

POINTS OF VIEW

Spend a night in the land of 'Northern Exposure'

There's a reason for the popularity of the television show "Northern Exposure." Weird people walk around a small town during the day, bumping into each other and doing strange things. At night everybody gathers in the town pub to discuss the day's events.

A lot of us would like to live that way. That's why we watch the show. On a recent vacation, I got the chance to visit what would be the set for the TV show.

The location was an Upper Peninsula town. And, no, I'm not going to give out the community's name. I don't want it to become too popular — it could spoil the trout fishing.

Here's the scene. I'm sitting at the bar with a Michigan writer. We're talking about bourbon, writing and how Trout Unlimited has spoiled fly fish-



JEFF COUNTS

ing. On my other side is a bearded Vietnam veteran whose mind unfortunately came out of the war the worse for wear. His job is the same as it was in Vietnam. He blows things up. However, he's now also a herbalist. Perhaps he's healing his soul. Once in a while he looks up from his beer and says something like "10 of us

went in and only two of us came out." I count myself lucky, along with Bill Clinton, who also didn't get drafted.

At the end of the bar, near the door, are two tables pushed together. Sitting there is a Russian kayak team. They're paddling around Lake Superior, and on this night sampling the local waters of sorts, vodka. There are toasts to Lenin, Lenin or maybe Ross Perot. I can't remember. It doesn't matter. Anything fits in this scene.

The bets at the bar are on which local ladies will bag one of the Russian bears at the dance at the community center. "Well, it's really a pole barn," the writer said.

The bar owner joins us. He's an ex-hiker from my old Detroit neighborhood. He's his own bouncer. We discuss mutual friends, one of whom joined the Marines in 1964 after quit-

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ting school. In our neighborhood, we were too stupid to know there was a war brewing.

During the evening, I'm talking to a woman who must have mistaken me for one of the Russians. She looked a bit like Maggie O'Connell. Maybe it was her eyes.

I wanted to tell her that dealing with the opposite sex for me now is like my trout fishing, "catch and release." I've got a keeper at home. But on to other "Northern Expo-

sure" characters. One my favorites is Ed the Indian who wants to be a film maker and talks about his buddy, Woody, as in Allen.

There was nobody like Ed in town, but the writer is a good substitute. He recently had lunch with Nicholson in Chicago where he was working on the movie "Hoffa."

It impressed me.

It's too bad we can't import a bit of northern Michigan to Detroit, like we have with sushi.

Oh, well, my own "Northern Exposure" town will be there next year, and probably longer than the TV series.

Jeff Counts is the editor of the Plymouth and Canton Observer Newspapers who would chance a strange accidental death if given the opportunity to run away with Maggie O'Connell.

LETTERS

Crack ruins so many

This is the story of a woman who has been watching from a distance a man whose life has been turned upside down as a result of the poison we know as crack cocaine.

It's not a prejudice drug. It treats everyone the same. The trail it leaves behind is a trail of broken hearts, broken families, children without parents, and most times parents without children.

Death is what crack cocaine thrives on, not always a physical death maybe a mental death or a spiritual death. A little girl is losing her daddy because poison has taken him to a place that he can't leave, a mother is losing her son, siblings are losing a brother and a young woman is losing her future.

Crack cocaine starts the fire. Once it has begun, it burns out of control until everything in its path is destroyed, it's not picky when it comes to methods of destruction. It doesn't have to be. We make the choices for it, we introduce it to our families and friends we let it into our body, and that's all it needs to survive.

When you try to walk away from it you can't call you. And you do whatever it takes to get it. That's when the destruction begins. At that point, the poison has altered your mind as

well as your body. You have to tell lies and cheat the people that you love.

When you can't control yourself, you will steal from these very same people who are the only ones that still believe in you and have any hope for your future.

The hope won't always be there, pretty soon they will expect this behavior and when that happens you can believe the hope is gone. When you have no hope for yourself and your friends and family have lost hope what is left for you, luck is no longer an option. You've run out of that too.

You feel like death is your only hope for salvation, and that's when crack cocaine has won the game.

When it gets your life forever, the game is over, and like most people who get lost in the game, their pain finally ends.

Crack cocaine moves on to its next unsuspecting victims.

Connie Hannah, Detroit

Editor's note: Connie Hannah is the girlfriend of Mikel Hopkins, the brother of Edward Hopkins, a Farmington Hills resident who was convicted recently on two counts of first-degree murder related to a \$250 drug debt.

Don't spoil the fun

I read with concern the article in the Monday, Aug. 10, Farmington Observer regarding the possible closing of the sled hill at Farmington School Headquarters on Shiawassee Road this coming winter.

Sledding on this hill is a treasured part of my family's winter recreation. I would hate to see the demise of this activity just because of one pending lawsuit.

I, like most people, consider sledding an "at your own risk" activity. It would be a shame to close the sled hill merely because of one person who doesn't seem to understand that snow can be slippery without it being anyone's fault.

I would suggest, however, that when the sled hill re-opens this winter, signs should be clearly posted stating that the use of the sled hill is at the risk of the user, to prevent lawsuits in the future.

In my opinion, the Farmington school trustees, the city of Farmington and the Jaycees did an excellent job this past winter in making the sled hill a safer place. I would encourage them to do the same this year and not let one

person spoil this activity for the rest of us.

Marie M. Kellar, Farmington Hills

Winner says thanks

I want to thank all the judicial candidates for a positive and clean race. I think the citizens in Farmington and Farmington Hills were very fortunate to have such a qualified group of individuals to consider.

I am looking forward to November and a campaign worthy of the dignity of a 47th District Court Judge.

I am grateful to my friends and neighbors who worked so hard and gave so much support. I also want to thank my wife, Sharon, and my family who worked so hard to make this primary victory possible.

The best part of my campaign was walking in neighborhoods, listening to the concerns of the voters and meeting so many residents of Farmington and Farmington Hills. This is a community where my family and I have lived and been actively involved for 27 years, and I would be honored to bring it firm and fair judicial representation.

Again, I would like to thank everyone for their support and hard work.

John McDonald, Farmington Hills

Helped many children

After many years of starting children on their journey through education, Mary Lou White is retiring from Nardin Park Community Nursery School.

Over the past 14 years, White has played an integral part in shaping the nursery school and its program. Hundreds of children were touched by her warmth and love as she welcomed them to their first school experience.

White started her association with Nardin Park Community Nursery School when her own two sons were young. What started as a part-time job, developed into a career and a strong commitment to the nursery school.

In addition to teaching, she served as assistant director at the school and held numerous positions on the Farmington Area Preschool Council.

Now that her sons are grown, White looks forward to retirement with her husband as a time for rest and travel.

The nursery school thanked White during a family picnic in June. Many of her present and former students were there to wish her well.

Cynthia L. Steff, Nardin Park Community Nursery School

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