

editorial opinion

from our readers

Reader attacks Birthright philosophy

Editor

The July 12 Observer & Eccentric issue features an article about Birthright, Inc., a non-profit organization which offers assistance to pregnant young women who choose to carry their pregnancies full term.

In this article Ms. Finland, director of Birthright, discussed the operating procedures and objectives of her organization. Upon reading the article, I was struck by several inherent contradictions and incongruities which I believe merit further discussion.

In an introductory statement, Ms. Finland notes that once the pregnancy is confirmed, the biological father usually isn't in the picture anymore. Thus the young woman without a prospective husband and often without any concrete means of financial support is left to the tremendous task of single parenthood.

Ms. Finland considers this point a shame-

ful display of irresponsibility—it's still very difficult for a young woman to raise a baby, but we don't let them that.

Birthright accepts custodial responsibility for those girls who are initially outraged by their parents and for this, deserves credit.

BUT AS FOR the babies, what becomes of them? Fewer unwed mothers are giving up their babies for adoption, choosing instead to keep them. But is it feasible that a young girl barely a child herself, has the maturity to handle a solo effort at raising a child?

A young woman who, in the words of Ms. Finland, may have "got pregnant to get out of a bad situation at home" or because she needed "something to live" in a previous statement, Ms. Finland had noted that the girls are good kids, but that the pregnancy just happened to them.

It is indeed surprising how many immature conceptions are taking place. Ap-

parently, the sexually inquisitive nature often characteristic of male and female adolescents is not a factor.

Perhaps this is why Ms. Finland contends that "birth control is not our purpose."

Birthright does not offer this information to the new mothers, choosing instead to directly ignore the possibility of their future sexual encounters. And it is most unlikely that these young women, some in their early teens, others in their second pregnancies, will seek this assistance on their own.

The article is entitled, "Birthright provides alternatives," but Birthright offers only one alternative—that of having the baby.

And it is unclear to me precisely who is benefiting from this undesiredness—the newborn baby whose future is indeed tentative, the teen mother who must assume responsibility beyond her capabilities or Ms. Finland and the other Birthright volunteers, who can bank in their sense of propriety and say "we now have another grandchild."

CLARE TERESA TULLY
Farmington Hills

Employee explains protest at Tanny health club

Editor

I viewed with interest the photograph of the Vic Tanny pocket in your May 31 issue of the Livonia Observer & Eccentric. I was one of the terminated physical fitness instructors who took part in the two-day protest staged at the Livonia Club of Vic Tanny.

Why were we protesting at Seven Mile and Middlebelt Roads on May 28 and 29? We were protesting the unfair, ridiculous, and outrageous labor practices in which Vic Tanny has been engaging for approximately the last 10 years and unfortunately has been getting away with for approximately the last 10 years.

To be specific, I was hired as a physical fitness instructor at the rate of \$2.50 per hour. After reading the Vic Tanny Training Manual and the written list entitled "Duties of an Instructor," I enthusiastically undertook the job during my four months with Vic Tanny. I was ordered to perform duties completely unrelated to my specific job of supervising workouts and servicing Vic Tanny members in their individual exercise programs.

One such outrageous duty was that of serving as a delivery person every Monday. This was made mandatory by the Livonia club's manager that every week one of the instructors would drive her own automobile from the Livonia Club to the Dearborn Main Office to obtain club supplies and manager paychecks. For the distance of 28 miles round trip, the instructor would be reimbursed \$1. I could not afford to operate my automobile for 28 miles on \$1.

considerations perpetrated by the Vic Tanny Company upon their employees.

The rectly these transgressions against their employees' charges have been filed against Vic Tanny both with the National Labor Relations Board and the Wage and Hour Division of the U.S. Department of Labor.

ROCHELLE REAGAN
Farmington Hills

Another example of unreasonable job demands involves the fact that instructors are required to perform the maid's duties when the maid is absent, i.e., scrubbing the showers, cleaning the lavatories, and mopping the floors. I was expected to do this in addition to my regular duties as an instructor and without any extra compensation.

Another area which has legal overtones is the "hours worked versus wages paid" matter. As an instructor I was required to be on the gymnasium floor ready to work 18 minutes prior to the opening of the club. I was never paid for those 10 minutes which figured on a weekly basis amounted to 40 minutes of overtime work with no monetary compensation.

These were the basic issues behind our protest, two additional pages would be needed to describe the numerous other in-

Soccer coverage lauded

Editor

I wanted at this time to express my appreciation for the fine coverage you extended to the Farmington Soccer Club for publishing the standings of the Western Suburban Soccer League. I sincerely hope that we might have your continued support when we begin our fall season in September.

In speaking of my own children as a barometer of the other children of the club, the soccer standings were the first article in your paper that they looked for every Thursday.

I read an interesting article in the SportMedicine magazine that my physician husband reviews. In one with the magazine states that in the nation there are one million children playing soccer, 25 million playing recreational baseball and 600,000 playing recreational football.

The interesting thing is that soccer is the only one of those sports that continues to increase every year. The others are maintaining a status quo or are declining. This

is certainly true in our Farmington Soccer Club.

Three years ago there was one team of approximately 13 boys. There were 21 teams averaging 15 players each this season and we expect that next spring when we again take registrations we will double again. In speaking with a close friend of mine in baseball, whose husband is a baseball coach, she wanted us to expect about 300 children from baseball alone because many parents were becoming disenchanted with the program.

The general appeal of soccer seems to be largely due to three things according to SportMedicine magazine. There is a relatively small expense in equipment to compare with other sports. Injuries are rare and generally not severe and there is continuous action. The average mid-fielder runs five miles in a game and with action like that the kids really feel they have been part of the action.

Ms. thanks once again.

JUDITH MAHRID
Farmington Soccer Club Secretary

Thankful for 'Gathering Place'

Editor

We are writing this letter to thank and praise all the people involved with The Gathering Place in Farmington.

We have had the pleasant experience of being volunteers at this senior citizen center for the past few months through the Cycle IX program of Oakland University and Farmington schools.

Ms. Loreta Gowan, coordinator of the center activities, has been managing an extensive program in conjunction with her philosophy.

In displaying a very positive attitude toward the seniors, we provide an atmosphere that is conducive to their well-being. We have high expectations and respect toward the seniors and they return this in kind.

Listing the activities and the extent of the services provided would not adequately convey the congenial environment at this center. The strength of this facility is in the people themselves, those who organize as well as those who participate.

The warmth and acceptance which we felt is available to all seniors in the community. We are confident that if they take advantage of this program their experience will be as rewarding as ours has been.

MARY ANN EAGER and JEANNE
Cycle IX interns

Note: "The Gathering Place" is sponsored by the Farmington Area Recreation Commission and is located in the American Legion Hall, 3175 Grand River, Farmington. The center is open Monday through Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.



by
CORINNE ADATT

Growing up is fun to do

It has been by good fortune and occasionally my misfortune, to work with a good many people who are young enough to be my kids.

Although they have yet to get around to calling me the "grand old lady of conservatism journalism," they do refer to me as their "oldest, resident Hippie" once in a while.

Sometimes I denote a note of pity in the voices because I am not a bona fide member of the younger generation.

WELL, YOUNG FRIENDS, I wouldn't turn back the years—no way. I couldn't face a rerun of those early, traumatic years—yes, even in those dimly remembered times, maturing was a heavy scene. Some of my contemporaries may forget the pain and remember only carefree days. It wasn't so.

Though it sounds facetious in the light of the world's problems, we in the mid-years (my favorite flip term for beyond 40) have managed to come to terms with our outer appearances.

No longer do we stand in front of the bathroom mirror for hours watching the nose turned up instead of down, that the hair was curly instead of stick straight, that the eyes were jade or olive green instead of mud brown or faded blue.

Nope, we have come to the point where what we see in the mirror is what we are.

Like an old, but dependable car, a devoted pet or a faithful lover, that face is a part of our lives and anything other than minor changes would be unthinkable.

With the lines of the picture indelibly sketched, we can work on the finishing brush strokes. A touch here or there to brighten and heighten is what's needed. Look around you—a woman in her mid-years (there is again) who is secure in her visual identity is not hidden behind a wall of make-up. She smiles knowing that the crooked nose will neither make or break her future and that mud eyes can light up just as much as olive green.


A RECEDING HAIRLINE may panic a young man, but an older one who has accomplished a good many of his dreams will hardly be unnerved by presence or lack of it.

So, no, I wouldn't want to go around again. Having done my time in life's youth segment, I figure I've earned my security the hard way. And the crow's feet at the corners of the eyes are medals of honor—testimony to having made it through the battle.


Resident hippie, my foot. I was bopping around in these years when the young lions were still in diapers.

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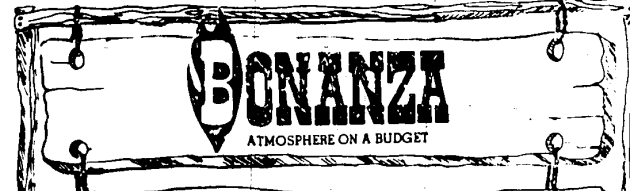
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