

When life gives you lemons, make lemonade

When life gives you lemons, make lemonade, the adage tells us.

In the Farmington area, merchants and consumers have had more than their taste of the sour fruit. Like the rest of Michigan, we are feeling the traumatic effects of an economy gone awry.

Businesses are scrambling in all directions just to keep their doors open. Recently, Borman Foods Inc., owner of Farmer Jack, announced it will close its downtown Farmington location.

The public outcry protesting the move is both futile and misguided.

Already the Farmington planning commission has recommended to City Council that land necessary to relocate the supermarket be rezoned at Nine Mile and Farmington — certainly a better option than Farmer Jack's moving out altogether.

On May 3, the City Council will conduct a public

hearing on the matter. And while residents are urged to attend and speak their minds, protesters should realize the move is inevitable and could be a positive event.

In the last decade, the Farmington area has changed dramatically. No longer can it be looked upon as a semirural, bedroom community. In a few years, both Farmington and Farmington Hills will be "full up." In these transition years, movement and change are healthy.

DOWNTOWN Farmington will survive the Farmer Jack move. Those who say the move would improve the consumer drawing power to the general mercantile area may very well be correct.

As downtown Farmington now stands, it is congested and has far too little parking space. It needs some breathing room. Ideally, the present Farmer

Jack would be suitable as property for a multi-story parking structure.

Maybe then, shoppers would be encouraged to come back downtown to a more accessible and convenient shopping area, unafraid of being mowed down by an irate driver.

Surprisingly, in a community built and maintained by those who hold strong beliefs in the free enterprise system, one of the main objections to the Farmer Jack move is the fear of competition.

Farmington area merchants should avoid the pitfall which has consumed the national economy. In our halcyon days, when we controlled the world market, we became used to shoddy products and the same kind of service to go along with it.

But now American businesses fear the Japanese, fear the Germans, fear the Arabs. They are being

forced to compete. The transition is difficult, for sure.

The transition will also be difficult in the Farmington area as the business climate shifts. Local merchants will have to think twice before they stock a price tag on a product. They are going to have to fight to maintain their clientele.

THE DAY OF the polite sales clerk may yet rejoin us. Sales may be really just that rather than just a seasonal sign on the window to attract customers.

Downtown Farmington merchants may have to rethink their business strategy. A fresh outlook may have to be conceived to keep in business.

But let it be. It can only bring an improved marketplace.

Steve Barnaby
Farmington editor.



Tim Richard

Exec seeks more muscle for the office

Oakland voters in 1974 chose to bring Michigan's most progressive county under the so-called "unified government" plan. They opted for Plan A calling for an elected county executive and they chose Daniel T. Murphy to fill the post.

The voters then went home, but Dan Murphy's work had just begun.

And it is continuing. Even after eight years, Oakland's county administration is less than unified.

That's not Murphy's fault. Every effort he has made to carry out the voters' mandate has been fought tooth and nail, usually by the opposition party but sometimes by his fellow Republicans.

THE CHIEF complaint, in the words of one commissioner, is that Murphy "swells with power."

I have thought about that long and hard. It's true that Murphy is seeking to bring more functions under his wing. Does that mean he is on a power trip?

Well, I have interviewed Murphy in his office, caught up with him for corridor conversations, grilled him with other newsmen before the unblinking TV camera eye, watched him in debate, heard his speeches and sat with him at table.

Whatever the setting, Murphy says the same thing. You never get one message in a whispered conversation and another in the public address.

The issue shouldn't be whether Murphy is personally seeking power. The issue should be whether all administrative functions should be unified under a single, visible, elected executive officer willing and able to answer to the public.

I have read every criticism of Murphy I can find and listened to every detail of every speech against him anyone wanted to make. Frankly, every single move he has made has been to enhance the office and carry out the voters' logical mandate, not to gratify his own ego.

MURPHY IS correct when he seeks for the county executive's office:

- Elimination of the board of institutions, formerly a board of commissioners' appointment. An administrator should run buildings, not a committee.

- Control of the county medical care facility.
- A seat on the governing board of the parks and recreation department.
- A seat on the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments General Assembly and Executive Committee.

Most cities, including Detroit, are represented by the chief executive. He would be silly to have a seven-county planning authority without the voice of the top administrator of a unit of government with one million constituents.

Jurisdiction over Children's Village. A probate court has no business trying to administer such a facility. The governor, not the Supreme Court, runs the state prisons. The mayor, not the local court, runs Dehoco. The county executive should run Children's Village.

Consolidation of the drain office and the executive's public works department. And to be entirely logical, the road commission's administrative functions belong under the county executive, too.

IT'S IMPORTANT that Murphy win these battles for two reasons:

First, although his options are open, Murphy will probably never seek higher office. Future Oakland County executives may be ambitious for higher office. It's better that Murphy, and not his successors, win these jurisdictional battles.

Second, Wayne County is about to elect an executive. That executive's job, though difficult, will be easier if the Oakland executive can break ground for him.

There is a difference between the man and the office. Richard Nixon didn't know the difference. Dan Murphy does.



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Modern library is a busy, fun place

Special "weeks" are proclaimed with such regularity that most newspapers cannot keep up. Hardly a day goes by that a newspaper office does not receive a call asking for a reporter to cover the signing of a proclamation naming this Such-and-Such Week.

Because of the many requests, most have to be ignored.

Usually, several "weeks" are going on simultaneously. For instance, this is Secretaries, Remember the Holocaust, Bike Safety, National Volunteers, Private Property and National Library weeks.

I'M GOING to make an exception today for National Library Week.

Maybe it's because I make my livelihood with the written word, but I've always had a soft spot in my heart for libraries.

I found out about National Library Week last weekend while visiting my suburban library. I was accompanied by my 4-year-old daughter and my father. That in itself says something about libraries. What other activity could attract three generations at the same time?

Libraries have changed dramatically in the past few years. They are exciting places to visit. Sometimes, I think maybe they have become too



Nick Sharkey

much fun. At my library, there are so many people talking that at times it's difficult to concentrate on reading. High school students seem to use it as a place to congregate and meet their friends.

Maybe that's not all bad. It's better than the stodgy image of dusty books and old maid librarians.

Modern libraries are total information centers. A visitor will find cassette tapes, microfilms, magazines, newspapers and art exhibitions next to shelves of books.

Important papers can be copied. Reading clubs are designed for children. Story hours attract the toddlers. Movies and records can be borrowed. In some libraries, art works can be rented.

IT'S EASY to trace my life through memories of libraries. I can still remember looking at books at a

small, neighborhood branch library before I could read.

I'll never forget the day I was old enough to get my first library card. My younger days were filled with borrowing sports and Hardy Boys books from the library. In high school I received help from friendly librarians in working on those dreaded term papers.

The favorite bar near my college campus was called The Library. More than one collegian comforted his parents by telling them he was spending all his time at the library.

Later I returned to graduate school after adding a family. Unable to find a quiet place at home, I turned to the library.

EVEN IN TODAY'S era of tax revolt, few people begrudge the money spent on municipal libraries. There's not a better value for the tax dollar.

Finally, I love libraries because they're continuing to be called "libraries." School bureaucrats, with their love of confusing jargon, now call libraries "learning resource centers." It's reassuring to know that the functions of a library can be dramatically expanded, but the name can be retained.

This week, a lifelong friend of mine will be honored. Visit your local library and you may find a new friend.

Auto execs pull a fast one on salaries

You can bet your bottom dollar (if you have one left) that a lot of auto workers feel like chumps this week.

They woke up Saturday to learn that at least one auto worker marches to the tune of a different drummer when it comes to wages.

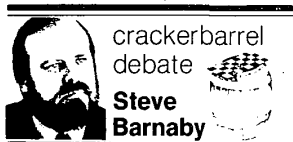
After all the patriotic outcries imploring workers to grant wage concessions, General Motors announced its chairman was paid \$475,000 last year — an 18.8-percent increase over the previous auto fiscal fiscal year.

With all the courage of a yellow-bellied polecat and slyness of a fox, GM waited until after the pretty wage concession package with the UAW was signed, sealed and delivered by none other than UAW President Douglas Fraser.

What a disgrace. The photograph in the Saturday editions tells it all. There stands Fraser shaking hands with none other than a smiling GM Chairman Roger Smith, who looks like the mouse who got away with the cheese.

But it turns out Smith got away with a lot more than the cheese. His personal aggrandizement goes far beyond an 18.8-percent raise. In 1980, as an executive vice president, Smith was paid a paltry \$275,000. In total he has reaped a hefty \$200,000 raise.

AS THE WORLD looks on, good old-fashioned



crackerbarrel debate
Steve Barnaby

American greed wins out. So much for all this baloney about labor and management working together for the benefit of the American economy.

Good old Rog isn't the only fellow who has chosen to fatten his personal bankroll lately. GM President James McDonald made \$275,000 in 1980 as an executive vice president. Last year he was paid \$411,250, or 17.5 percent more than predecessor Pete Estes.

The honor roll continues. Ford Chairman Philip Caldwell settled for an 8-percent increase — from \$416,790 to \$450,240. Ford President Donald Peterson made \$324,205 in 1980 and \$362,678 in 1981 — an 11.9-percent increase.

Suddenly those 48 percent of GM UAW workers who voted against wage concessions look like they were trying to tell us something.

The real culprits in this whole ruse have to be the UAW leadership. The American auto workers have come to expect such conduct from their corporate leaders.

It's difficult to believe that the likes of Fraser didn't know about these disproportionate executive wage increases before he signed that contract with GM. And if he didn't, he should have known.

Certainly it's true that if all the auto executives gave up all their wages, little would be accomplished in making the American auto industry profitable again.

BUT SOMETHING can be said for the value of symbolism — be it negative or positive.

Certainly Smith and his buddies would have been able to pay the gas and electricity last year without raises.

Rather than strengthening the bond between labor and management, this year's breed of auto executive has reinforced the notion that a double standard continues to exist.

And as long as the fires of suspicion exists, fanned by the executives themselves, this country will be unable to unite and compete profitably in the world market.