, and myself.

This amendment would:  
• Eliminate the language of the 1972 Highway Advertising Act that states "... outdoor advertising is an integral part of the marketing function and an established segment of the economy of the state."

• Provide for specific informational panels such as those in use in Iowa, Washington, Oregon, Virginia, and Vermont, erected by the Highway department where businesses can display their logo directing travelers to gas stations and restaurants.

• Prohibit further erection of billboards.

• Authorize citizen suits to obtain removal of illegal billboards.

If you've driven through Virginia you've noticed how much more lovely the landscape is when it's not cluttered with commercial billboards. Support for the Virginia-type informational panels has come from various segments of the state.

AAA's Michigan Living magazine ran an article last March entitled "Highway Signs — Blight or Blessing?" Readers responded 10-1 opposing billboards.

The Travel Bureau favors the informational panels.

The Department of Transportation needs convincing. Write to: Jack E. Morgan, manager, Public Involvement Section, Department of Transportation P.O. Box 30050, Lansing 48909.

## Volunteers

The Oakland County Volunteer Bureau, a program of the Volunteer Action Center of United Community Services, has weekly listings of agencies needing volunteer help. Further information about these and over 200 other agencies may be obtained by calling the Bureau, 642-7272. Any non-profit organization needing volunteer assistance may also call the Bureau.

**SPEAKERS** — Women are needed to help with a new breast cancer education effort being conducted in the Oakland County area by the American Cancer Society. The program, called "Straight Talk," needs volunteers to talk with local women about the importance of early detection of breast cancer. All necessary training is provided.

**PLUS VOLUNTEER** — People Listening, Understanding, Sharing, is the basis for this program with Troy Youth Assistance. Volunteers are matched on a one-to-one basis with young people needing encouragement from a caring adult. After a training period, a volunteer is expected to meet with the child on a weekly basis to offer emotional support, help to develop a feeling of self-worth, and in general, be a friend.

**PROBATIONER'S FRIEND** — Adults, especially men, who are personable, tolerant, and stable in their own lives are needed to serve on a one-to-one basis with probationers of the Oakland County Circuit Court. The purpose of the program is to provide a probationer with a friend who can offer a steady influence, help in obtaining a job or further education, and be available to listen and give advice.

**BLOOD PROGRAM CALLERS** — The American Red Cross in Bloomfield Hills needs volunteers who enjoy talking with people on the telephone to contact previous donors when there are special blood needs for open heart surgery. Hours are flexible. Orientation is provided.

## Home ecs get seminar

Home economist Karen Purdy will present a "Clothes Encounter" fashion show-seminar for the March meeting of Detroit Area Home Economists in Action, scheduled at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 15, in the Grosche Pointe War Memorial.

Her program will cover wardrobe planning and up-dating for the professional featuring: color analysis, Vogue's newest patterns, and Leiter's designer fabrics' spring collection.

Ms. Purdy, a former home economics teacher, is the owner of the Designer's Touch, a creative fashion shop for people who sew or have their things made. It is at 16925 Harper in Detroit.

This meeting is open to the public. Admission of \$3.50 per person.

# You'll be asked for phonogifts

Phonogift, the week-long telephone solicitation drive of the Allied Jewish Campaign-Israel Emergency Fund Women's Division, will begin March 11. Several hundred volunteer workers will participate in the campaign which last year reached more than 7,000 women. Workers still are needed for many shifts through the week.

Contributions to the Allied Jewish Campaign-Israel Emergency Fund support 16 local educational and social welfare institutions plus dozens of other beneficiaries in the U.S. and overseas.

Baylee Franklin of Huntington Woods is Phonogift chairman. Janice Schwarz of Birmingham is associate chairman. Terran Leemis of Southfield is coordinator, and Valerie Indenbaum of Franklin and Marcia Parvov of Southfield are day directors.

Harriet Colman and Julie Gurwin, both of Southfield, are in charge of clerical work and Doris August of Birmingham and Faye Schnaar of Southfield are briefing chairmen. Harriet Rich of Oak Park heads the motor corps; Delores Farber of Southfield is in charge of special handling; and Susan Marwil of Huntington Woods and Judy Natfaly of



Janice Schwarz of Birmingham is associate chairwoman of the Phonogift fundraiser scheduled for March 9-11.

Lathrup Village are post-Phonogift chairmen.

Shelby Tauber of Franklin is Women's Division campaign chairman; Dulcie Rosenfield of Detroit is president.

To volunteer, call Lois H. Brown, division director, at 965-3939.

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