

## Cutting trees to improve view shows lack of vision

My editor doesn't like to see profanity in the paper, but I am mad, really mad — much madder than mad as "heck." But I guess that will have to do.

The maples are gone, and I can't do a blessed thing about it.

Except complain, gripe and maybe cry.

The two gorgeous maples in front of Kern's Bakery provided a spot of beauty and shade along Chapman Highway for more than 30 years. They weren't dying or diseased or even sickly.

They were healthy — so healthy that they presented "problems" to the bakery's owners "almost monthly," said Kern's president and chief executive John Cooper, as quoted in The News-Sentinel Friday.

The trees were too close to the highway, Cooper said. I wonder who made that judgment? I personally have never had the slightest problem driving past them.

The trees' limbs sometimes obscured vision in one lane of Chapman, Cooper said. Really? Whose



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vision? His? Certainly not mine, although I guess one could say my driving vision was temporarily "obscured" when I gazed with wonder at the brilliantly colored leaves in the fall.

The trees were a problem for the Knoxville Utilities Board, who had to clear the limbs into an L-shape, Cooper said. So? I'd rather have an L-shaped maple to watch than no maple at all.

The trees' roots were also a problem, Cooper told our newspaper. He didn't say why, so I asked Jim Cortese of Cortese Tree Service, whose business slogan is "We Save Trees."

Cortese said he believed the two beauties were either sugar maples or red maples, "and nor-

mally their roots do not cause the problems that water maples cause" in regard to underground problems with sewers and such.

"If the problem was mowing the grass around the roots," Cortese said, "then flowers or ivy could have been planted."

Cortese's point — and mine — is that there were so many other solutions Kern's owners could have found other than killing the trees. If they wanted to increase visibility of the newly cleaned building — as our article indicates — they could have raised the branch level, Cortese noted.

"I don't want to criticize the owners," he said, "but if people are going to be concerned about the environment, we are going to have to have some sort of tree ordinance. The city needs to have some power to slap fines on people for doing stupid things."

Cooper said Kern's will donate \$1,000 to plant trees in Fort Dickerson Park. Well, gee, thanks. But couldn't that have been done

without destroying the maples? One hundred new trees don't replace two 40-year-old beauties.

"If we are going to make the goals of Earth Day work, we must learn to think globally and act locally," Cortese said. "Cutting down trees somewhere and planting others somewhere else just doesn't do it."

"The old trees keep losing. You can plant new trees, but it's not the same. Those maples were actual landmarks. I don't think the owners realized that."

I don't think they did either, and isn't it a terrible shame? When Cooper, a former accountant, took over in January 1989 as CEO of Kern's, he said, "We plan to take a very active role in the community. We intend to be good for the city."

Too bad those good intentions didn't extend to the two exquisite gifts of God that stood regally beside his bakery.

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