

editorial opinion

Political pot brewing over borderline building

One person's blessing always seems to be another person's curse in this day and age.

Take the case of Farmington residents living in Drakeshire Heights. In the last few weeks, they suddenly realized that their sister city, Farmington Hills, is contemplating the construction of senior citizen and low-income housing in their back yards.

The dream project, hammered out after years of debate and compromise, would be located at the corner of Freedom and Drake roads. Of course, the entire project is at the mercy of the Michigan State Housing Development Authority. So it could be some time before the first shovel of dirt is turned, if ever.

Some folks around town have the false notion that Farmington Hills officials are hiding the project in the southern corner of their municipality to temper the furor of protest. It's the out-of-sight, out-of-mind idea.

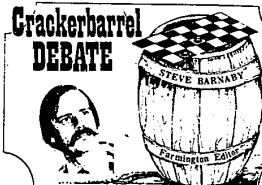
But in reality, the project is slated to take up that spot because Ron Hanaway is making the land available to Farmington Hills as something of a nine-acre gift.

At any rate, Drakeshire Heights residents are planning to besiege the Farmington City Council next week to give its members a bit of a tongue lashing.

City of Farmington legislators are finding themselves in a bind. Never known to be on the best of terms with the Gang of Seven up at the corner of Orchard Lake and 11 Mile Road, the "guys" are being asked to use their "clout" to see that the project is moved elsewhere.

That's tantamount to asking the Shah to go back to Iran and request the Ayatollah to let the ladies wear mini-skirts and lipstick. In short, it just won't work.

In a more serious vein, this incident is a classic



example of residents misunderstanding how local government really works. The folks in Farmington don't have a thing to say about what goes on in Farmington Hills — and neither do that city's leaders.

Farmington Hills could build a 70-story hotel on that property if they saw fit. But for some reason, some Farmington residents have the mistaken notion that the "Farmington" in Farmington Hills makes the two municipalities related in a way which they aren't. City of Farmington folks could have had a "say" in the decision. But they blew their chance earlier in this decade when they rejected consolidation with what was then Farmington Township. Now Farmington is paying the price.

The township went on to incorporate as the city of Farmington Hills. I always thought it should have given itself an entirely different name, like Sparta or Des Moines. Then everybody would know where they live.

On the other hand, the flap is significant because the two municipalities do have many things in common.

Consolidation, anyone?

Eccentricities

by HENRY M. HOGAN, JR.



Shopping: Boy in a big jungle

My wife sent me into a local supermarket one Sunday to buy some red wine vinegar with tarra-

gon.

Once inside, I was like a little boy in a big jungle. I was faced with many paths but didn't see a little rack with road maps anywhere.

Before striking out into the unknown, I tested several little wire carts which were clustered around the door and selected one in which all four wheels rolled in a single direction. I then stepped out into traffic.

In the first aisle, there were three carts parked side by side, which is quite a feat, considering that it is usually hard for two carts to pass. The operators of these carts continued their conversations and didn't let me disturb them. I finally excused myself and pushed through.

I SEARCHED and searched for the vinegar and finally asked a young gentleman for directions. While there are signs over every aisle indicating the major items displayed, they don't help if you want one insignificant item.

Also, I was to learn that items are stacked by usage, like tomato sauce with spaghetti, but that regular vinegar is stacked in a different place from specialty vinegars.

I finally found the item, made my way back to the checkout counter and waited patiently in line. There were two unattended carts in line ahead of me, each of which was half-full of goodies. Every so often, a woman with her arms full of groceries would run up to one of the carts and drop her cargo.

The checkout clerk was waiting, but No. 1 cart was still being filled. I then understood why the wheels of the cart didn't need to work.

If you know your way around, you park your cart at the checkout stand then proceed on foot to get your groceries. It saves the time of having to wait in line later.

The store provided a speedy checkout counter if you had six items or less. I had only one small one. Unfortunately, the line at this counter was three times longer than any other line, so you didn't save any time.

I also noticed that the majority of people in that line didn't count to see if they had only six items or less.

FINALLY IT WAS my turn, and the checkout clerk looked at me very oddly. I knew I was an outsider because I didn't have any of those little coupons you rip out of the newspapers.

I paid for my little bottle of vinegar, and she gave me not only change but also some of those little stamps which the kids paste on the car windows before you get home.

I got back to the car and my spouse said, "Only one bottle?"

With that I turned around and headed back into the jungle.

As I entered, I saw women parking their carts in the lane for the checkout counter, but I was helpless. When you buy only one item, there is nothing to park at the counter.

By the time the experience was over a second time, I understood why my spouse shops only once a week.



Everyone has a target

Poles tell Warsaw jokes

Q. How many Californians does it take to install a new light bulb?

A. Seven. One to handle the tight bulb and six to share the experience.

Now that's what I call a good ethnic joke. It pokes on someone besides the Poles, for one thing. For another, it is a joke that can be told about only one group — Californians, known for a half-century for psycho-religious cults.

This is not to defend ethnic jokes. Nine-tenths are terrible — more ethnic than joke, and really "dumb" jokes. If you can remember the last six Polish or Irish jokes you heard, try dropping the name of one ethnic group and inserting another.

A few decades back, many of our so-called ethnic jokes were told as "moron" or "little moron" jokes. By re-telling them as ethnic jokes, we've gone a couple of steps backward.

THERE'S A CULTURE shock coming to metropolitan Detroit from a place like Kalamazoo. What used to be in Kalamazoo as a Dutch joke becomes a Polish joke here.

The big difference is that many Polish-Americans enjoy Polish jokes, but few Dutch-Americans enjoy Dutch jokes. Perhaps one could make an ethnic joke out of that.

Every area of the state and world has its own ethnic jokes. In St. Joseph, they tell German jokes. And do you know what they tell in the upper peninsula?

Q. What's yellow and black and full of pins?

A. The Hancock school bus. (It's a pun: fins sounds like Finns. Get it?)

Before we roam too far afield, you might be curious about what kind of joke Poles in Finland tell. One source says they tell Russian jokes. A friend who speaks the language, however, says they actually tell Warsaw jokes.

Warsaw? Yes, for a reason. Way back when, the Russian capital was elsewhere, maybe Cracow. A particular king enjoyed vacationing in the rustic at-



Tim Richard

mosphere of Warsaw. Gradually, he moved his court there, the equivalent of moving the capital of Michigan from Lansing to Mancelona. The courtiers looked down their noses at the local folks, and thus was born the Warsaw joke.

MY BROTHER AL settled in Montana in the late 1960s and reports they tell North Dakota jokes.

A North Dakotan looking for work landed in Montana. He needed a place to live, so a farmer rented him the basement of an out-house. The North Dakotan liked it so much, he wrote home and invited his brother to move in with him.

Al says that really cracks them-up in the pool rooms in Montana. Al cannot be contradicted because he is the family movie star. He appears behind Clint Eastwood's cue stick in the pool room crowd of "Thunderbolt and Lightfoot."

S. Rick Czach, writing in the Michigan Journalist, the J-Department publication at the University of Michigan, tells what they tell in countries around the world.

Brazilians are considered pompous and arrogant by the Argentinians. In turn, the Brazilians stick it to the Portuguese, their original colonizers.

In Europe, Czech reports, there is a whole new breed of ethnic jokes about visiting Saudi Arabians and their petrodollars.

Russians have two targets: their own government officials and American cowboys. Russian humor portrays our cowboys as bloodthirsty, sex-starved rowdies.

The French tell Belgian jokes, and the Japanese tell Korean jokes, Czech writes.

CANADIANS TELL jokes about people from Newfoundland, or "Newfies." I've even heard references to Newfie jokes on the CBC.

Besides "moron" type ethnic jokes, there is another category that might be called "money" jokes. The butt is an ethnic group noted for its tightness.

I once heard a banker from Virginia crack up an audience of Kalamazoo businessmen with a Scotch joke. I later heard the same joke passed off as a Polish joke, but it was no good. Money jokes work best with Dutch, Scotch, Jews, Greeks and Armenians, and maybe Chinese.

This particular joke was about two men and their wager to see which could make a dime go further in the course of a week. You could tell it anywhere in the world, but be careful which ethnic group wins the bet and which one loses.



John Reddy

Hospital costs: No one is God

The cost of medical care is a subject of high visibility and has been for some time. It's a complex issue.

For years, much of the dirty work in hospitals was done by ward attendants, custodians, nurses aides and nurses at relatively low rates of pay. Higher minimum wages and unionization of medical workers have contributed to some of the accelerated costs.

But when you're sick, you want the best care these people can provide, and that often requires superhuman feats. When you need them, they're worth every penny and more.

Then there are the technicians, the medical specialists — the doctors. When you're sick, you want not only their best skills and knowledge but their loving care and understanding. You want them generally to do what most often only God can do. At its best, that means keeping you alive.

MAYBE THERE aren't enough physicians and specialists.

Perhaps medical schools are too strict, require too much education, are too exclusive in saying who shall be admitted.

Maybe the cost of education for would-be medical specialists is too high and should be paid for by everyone through taxes.

Then there are the pharmaceutical houses, the manufacturers of exotic testing equipment and medical tools. They spend a lot of money on engineers to produce gadgets for medical experts to use when they deal with our bodies.

And who would not want any member of the medical profession who is going to lay hands on us not to have the best tools and medicines?

AH, THEN THERE are the lawyers.

There's a cadre of paramedical lawyers who practice medicine through legal briefs. Isn't it too bad doctors are human? And that humans do make mistakes?

The men and women of the jury? It's a lot easier for them to identify with the patient than for them to understand medicine.

So, to prepare for the eventual charges that they are not God and have made mistakes, doctors are using ever more machinery to make tests. Tests require more expensively trained experts.

Then there are insurance companies. While they may try to force policing of the doctors, it's easier to raise premiums.

THEN THERE ARE medical associations and hospital boards of directors.

What do they do? Well, in my opinion, this is a group of people who don't do enough in their roles as watchdogs and policy setters.

The public would be a great deal more sympathetic if medical associations would throw out those in their professions who display general disregard for their standards.

Hospital directors, too, are in a position to ask a good many more hard-nosed questions of their administrators and professional supervisors. Is every new piece of equipment and each new drug that much more beneficial, considering costs?

Somewhere down the road, we're all going to have to accept the fact that we can't live forever or that we can't always expect to feel well. We may even have to accept the fact the doctor isn't a miracle worker or God.

What's the cost of that?

Have you heard?

From their highs of \$2.50 to \$3 a pound, coffee prices have now dropped below \$2, and in some cases close to \$1.80. The decrease is 20 to 30 percent. Apparently, the folks who run our vending machines haven't heard the word and have kept prices at their peaks. We'll have to leave the vendors a little note: Cut those coffee prices!

A Division of
Suburban Communications Corporation

Philip H. Power
Chairman of the Board
(on leave of absence)

Richard D. Agnition
President
Chief Executive Officer

Farmington Observer

"Successor of the Farmington Enterprise"

Steve Barnaby

Editor

2352 Farmington Rd.

Farmington, MI 48024

(313) 477-5450

John Reddy, General Mgr.

Thomas A. Riordan, Executive Editor

George J. Hagan, Advertising Director, Fred J. Wright, Circulation Director