

# Opinion

Robert Sklar editor/477-5450  
Kathleen Moran assistant managing editor

33203 Grand River Ave./Farmington, MI 48024

Philip Power chairman of the board  
Richard Aginlan president  
Dick Isham general manager  
Steve Barnaby managing editor  
Fred Wright circulation director

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## Road woes — a major concern

**L**ET'S FORGET extending Northwestern Highway and get on with widening, paving and improving already existing roads in West Bloomfield and Farmington Hills.

Lack of widespread support and government funding has all but doomed any chance of extending Northwestern Highway from Orchard Lake Road to Maple Road.

After all the provincial attitudes, government studies and political haggling that have dogged such an extension, it was encouraging to see an inter-governmental meeting of the minds April 9 in Farmington Hills City Hall.

That information-sharing was a good example of democracy in action. But it could end up an exercise in futility.

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months, it's not schools, office buildings, shopping centers or new development ordinances. It's road and traffic congestion.

AT THE END of last week's exchange, West Bloomfield Township Supervisor John Doherty said he felt a smaller committee should be established to prepare specific recommendations for road improvements.

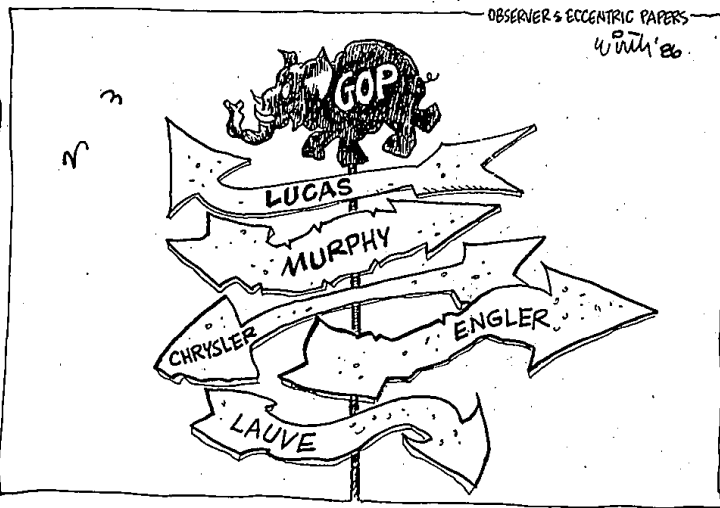
Quickly lending his support, Farmington Hills Mayor Joe Alkateeb challenged Gov. Blanchard to take a hard look at the state's road woes in general and Oakland County's in particular by running for re-election this year on a platform of roads, roads, roads.

Whatever alternatives to extending Northwestern are pursued, the accident should be on "a unified plan, a unified voice," as Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick aptly put it.

It's not surprising so much interest has been directed to widening Northwestern, 14 Mile, Haggerty and I-396, boulevarding Maple, completing the paving of Halsted, Drake and Farmington Road, and adding I-696 interchanges near Haggerty, Drake and Inkster — all realistic alternatives to extending Northwestern provided there's sufficient right-of-way.

The burden is now on the intergovernmental coalition to encourage viewpoints, sort out concerns, chart priorities and identify funding before the 14 Mile Road-Orchard Lake Road intersection turns into Oakland County's biggest — and most-volatile — parking lot.

— Observer & Eccentric Newspapers



## GOP race: no substance

THE REPUBLICAN gubernatorial primary is like a weathervane with five arrows pointing in five different directions.

It's not that the candidates disagree. It's that they talk about different things. In part, that's because people running the forums at which they speak let them get away with it. Three local examples come to mind.

The Troy Chamber of Commerce set up a panel with only the first three announced candidates. Two didn't get to answer the questions. (Only by reading this newspaper on March 17 could you compare the views of all five.)

The Republican Forum, meeting in Westland two weeks later, gave different questions to different candidates. A serious voter couldn't compare their views.

At a Bloomfield Township forum, the five candidates got 10 minutes apiece — an hour in all — to repeat their canned speeches. That left time for only two questions from the audience. Chances to compare their answers were almost nil.

THE HOTTEST issue in Lansing for the last year has been soaring liability insurance rates due to a glut of law-



Tim Richard

suits. Central question is whether to cap jury awards for pain and suffering at \$250,000. Where do the Republican candidates stand?

Nowhere, in Bill Lucas' case. The Wayne County executive twice has been asked and couldn't answer. Ironically, this most evasive man faults Gov. James Blanchard for lack of "leadership."

Dick Chrysler, an auto customizer without a day of governmental experience, apparently failed to understand the issue and talked about a totally different issue, essential auto insurance.

Dan Murphy, the Oakland County executive, and state Rep. Colleen Engler had answers. They're for a cap. Well informed, those two.

YOU'VE HEARD of "one issue" candidates. How about a "half-issue" candidate?

John Lauve, the GM engineer, gained some name recognition with a futile, three-year attempt to recall Blanchard on the income tax issue. On a recent TV program, I asked Lauve about property tax rebates — a billion-dollar budget item. He was stumped.

We pay \$4 billion in state income taxes and \$5 billion in property taxes. Part of one tax (income) is used to reduce the burden of the other (property). It seems to me a candidate should be prepared either to defend it or suggest improvements.

ISSUES ABOUND. Recently our legislators raised hunting and fishing licenses 32-50 percent. Non-residents start paying immediately, but residents don't pay until after the 1986 election.

Are Our Leaders going to play a game of divide-and-conquer, raising revenues from drinkers one month, hotel users another month, bank deposits a third month — so that the entire electorate won't get sore simultaneously?

What do the candidates think about toxic waste disposal?

The sooner audiences get tough with the candidates, the sooner we'll get beyond glitzy images and be able to pick the best chief executive.

## Community call a worthy cause

DO YOU know of a Farmington-area youth who has volunteered time and energy to aid an individual, an organization or the community without thought of personal reward?

Farmington Youth Assistance is looking for good-hearted students to honor at its first youth recognition breakfast in May. Nominees must be Farmington-area residents in grades six through 12 in a public, private or parochial school. Youths, adults or groups can submit nominations.

Examples of voluntary service include personal acts of heroism, hospital or nursing home work, beautification activities, school service projects or church youth projects.

Nomination forms are available by calling the youth assistance office at 176-3840. The youth recognition breakfast committee will screen all nominations; its judgment is final.

ANSWERING THIS community call would be a public service. The accomplishments of nominees elsewhere in Oakland County have been impressive, underscoring why youth recognition programs merit full community support.

Locally, the screening committee will look for selfless students who have performed such deeds as organizing a fund-raiser for medical research, delivering flowers to the bedridden or shoveling snow without pay for a disabled neighbor.

Joan Dudley, breakfast committee chairwoman, describes such recognition as "the best possible way to encourage young people to continue to be community spirited."

"Too often," she added, "people who quietly contribute are never recognized."

WORTHY NOMINEES are true practitioners of volunteer work. Community good will is their byword. The opportunity to interact is what inspires them.

Breakfast honorees will receive a memento signifying their contributions are publicly appreciated.

Farmington Youth Assistance is a 28-year-old community service organization sponsored by Farmington, Farmington Hills, Farmington Public Schools and Oakland County Probate Court. It's dedicated to preventing juvenile delinquency and promoting family well-being.

The youth recognition breakfast is an excellent example of how Farmington Youth Assistance goes about living up to its motto: "We Care About Kids."

THE KIND of public recognition fostered by such breakfasts has proven invaluable in helping polish the image of young people.

That image is too often tarnished by the troubling few who tend to attract more than their share of the spotlight.

— Bob Sklar

## World is not in our image

THE INNOCENT eyes gazed out from the page. Big, bold headlines to the left proclaimed: "She likes Elvis, Led Zeppelin and Lenin."

The woman was dressed in a Soviet Army uniform and was holding a Russian-made AK-47.

Farther on in the magazine was a special advertising supplement on Japan. Scattered throughout were photographs of Japanese in front of American symbols — McDonald's, 7-Eleven stores and American Express cards.

The ads screamed American ethnocentrism. This attitude, that everybody wants to be like us, really is a cheap illusion we're allowing ourselves to see, a trick that only serves to harm us.

Our problem, as was pointed out very aptly by two prominent people in our area last week, is that we're culturally walling ourselves in, isolating ourselves from the rest of the world.

Speaking at Oakland University recently, former Soviet delegate to the U.N. Arkady Shevchenko explained the problem.

Although now a defector living in America, he obviously would like to see the two great powers have a better understanding of one another.

"It's so bad that so few in the United States don't know the Russian language. Not only politically, but secondly Americans lose enormously in the translation," he said.

His remarks were in reaction to the



crackerbarrel debate

Steve Barnaby

announcement by Oakland that it was cancelling its Russian language program. University officials say they just don't have the faculty or the economic means to maintain the program.

ON ANOTHER front, Oakland Community College President R. Stephen Nicholson was giving us a similar warning.

"We need to place more emphasis on knowing who our neighbors are," he said. "It's rather amazing to me that colleges in Michigan have been so slow to pick up all of the opportunities to begin to qualify people for jobs in . . . international areas."

Nicholson is attempting to establish a program for businesses that want to go into the export business. The educator lived in Japan for a decade and is fluent in that country's language, art and literature.

Both Nicholson and Shevchenko are right. We do have to know our neighbors better.

But we don't. And we're slipping deeper into our isolationist stupor.

Technology has wiped away traditional geographic barriers. Great mountain ranges and expansive bodies of water mean little.

Look around. Most of us know little of Japanese life or culture. We know even less about the Soviet Union. We rely on sketchy information gleaned from biases built up through the ages.

Despite the ads you see and attitudes you may have, not everybody in the world wants to be "just like us."

We must understand that various cultures think differently about how the world should be. And that's all right.

Diversity can be a positive force. We must work at making it so. We must provide the money and make the time to learn about the world around us.

## Michigan 150 years old

TOBACCO, usually considered a southern product, once brought great revenues to Michigan. The Calvert Lithographing Co. of Detroit created designs and printed labels for tobacco companies in the 19th century.

Founded by the English-born Thomas Calvert who came here in 1801, the firm was famed for fine printing of Perry Seed Co. catalogs, college diplomas and sheet music, according to Michigan History magazine.