

## Wooddale woes

### Mean words are no answer

**W**ill Rogers said this about plans: If they're milk and honey to someone, they're poison ivy to someone else. The milk and honey tasted cold and sweet to some who attended a community meeting at Wooddale Elementary School in Farmington Hills Monday evening. Others scratched themselves raw.

The issues at Wooddale — aptly named since it's located in a little valley with lots of trees — are the parking lot and entrance way. The lot is too small, the driveway too steep leading out of the valley.

The school grounds and surrounding subdivision streets can be dangerous for youngsters, especially during winter.

Just about everyone in the Wooddale community agrees that their school has these problems. Ah, but what to do about them? The proposed solutions — plans, if you will — seem to have pitted neighbor against neighbor and parent against non-parent.

One of the leading solutions, as designed by a traffic-management firm, would close off the steep driveway (an 8-percent grade) leading to Peppermill and build a new access road west through a pretty stand of trees to Oak Forest.

This would please a lot of people, but those living on Oak Forest and other streets in the Colony West subdivision are not among them. Many would rather not have the school traffic

going through their sub. And some would rather look at trees than a school road.

Now, we're of two minds about the Wooddale meeting Monday.

First, we're impressed that so many people (about 100, someone said) put aside home, family and the Olympics on TV to attend a gathering on this important local issue. Plenty of positive comments were made. We hope the folks who run our schools realize that these people care.

We're sure that the safety of Wooddale youngsters was paramount on the minds of meeting-goers, with other concerns like traffic congestion and property values clearly secondary. We're sure.

On the other hand, we were disappointed to hear so many mean words spoken, neighbor to neighbor, at the meeting. The man from the traffic-flow firm took an occasional verbal beating, too.

Mean words spoken by frustrated people aren't going to solve the problems at Wooddale. But some fast and informed action by the Farmington Board of Education is.

The board, which we're glad to see, took some needed action on this problem Tuesday. Officials should study it some more, if that's what's needed, but put it at the top of the list. Find out what's best and then do it.

## Rights denial debases society

**F**reedom is no joking matter.

That's why we hope those who were amused by the recent remarks made by Oakland County executive candidate Phil Marcuse take another look at what kind of society is best for themselves and their children.

Marcuse, in a desperate attempt to gather some badly needed last minute support for his failed candidacy, appealed to the basest nature of society by attacking his opponent, Betty Howe, on the basis of gender.

This misguided line clerk apparently believes that women's leadership skills qualify them only for duties performed in the home, and that just by being born a male, he is more qualified than his opponent to be an elected public servant.

It would be easy enough to laugh off such foolishness. But we only have to look around us to see how serious the denial of equal rights for women has debased our society.

This court jester of Oakland County politics represents a far deeper threat.

The cavalier attitude toward rights exists in the most influential of places, from corporate boardrooms to the floor of the U.S. Senate. These leaders, who make decisions on the basis of expediency, to preserve their own power bases, consistently forfeit the rights of those who are often unable to defend themselves.

And this savage war of inequality has too of-

ten been waged against women.

The truly strong in our society must consistently and continually speak out against these inequities.

The entire structure of our armed forces has been shaken by revelations of sexual abuse and harassment.

The now infamous "Tailhook" convention, where several women Naval officers were fondled and abused, only serves to make us more aware of the long journey we have to travel before equality can be obtained.

The credibility of the U.S. Supreme Court has been undermined. During the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings, a majority of U.S. senators thought male bonding was more important than justice.

The horrendous numbers of crimes committed against women because they are women — rapes, spouse abuse, sexual harassment and discrimination — exist only to sap this country's strength.

The frantic battle against equality launched in recent years by a frightened reactionary right wing must be halted lest we all sacrifice our freedoms.

For any of us to be equal, all must be equal. That's a value missing on today's American landscape, a value which, if adopted, could go a long way toward solving many of this country's ills.

ARKIE HUDKINS

*Ripley's* BELIEVE IT....OR NOT!!

Phil Marcuse, of suburban Michigan, contends that "women aren't suited for executive positions." He is running against a woman for the job of Oakland County Executive.



## LETTERS

### Discourage panhandling

**I**t was exciting to read some of the positive things about Detroit in Judith Doner Berne's column in the Observer & Eccentric newspaper.

I believe that the business community of Detroit is taking important steps toward a comeback. I also believe that all of us have a stake in the comeback and that all of us must do our part to make a better Detroit a reality. This includes the government, businesses, the media and the community.

In reference to the panhandlers, I have personally talked with one person, who said that he has made as much as \$100 in three hours. This was done by standing on the street corner with a sign which said, "Will work for food, Nam Vet. God Bless." I often give those people a business card and offer them a job. They rarely call. I am glad to hear that you support a campaign to rid our city of panhandlers.

I am also glad to hear that you and your husband are willing to come into the city and that

you are willing to write about it. Suburbanites need to know that Detroit has much to offer and that if we don't take advantage of it, it will be gone.

We at Metro Detroit Temporary Services, Inc. are committed to the city of Detroit and more specifically to its people.

I would just like to say thank you for your support of Detroit and ask that you continue that support in the media for all to see.

Marilyn Malin, president, Metro Detroit Temporary Services

**Opinions are to be shared:** We welcome your ideas, as do your neighbors. That's why we offer this space on a weekly basis for opinions in your own words. We will help by editing for clarity. To assure authenticity, we ask that you sign your letter and provide a contact telephone number.

Letters should be mailed to: Editor, The Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336.

## Negative advertising rages on

**R**elections on Tuesday's primary elections . . .

Michigan's political system is changing.

Not through voter anger, although there's plenty of that, but through the old-fashioned mechanisms that have driven our politics for half a century. Population shifts, mainly from cities to suburbs, and the redistricting that comes every 10 years, have given Oakland and Wayne County suburbs larger counts in the 1990 census than the city of Detroit.

Consider Michigan's delegation to the U.S. Congress. Population losses cut our quota of representatives from 18 to 16. Redistricting, plus tough primary fights, plus age, plus frustration lead six congressmen unexpectedly to decide to retire.

Among these were some seriously senior members, like Bill Broomfield, Bob Traxler, Dennis Hertel and Howard Wolpe. It will take another generation for Michigan to regain the clout in Washington it has today.

Likewise, the clout held in Lansing by inner cities is eroding under the steady pressure of population shifts to the suburbs.

The entire state House was redistricted this year. The biggest primary fights took around the periphery of Detroit, where districts were pushed out, putting into sudden retirement a series of previously secure, white, Democratic reps.

The political system is still in crisis, but don't for a moment think that this primary has been without consequence.

Negative advertising is still all the rage.

We had mudslinging in the 11th Congressional District (Dave Honigman versus Alice Gilbert). We saw character assassination in the 7th (favorite Joe Schwartz versus long shot Brad Haskens). And we experienced real attack politics in the race for Wayne County Sheriff (Bob Ficano versus Kevin Kelley).

We saw literally obscene television advertising on behalf of John Mangopoulos, a (for-



PHILIP POWER

tunately) unknown Republican running against favorite Dick Chrysler for the GOP nomination in the 6th Congressional District. The spot showed men kissing, aborted fetuses and a naked boy.

After this systematic assault on our public sensibilities, one is tempted to ask, why? The answer is clear: Negative works. And until it doesn't, politicians will be tempted to use it.

One reason it works is it gets coverage in the media.

The sanctimonious two-faced media monster is loose once more in the land.

On one hand, editorial writers grandly tut-tut about negative ads, while the news side plays up the mudslinging and resolutely refuses to cover any of the serious issue positions of the candidates. The Detroit Free-News Sunday paper was the worst, heading page one coverage with a roundup devoted entirely to mudslinging.

Ask any candidate about his or her success in getting the media to cover an issue-oriented campaign, and you'll get one mad candidate.

Conclusion: We in the media ought to clean up our own act before we dump on the politicians again.

Philip Power is chairman of the company that owns this newspaper.

## COMMUNITY VOICE

### QUESTION:

Should Vice President Dan Quayle stay on the Republican ticket?

We asked this question at the American House retirement home on Middlebelt in Farmington Hills.



"I think he should be dumped. He's for the birds. They didn't name him Quayle for nothing."

Sylvia Kantor  
Farmington Hills



"I'd rather have Dan Quayle than Bush. I'd pick Mario Cuomo to be president, but he doesn't want to be."

Millicent Hollis  
Farmington Hills



"I think Bush should keep him. He's been with him four years."

Diana Wilson  
Livonia



"I don't think Bush ever should have put him on. I don't think Quayle is qualified to be president."

Ralph Eschelman  
Farmington Hills

## The Farmington Observer

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