



Hors d'oeuvres by Lynn Orr

Raving redheads rebel

If reputation counts for anything, the latest group to raise the discrimination banner has the hot temper needed to fan some smoldering fires.

A natural-born redhead, as she describes herself, wrote a letter to one of our daily friends last week, complaining that natural-born redheads (she made the distinction pointedly) have suffered discrimination and exploitation. Beauty pageants were the particular targets of this redhead's rage.

Charging that redheads weren't allowed to participate in beauty contests, she wanted to know why redheads were excluded. The carrot-top in question has her facts wrong. There was a red-headed Miss California a few years back in the runner-up category, and I believe, although I can't confirm, that there was a redheaded winner of the Miss America contest in the 1940's.

HOWEVER, the redhead complainant failed to define the red of her charges about exploitation of the burn-tressed humans of the world. As one of that select group (natural-born and all), I think I can fill in some of the spaces.

Off the top of my head (pun intended—it's a slow day), the first thing that comes in mind is the nickname "Red." If my parents had wanted me to be named "Red," it would be one my birth certificate. If I liked the nickname, I would respond when thus addressed. Since neither option holds true, I ignore people who think it's cute. I called a persistent "Red" nappy dropper "Brunette" for a while, and that tact was successful.

Getting tagged as hot-tempered is

another disadvantage. Exploitation seems a little strong. Probably redheads are hot-tempered, but heredity has nothing to do with it. But temper tantrums rejected by other children are expected from red-haired toddlers. Consequently, they learn they can get away with a certain amount of temper. Of course, when a redhead gets mad, no one takes him or her seriously. "I always wondered about redheads and bad tempers," they tell you. Out the nearest window is what I'd like to tell them.

Probably the biggest problem for redheads turns out to be an advantage, sort of like height and being able to open tall cabinets without a chair. Redheads stand out. There's no getting around it.

KINDERGARTEN is a redhead's first experience with this phenomenon. And throughout school, when teachers walk into classrooms in the fall and address their first question, it's always directed to "the redhead," and all eyes turn to you.

Redheads thus learn to get smart—or at least be prepared. You learn to avoid being caught off guard. This, too, has its disadvantages. Once a teacher knows he can call on you for the right answer, you find yourself answering the tough questions. Of course most kids in general learn how to avoid a teacher's probing question. You look right in his or her eyes. They're convinced you know the answer, and since they're usually trying to catch someone unprepared, they pass you by. But you had better be prepared for the tough questions, when the teacher is desperate for

some reinforcement that he's actually teaching.

WEARING RED clothes is another catastrophe to be avoided. Mothers usually avoid dressing their red-headed tots in red because of the clash—usually we're stuck with aqua, green, blue and yellow. My mother, however, was never one to follow the books, much to her credit. But she paid the penalty.

"I never would have thought of putting her in red," some sarcastic competitive mother might say to my mom. Pink is a different story. Pale pink looks nice on a little red-haired baby. Shocking pink on a grown-up lady looks like you're heading for John R.

Consequently, I seldom wear red or pink. I do have a red coat and I still find that people are surprised that I would wear it. I'm not surprised. Blondes wear yellow and white, and brunettes wear brown and black. Maybe that lady and the beauty contests was on the right track when I think about it.

I'm afraid that lady in the paper is going to have a hard time getting support for her cause, though. If it were true, exclusion from beauty contests could only be considered a boon in my book. And whether the world is ready for a redheaded rally is questionable. How could we tell the fakes from the real thing? Drawing the color line would be difficult, considering Lady Chairol. Redbaiters might come out in full force, and someone could possibly find a Biblical reference to support a counter movement. That lady in the paper must see red just thinking about it.



"AW, COME ON—THAT'S A BUNCH OF..."

"I SMOKE A COUPLE PACKS A DAY..."

"AND YOU REALLY THINK..."



"I'VE HEARD IT ALL BEFORE."

"I COULD DIE?"

"WHY AREN'T THEY DOING MORE ABOUT IT?"



"THE WHOLE THING IS SO BORING!"

"...I DON'T SMOKE THAT MUCH."

"...OR DO I..."

My Cup of Tea

by Loraine McClish

Campers, camperships' numbers don't mesh

By the end of August, 35 Farmington area children will have been to camp this summer through the efforts of Farmington Youth Assistance. The number is stable one that doesn't vary more than three or four campers one way or the other from one summer to the next.

Another number, which is a stable one for the volunteers who send those children off to an experience they might never have otherwise, is 65. Sixty-five is the number of names that comes in year after year from school principals, social workers and public health nurses, who make out the lists of who is eligible to go and who will benefit by going.

The matter is so cut and dried that the chairman knows before he or she takes the job that it is going to require a lot of juggling of priorities, then, ultimately, scratching off names.

And because the entire committee

never knows just how much money there will be until the last kid has a seat reserved on the last camp bus, it's a January-to-August period of mixed emotions.

THE MIXTURE concerns the joy that will come when the final report is in, knowing how many youth got a boost or a benefit from some time at camp.

The other side of the coin, of course, is knowing that there are more out there that should be getting a crack at discovering another kind of world in an away-from-home situation.

The committee is not in the business of raising money to offset the lack from a small budget and a few (albeit generous) hand-outs. They are in the business of seeing that as many kids get to camp as they can possibly find slots to put them.

Then, what with physicals to be got-

ten for the campers, often pulling together supplementary clothes or equipment, and more often than not, finding transportation, that's plenty to do. More than that, they are spending time they give doing these things than spending their energies selling raffle tickets or organizing a rummage sale.

WHEN THOSE final evaluations come in there will be some stories not as happy as others, but for every kid that got stung by a bee at camp, or every one who got a massive case of homesickness, there are literally dozens of others who are marked down as true success stories.

The child is fitted into a particular camp slot because of any one or a dozen variables. Some camperships come high. Some are freebies. But it averages out to about \$50 for each child.

In this case, \$50 can go a long, long way.

Citizens Can Win



By DOUG ROSS

Looking at the Blue snafu

Blue Cross-Blue Shield has affronted every one of its subscribers in Michigan. And I don't think they should be allowed to get away with it.

Here are the facts.

A week ago Friday, the corporate body of Blue Cross-Blue Shield rejected Charles Chomet for another term on the Blues' board of directors. Chomet, who had just completed his first 15-month term on the board, had been nominated for a second stint as a consumer representative by State Insurance Commissioner Thomas Jones. Why this unprecedented action to

deny a second term on the board to a nominee of the insurance commissioner?

According to a source close to the Blues' management and its board of directors, Chomet's sin was that he dared to go to the public with charges of mismanagement and waste. It was Chomet who alerted the public to the fact that the Blues overpaid 200 nursing homes more than \$10 million of their subscribers' money over the past three years. It was Chomet who publicly challenged a \$15,000 pay raise for Blues' president John McCabe (giving McCabe a \$10,000 a year salary) at a time when the company was

pleading for a rate hike because of rising costs.

And it was Chomet who had the temerity to suggest that the Blues', a semi-monopoly that insures 65 per cent of all Michigan residents and enjoys federal and state tax-exempt status, ought to open its board meetings to the public so its subscribers can see how their money is being spent.

IN SHORT, Chomet was pushed out by the Blues because he was doing exactly what he was supposed to be doing as a consumer representative on that board. He was asking tough questions out in the open so all of us could hear the answers.

I happen to know Chuck Chomet well. He is a sincere, hardworking guy who cares deeply about people and how big institutions treat them. He's probably done more to improve conditions in nursing homes in this state than anyone. He's certainly no rabble rouser.

As Governor William Milliken put it the other day, "I frankly feel very strongly about this guy. He serves a good purpose. He's a good needle maker who goes out and asks good questions that ought to be asked."

He asks good questions that ought to be asked. Which is precisely why Blue Cross-Blue Shield wants to be rid of Chuck Chomet. And why we can't afford to let them get away with it.

The Michigan Citizens Lobby, along with the other major consumer groups in the state, has asked insurance commissioner Jones to renominate Chomet. If he does, and I think he will, the Blues' corporate body will again vote on the nomination on Sept. 8.

If you are a Blues' subscriber, send the corporation a letter telling them you want someone on the board with the guts to go public if your premiums or health care is being mismanaged. Be polite but firm. After all, you're paying their salaries.

from our readers

Resident pans millage for downtown district

Editor:

I attended the meeting two weeks ago regarding the millage that Farmington City Council wants to impose on the residents of the Downtown Business District for the good of Farmington.

I own property on Orchard Street and have for perhaps 40 years. Most of the people on that street have owned their homes and paid taxes for many, many years.

We were not considered when the council went to Urban Renewal three times to have our places condemned and we were turned down all three times. You have had no consideration for us since then. You built the stores with the back towards us. You allow the merchants to put their garbage cans in back of the stores, which allows us to look at them. They are usually overflowing. You allow the merchants to put trash in boxes out their back doors which are usually overflowing and the papers blow in our yards. Did you consider me when you built the road tipping it in my yard so when it rains the water runs down my driveway like the water over Niagara Falls?

ONE YEAR you put a big pile of snow directly across from my driveway, allowing the water to run a stream down my driveway. This water backs up in my driveway. You promised to build up my driveway so the water would not go in my basement. Did you do it after the first

year? No, you did not.

You allow the trucks to come here all times of night delivering material, making all kinds of noise. You term Orchard a service street, but it is a dedicated street and deserving as much consideration as any other street.

I have had people look at my place on Orchard Street and ask why we allowed the city to do that to us. This I wonder, too. Guess maybe we were considering the good of Farmington, as you people term it. You say this millage would only raise \$8,000. If that is all, why don't you people take care of it. You have done such a good job taking care of the merchants with our tax money so far.

I think it is an insult to our intelligence to ask us to pay one dollar more than the sacrifice we already have made. It is no great pleasure owning property and living on Orchard Street. Must we continue paying for the blunder of the layout of the shopping center? Why don't you try to improve the appearance of the Federal Department Store? I suppose our tax money would go to help pay for this blunder.

NOW COUNCIL, do you want our blood for the good of Farmington? I think we have paid dearly, and it is highly insulting to ask us to pay one dollar more, for we all know that would only be a beginning.

Why does the council feel they should spend our tax money to keep up the appearance of the shopping center? Have you not done enough for them? Should they not keep their sidewalks in repair, etc. like you would or should we?

I am afraid there is much more back of all this.

WINIFRED B. OTIS
2232 Lakeway,
Farmington

Thanks for the festival

To the editor:

My family and I really enjoyed the Farmington Founders Day Festival this year. There were so many nice events planned, and we can appreciate how much work was involved.

The friendly atmosphere in downtown Farmington made the whole festival even nicer. Sunday-Afternoon-In-The-Park was fun—especially the Gong Show. During the Greased Pig Contest I was rooting for the pig when I saw all those kids in the ring waiting to catch it.

Thanks to you all, Festival Planners, you did such a good job. Keep up the good work.

(signed) Margie Malovina,
Farmington Hills.

A Division of
Suburban Communications Corporation

Philip H. Power
Chairman of the Board

Richard D. Agnion
President
Chief Executive Officer

Readers' forum

Letters must be original copies and contain the signature and address of the sender.

Limit letters to 300 words.

Farmington Observer

Steve Barnaby
Editor

2217 West Nine Mile,
Southfield, MI 48075
(313) 352-5400

John Reddy, General Mgr.

Arthur Langer, Advertising Director

Fred J. Wright, Circulation Mgr.