

12A(F)

Changing festival takes more than griping

Seems time is well past due for Farmington to tailor itself for a new festival approach.

The issue was brought into focus recently when a group of business people in the downtown area signed a petition objecting to the mid-summer event as a honky-tonk event which downgraded the area.

Well now, honky tonk is a tad strong. But the petition does remind us that for the past five or six years discontent has surrounded an event which is supposed to add pride and bring recognition to this community.

But the ire cast at the festival really is misdirected. The two-decade-old event is a symptom rather than a disease.

The Festival, you see, just hasn't changed with the times. In short, the Farmington/Farmington Hills community is growing so rapidly that a community celebration which seemed so attractive a few years back has become the ugly duckling.

LIKE MANY other communities, the Farmington area has fallen prey to urban sprawl and this area has done little to adapt or change.

Twenty years ago when the Festival concept was born, Farmington was a small town surrounded by a mostly rural township. The city of Detroit, seemed a long way away.

The intersection of Grand River and Farmington was the focal point of activity.

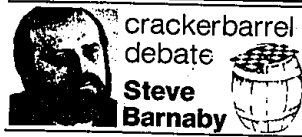
But all that has changed. Where once horses grazed, subdivisions now flourish. Where corn was harvested, profits now are reaped in more shopping malls than most persons could have imagined in 1963.

What used to be known as the downtown Farmington area has become just another mall among many. And many of those malls are more convenient and aesthetically pleasing to the contemporary consumer.

Those who assume the Festival has changed are slightly off the mark. It is Farmington which has changed. And what looked bright and exciting 10 or 15 years ago, now looks tarnished and old.

And some of that old and tarnished includes attitudes as well as buildings and festivals.

A fair person can hardly blame this year's committee which, almost to a person, was composed of



crackerbarrel debate
Steve Barnaby

rookies who signed up at the last minute to ensure that the event would take place.

AT LEAST they tried. Anyone, you know, can volunteer for the committee. But only a few did. Most of these were persons who had absolutely nothing to gain monetarily by seeing a Festival, good, bad or indifferent, take place.

But the dissenters do force us to look closer at the community.

While many of us cherish fond memories of Festivals past and the way Farmington used to be, it is time to rethink the entire event and our attitudes about this area.

Simply abandoning the Festival without an alternative summer event would be a mistake. While Farmington/Farmington Hills languishes in the summer sun, other communities will prosper from their vacation activities.

Although some persons may think otherwise, to prosper, the Farmington area needs to maintain an image as something more than a community of streets cluttered with automobiles, look-alike subdivisions, malls and parking lots.

Being suburban is one thing, being dull is quite another.

Image and atmosphere count in bringing in new residents, businesses and consumers. We know that the Farmington area is just as fine as Birmingham or Plymouth. But compare their image to that of the Farmington area's Birmingham-chic, Plymouth-quiet and Farmington??

Well, that's up to those of us who work and live here to tell the Farmington story. It's up to us to work together to develop and maintain an image and character and to let the rest of the metro area know.

Maybe then we can find a festival that fits.

'Cockeyed archer' hits bankers where it hurts

IN POLITICS there's a technique known as the "cockeyed archer." The activist appears to be aiming at one target while actually shooting at another. Jeanne Paluzzi, Livonia businesswoman, demonstrated the technique marvelously when testifying to a state Senate committee in favor of Gov. James J. Blanchard's proposal for a "Michigan Strategic Fund" to aid fledgling firms.

Actually, Paluzzi, speaking for the Michigan chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners, was shooting at the banking industry. She drew blood.

HER TESTIMONY contained five war stories, all gleaned from the women business operators' network:

- "We can't include your inventory in figuring out the loan package. Cosmetics are perishables," a banker told one applicant.
- "I got a loan for a 'vacation.' The bank wouldn't loan anything for purchasing the house for investment."

• "The commercial loan officer just put my expensively and CPA-prepared package in a drawer and said he wouldn't look at it until I brought in my husband. He didn't even ask if I were married."

• "My accountant was asked all the questions, as if I weren't there. My accountant would turn to me, ask the question, and I would answer looking at the bank manager. The 'interpretation' services continued until I terminated the interview — and the entire relationship."

• "Continuous remarks that were either snide or sexually provocative made me pull my personal and business accounts. My husband pulled his, too."

THERE WERE spokesmen for the Michigan Association of Bankers and a couple of the big bank holding companies at the hearing. I waited for them to react.

Nothing. Not a word. Their competence to manage our money had been publicly challenged, and they didn't have a word of response.

The gist of the banking industry's testimony was



Tim Richard

that all the good loans are being made, and anything they turn down can't be very good.

It reminded me of the 19th century Oriental potentate who was visited by an American trading ship. The Oriental potentate told them to go away, saying, "We already have every product useful to mankind, and anything you have can't be very useful."

The bankers' attitude is kind of a financial version of the doctrine of moral infallibility, and a faithful believer will stay in her place.

WHAT CAUSES such an attitude? Let me tell you the story of the time I sought a response from a major bank to one of the attorney general's fulminations against branch banking. Referred to the appropriate vice president, I set up an interview and drove out to Bloomfield Hills to talk to him.

Asked the question, the VP stared blankly and intoned, "We will give the matter full consideration."

What did that mean? "We will study all the options," he said with another blank stare.

What are the options? What are the major three or four options? Who are "we"? How long will it take? Is a court case possible?

The bank VP stared and intoned again, "We will give the matter full consideration."

And then it dawned on me: These chaps are neither conservative, sexist nor archaic in their views. They are just plain stupid. They don't respond simply because they don't know what to say.

Faced with challenges and opportunities, they stare dutifully ahead and wait for the husband to come in.



OBSERVER AND ECCENTRIC NEWSPAPERS

Flight from Detroit? It isn't true

PERHAPS IT always was a myth. But at one time an image existed of suburbanites running away from the city. They erected imaginary barriers at Eight Mile and Telegraph roads.

If that was ever true, it is not today. Suburbanites no longer confine their efforts to their hometowns.

An example is the "Keep the Doors Open" drive designed to head off the closing of 14 Detroit branch libraries. Two Birmingham couples, Alicia and Jere Gillette and Carrie and Ed Proctor, have launched a campaign to raise money in the suburbs to keep Detroit libraries open.

"There should be a bond between city and the suburbs," Alicia Gillette said. "A library is just one of those wonderful things that shouldn't go down the drain."

The Birmingham couples spent part of the Labor Day weekend addressing 600 letters to their suburban friends asking for their help.

In the letter they stated, "As metropolitan Detroiters, we are convinced that 'stacks' of suburban dollars can have a great impact in restoring the Detroit Public Library system to its rightful place as the finest in the country."

THE STORY OF the plight of the Detroit libraries is well known. Basically, in June library officials decided to close 14 of the system's 21 branches July 18. The move was required to make up a \$1.07-million library deficit.

At that time the "Keep the Doors Open" committee was started. It consists of more than 20 Detroit-area community organizations and volunteer groups. The Gillettes and Proctors have begun the



Nick Sharkey

suburban chapter of the group.

Its goal is to raise \$1 million by Saturday, Oct. 1. Library officials have agreed to hold off on closing the libraries until that time.

Although the campaign is off to a slow start — only about \$40,000 had been pledged earlier this week — the suburban couples collected \$1,040 in the first three days of mail returns.

"I'm so proud of my friends and the way they have rallied behind this campaign," Alicia Gillette said earlier this week. "They really have shown that they care about people living in Detroit."

WHILE THIS campaign is going on, other suburbanites are working to save the annual Detroit Thanksgiving Day parade last winter.

Because of declining corporate involvement, a decision was made to cancel the parade last winter. In marched the wife of the governor, Paula Blanchard. Soon a board was formed with strong suburban participation.

"As far as I know the parade will be held," said the board's Carol Gels of Troy earlier this week.

Other suburbanites on the board are Tom Adams (Bloomfield Hills), Jeanne Findlater (Southfield), Walter McCarthy (Bloomfield Hills), Sara Power (Ann Arbor), Alan Schwartz (Bloomfield Hills) and Roger Smith (Bloomfield Hills).

"As a mother, I stand with my children in the cold every Thanksgiving morning and watch the parade," Gels said. "I took around I see other suburban friends all around me."

"I'm a firm believer in city-suburb cooperation. When you learn to work together, both benefit."

Alicia Gillette explained the difference between city and suburbs. "The new addition to the Birmingham library brought many complaints about the design of new glass doors," Gillette said.

"We should be thankful our library doors are open and share with those not as fortunate."

Bad judge proves to be an exception

THE CONVICTIONS of District Judge Evan Callanan of Westland and his attorney son for fixing court cases and defrauding by mail was one of those cases which helps reinforce the suspicion in some people's minds that the legal system is rife with charlatans, schemers, profiteers and crooks.

I think that the case, because it is such an exception, demonstrates how well off the system of justice is in our particular corner of the globe.

Except for a few memorable failures — a federal bankruptcy judge who awarded excessive fees to a lawyer friend, another District Judge in Madison Heights and former high court judge (and former governor) John Swainson — it is difficult to recall an instance of proven impropriety or profiteering involving a state judge.

Ever since the state eliminated justices of the peace and converted the lower courts into district courts under the aegis of the state, our district courts have served the public exceedingly well.

AND CIRCUIT courts in Oakland and Wayne County have operated well under the strain of an ever-increasing workload prompted by an explosion of lawyers, lawsuits and record judgments.

While critics may contend that there have been many instances of ineptness and poor legal reasoning, there seems to be little doubt that they generally have judges of high moral and intellectual principles. And generally the attorneys who aspire to become judges are those who have a real love for the law and a desire to see that the legal system is run fairly, effectively and judiciously.

Those who want the big dollar and the fast track tend to avoid the bench, or resign if they become too



Bob Wisler

dissatisfied comparing their salary with the fees of many of the sleek-suited attorneys who appear before them.

JUDGES now make in the neighborhood of \$60,000, which is a reasonable sum but not in the same stratum of many attorneys.

It was suggested to me after Callanan's conviction that he was not guilty of some of the light sentences in return for bribes — but may have been guilty of taking advantage of his judgeship to pick up some sorely needed pocket money. His \$60,000 salary was inadequate to maintain a judge in proper style, a man about town alleged to me.

"A judge has to have a certain standard of living, he has to spend the kind of money that is expected," the man explained.

His theory has it that Callanan meted out the same sentences he would have had he not received any money but took the cash under the presumption that the defendants didn't really need it.

IN THE END, it is the public which is most responsible for seeing to it that only the most qualified candidates seek and are elected to judicial office. The public's interest may well determine whether marginal candidates need apply.

Too often, voters shows little concern about judicial candidates and tend to vote for the "name" candidate — often a name that is familiar sounding, even if the candidate's credentials and reputation are unknown.

There is a suspicion that the people who put Callanan into office were more impressed with Callanan's name and campaign than with his record, which contains a previous indictment in the '60s for activities which allegedly took place while Callanan was serving as Garden City's city attorney.