

points of view

Gifts could put smiles on many faces

AS PEOPLE, we don't always do ourselves proud.

Our intolerance, our fear of people who are "different" and the ugly side of our nature is seldom better displayed than when a group home moves into a neighborhood.

The cries of protest are predictable. We are concerned for our safety, we say. We are concerned for our property values.

When such pleas seem cold and self-serving, a hypocritical concern for the residents of the group home is voiced. They will be too close to busy roads, we say if a city home is proposed. They will be too far from hospitals and other services, we say if a rural home is proposed.

Some of us are becoming more honest with our protests. We flat out say we don't want "those kind of people" in our neighborhood. The targets of these protests have often been the mentally retarded who were the first to use group homes in large numbers. But no one is immune.

In several affluent Oakland County communities it is now a sin to be old. We actually say, "We don't want our children to have to live near old people."

WE'VE SAID IT in Birmingham, Bloomfield Township and West Bloomfield Township, to name three places.

You can imagine how we react



Rich Perlberg

when we learn that our new neighbors are going to be former patients of a hospital for the mentally ill!

Despite initial misgivings, many of us learn to accept if not embrace group homes as neighbors, he says. That's partially because the fears are far more imagined than real. If we don't want to live near them, we usually don't notice them.

"Nothing serious has happened," he says. "I don't want to say that sometimes people don't get sick and have to return to the hospital. We've called police a couple of times, but there have been no neighborhood injuries, no property damage."

USUALLY, OUR WORST incon-

venience is to hear loud noise from the group home or to be hustled for a cigarette, he said. The goal for most of the group home residents is to assimilate to various degrees into the community.

Krupka was on the phone recently asking for some help. The adult residing in his home was often unable to enjoy happy holidays. The Community Residential Services is trying to remedy that by obtaining two gifts each for the 180 to 200 clients they serve in group homes in many suburban communities including Southfield, Farmington, Novi and Royal Oak.

They are asking people to spend about \$10 a gift. Or people or organizations could supply a gift for ev-

eryone in a group home for \$60.

"You can call us up and we'll tell you that Joe W. likes rock 'n' roll and you might buy him a record," said Krupka.

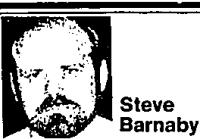
Krupka works in Pontiac. You can call him at 463-8446. Andrew Wermuth will take the call if he's not in.

They will gladly accept contributions and buy the gifts themselves. But it seems to me that it is much more in keeping with the holidays to buy the gift yourself.

It will make someone happy because, after all, people in group homes like to get presents just like you and I do.

Maybe they are not so different after all.

Inner suburbs must work to save future



Steve Barnaby

THANKSGIVING is one remnant of a lifestyle soon to pass with the turning of this century. Although we know over how it used to be, families are changing.

Eating together has become a rarity. Seeing one another has even become a rare experience.

Too bad? Probably. But for bigger reasons than are readily evident.

You see, in the time we treat our community in the same egocentric way we treat our families.

Hardly do we see communities combining to solve a problem. More often we see them fighting one another. Everybody suffers.

If we, as communities, don't help each other, we are in big trouble. As this last election shows, Washington sure isn't going to do anything. Neither Michael Dukakis or George Bush has an inkling of what to do to help solve the problems of middle America.

Washington is a monster, consuming itself with debt beyond imagination and special interest greed which has a bottomless appetite.

It has become a club composed of persons, nearly all wealthy, who are financed by special interest groups which only have their special interests in mind.

cluster housing. Today, communities like Clarkston, Lake Orion, Oxford and Holly are "the" communities in which to move.

The inner ring is being left behind — by retailers and homeowners, alike. Certainly, in this time of prosperity it is not difficult to see. But look beyond the inner ring. Novi, Royal Oak and the Oakland Technology Park. That's where the jobs are and that's where the housing is being built.

For the inner ring, it has become suburb against suburb. And now, like families, we must work together. We can no longer run from the problems which have haunted this metropolitan area for so many years.

The inner ring of suburbs is rapidly becoming the core of the metropolitan area. It suffers from the problems of the core area. As people move, opportunity decreases, crime is increasing. Drugs are becoming a way of life. Violence is a real fear among many residents.

It is time for us to open our arms and to work at rebuilding the core, whether that core be Detroit, Southfield, Birmingham, Livonia or Redford Township.

It's the family thing to do.

Why does good teacher get problem students?



Doc Doyle

Q: My daughter is in the fourth grade with an outstanding teacher. My daughter has no classroom behavior problem but there seems to be a predominance of children in the class who have had problems in earlier grades. Why does this excellent teacher tend to have most of the problem students?

A: Probably because the administration knows that the teacher is an excellent teacher and probably the teacher doesn't complain, which can lead the administrator to place problem children into her classroom.

This is unfortunate. If there are impulse-ridden, acting-out children in the fourth grade in one building they should be distributed among all fourth grade teachers.

I have known one teacher who badgered the principal so thoroughly

to keep impulsive kids out of her class that to keep peace the principal placed the acting-out children with another less accepting teacher who seldom complained. The teacher that complains the least and gets an overload of behavior problems can eventually become bitter, become a saint or burn out.

The answers provided here are the opinions of Dr. James Doyle and not the Troy School District. Questions for this column should be sent to Doc Doyle c/o the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.

keeping up with government

Come See our Decorated Silk Tree
• Unusual Ornaments
• Holiday Gifts • Corporate Gifts

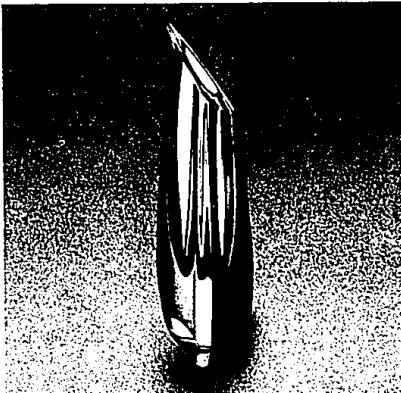
ONE WEEK ONLY SPECIAL SALE
Small Floral Bouquets in Ceramic Vases
Reg. '18 NOW \$10 thru Nov. 30

Reg. '18

GREAT
GIFT
IDEAS!
Southfield
Franklin Shopping Plaza
357-2020

CRYSTAL
FOR
THE
HOLIDAYS

Baccarat



ROSE VASE
BY BACCARAT OF FRANCE
\$150.99 high (13" high) \$200.00

GORMAN'S
INNER CIRCLE

Complimentary gift wrapping
Southfield: Telegraph at 12 Mile • Phone 353-9880

Gordon
of Sesame Street
live

Saturday, November 26

11 am and 2 pm

Sunday, November 27,

1 pm and 3 pm

Fountain Court

Sesame Street's Gordon mixes a special blend of entertainment and educational fun with songs, games, dances, and more. An autographed picture for every child!



For more information, call the Fairlane Information Center at 593-3330.

FAIRLANE

TOWN
CENTER

HUDSON'S, LORD & TAYLOR, JCPENNEY, SEARS, SAKS FIFTH AVENUE
PLUS OVER 200 STORES AND SERVICES AND 10 THEATERS