

Opinion

21898 Farmington Road/Farmington, MI 48024 Robert Sklar editor/477-5450

Let's link east, west with a splash of color

WHEN IT comes to decorating, some things just make sense, no matter how weird they sound.

I got to thinking about that other day as I drove along the new stretch of I-696 which links the sensible west side with the mysterious east.

No matter if you're a new metro Detroit resident or a veteran who has migrated along with the urban sprawl, you realize that this is a populace obsessed with transporting itself from point A to point B with the most amount of comfort and least inconvenience possible.

OF COURSE, we don't always get it right. That is to be expected from a community which took 30 years to build half an expressway. But we do stumble along, nevertheless, and somehow manage to make it all work, sort of.

But really, something ought to be done about the aesthetics down in the pit.

You know the pit, otherwise known as the Great Concrete Grand Canyon. It's that portion of the I-696 expressway which is completely sided with cement, oh about 30 or 40 feet high.

Sure is bleak.

Seems the road planners and residents so concerned about how the expressway would impact on the ani-



Steve Barnaby

imals at the zoo and the lifestyle of those abutting the freeway, forgot about the real victims, the drivers.

BUT SOLUTIONS do abound. I'm sure you've had a few ideas about what they could do with those foreboding and dreary masses of gray concrete. After all, there is more to life in a car than talking on the cellular phone.

Now my mother for one, a great lover of decorative innovation (she once suspended table lamps by fishwire), might suggest ivy. She, at one time, was a great ivy lover. We had so much ivy growing on the side of our house that nary a brick was to be seen.

Of course, the day did come when ivy went out of style and she single-handedly ripped it down, leaving me to wonder if I, indeed, was coming home to the correct address.

She only smiled while showing off the next innovation, driftwood

strewn about the living room. Obviously, ivy wouldn't work along the new stretch of I-696. Even the hardy ivy needs a bit of natural soil. But, alas, none exists on several stretches of our newest freeway.

So this humble editor suggests that those barren walls be painted. That's right, painted.

I'm not talking about slapping on just any old coat of paint. No, I'm talking about painting murals. After all, if Diego Rivera could do it, so could a whole slew of other up and comers from the artistic world.

Imagine. The state could run a competition. Naturally, a bi-partisan blue ribbon committee would be handpicked by the governor to make the final choice. That way some influential folks, who feel badly about not being on a committee at present, would feel wanted again.

The governor could find another excuse to promote a little goodwill during this election season and, most importantly, drivers would have something to look at on their way to and from the yet-to-be-explored east side.

Gratuit? What is a Gratuit, anyway?

Steve Barnaby is managing editor of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

At prep games Better supervision necessary

THERE'S NOTHING wrong with a spirited cross-town rivalry in high school sports. It's a time-honored tradition.

But we draw the line when good-natured ribbing turns ugly and students are hurt.

Such was the case in a post-game fight at North Farmington High, when the Raiders played Farmington High in a basketball game Friday night, Jan. 12.

Two Farmington High students told Farmington Hills police at Providence Hospital in Novi they were attacked by a group of North students moments after the game. Both required treatment for cuts and bruises, with one receiving stitches after he was kicked in the face.

The attack apparently stemmed from the use of an air horn by a Farmington High student during the game, which North, ironically, won. Neither of the students attacked had used the horn, according to witnesses.

In an unrelated incident the same night at Harrison High, no one was hurt in several skirmishes involving students and alumni at a basketball game against Northville and at the post-game dance, principal Clayton Graham said.

"WE'RE ALL very embarrassed by it," said Don Cowan, director of student services operations for the district. On behalf of the district, he pledged to "do everything we can to ensure it doesn't happen again."

"We've been very fortunate to have very little of this," he added. "We take a lot of pride in our schools."

Last week, school officials reacted quickly and met with some of the students involved and their parents to try to find out what triggered the violence and to try to mend any interschool rifts that may have developed.

Cowan said the district may also involve members of the student councils and the Student Round Table as resources — an excellent way, in our view, to help head off future confrontations.

We appreciate Cowan's candidness and the way he owned up to responsibility on behalf of the district.

But we'd ask officials to go a step further and

We appreciate (Don) Cowan's candidness and the way he owned up to responsibility on behalf of the district.

But we'd ask officials to go a step further and assure adequate supervision at cross-town sports events that draw crowds. . . Supervisors should include a sufficient number of folks of recognizable authority, like school administrators and auxiliary police.

assure adequate supervision at cross-town sports events that draw crowds, particularly football and basketball games. Supervisors should include a sufficient number of folks of recognizable authority, like school administrators and auxiliary police.

AT THE school board meeting on Tuesday, we trust that Superintendent Michael Flanagan apprises trustees of what happened Jan. 12 — and what steps the administration is taking to fulfill Cowan's pledge.

We trust better supervision is in place by Friday, Feb. 2, when Farmington hosts North in a scheduled re-match.

Graham attributed the incidents at Harrison to disputes between individuals, not schools. "I don't think many of the kids go out of their way to say, 'I go to this school, and I'm better than you,'" he said.

We tend to agree with his assessment. But there's always going to be a group of young toughs who truly think they're better. That's when trouble lurks.

Cowan said he can't help but wonder if the fights were "an outgrowth of what you see happening around this world, with all the hostility."

We can't help but wonder the same thing.

from our readers

Food bank says thanks

To the editor:
The Food Bank of Oakland County and the 70 volunteer organizations supplying emergency food to the hungry of our community want to express their warmest thanks to the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers for supporting our annual appeal.

Without your help, we never could have reached the thousands of people who responded so generously to their neighbors in need. You are to be commended for the public spirit-

ed way in which you serve our community.

James Macy, director,
Food Bank of Oakland County

Costick best city manager

To the editor:
On Jan. 8 during the Farmington Hills City Council meeting, William Costick gave out awards to city employees. If there was ever a man that deserves recognition, it is the city manager.

He, along with Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer, deserve

a lot of credit for what they have done for the city of Farmington Hills.

Lord help Farmington Hills if Mr. Costick ever decides to leave. The city council may meet, but it is Mr. Costick that does all the hard work.

Mr. Costick is Farmington Hills. There is an old saying, "Put your best foot forward."

Well, as for the city of Farmington Hills, Mr. Costick is the best and yet he will still go on doing his job without even thinking about it.

So here is a vote of recognition for William Costick, city manager of Farmington Hills, and thank you, Mr. Costick.

Verbon Kleipinski,
Farmington Hills

What kind of a kid do you suppose Thomas Edison was?



Bet he looked at problems and saw solutions. Like Maurice Scales who invented Baby No-Mash to prevent doors from closing on little fingers.

Bet he saw how things were done, and imagined better ways to do them. Like Lillian Lukas who invented the Puddle Detecting Cane for the blind.

Bet he watched how things work and thought of ways to avoid wasting time or effort. Like Caitilin McCracken who invented the Orphan Kitten Feeder for Three.

Maurice, Lillian and Caitilin were three of the thousands of winners in the Invent America! education program.

And you know that small genius can grow up to become big genius—with the capacity to make America number one again.

To participate, just write Invent America!, 510 King Street, Suite 420, Alexandria, VA 22314, or call 703/684-1836.

If you're wondering if it's all worthwhile, just imagine what Edison would have said.

Invent America!
For now—as never before—our country needs an inventive spark.



Bringing bright ideas out of young minds

