

# editorial opinion

## "Around the edge"

by Jackie Klein

Johnny Schmidt of Southfield is one 12-year-old who isn't experiencing typical preteen problems.

Johnny is more than an "in-between." His attitude is the doesn't quite fit into any age group. He couldn't keep up with others like him when he attended a special education class in Lederle Middle School.

He was a student in Adler Elementary school where he's functioning on a first to second grade level. Because of his severe learning disability, Johnny worries about his future.

He's aware he can't out the mustard academically, but he believes he can make a contribution in a living training police dog.

Johnny has always been interested in animals, from raccoons and squirrels to household pets, said his mother, Joyce Schmidt.

We have a Boston Terrier who had pups four weeks ago and we kept one of the litter. Johnny would love to train the pup but he really doesn't know how to do it.

MRS. SCHMIDT has made many futile attempts to find someone qualified to train her nine-year-old Labrador retriever, but the answer is always, "I'm too busy."

Johnny could even work with a dog already trained, she said. As long as he

thinks he's doing it himself, it would really build up his ego. It would give him a niche and more confidence in his future.

The Schmidts have three other sons. James, 13, is in a special education class at Lederle. Nine-year-old Mike is a special education student in Vanderberg School. Three-year-old William, his mother said, appears to be picking up behavior patterns from his older brothers.

Schmidt is a maintenance man for WXYZ Broadcast House. The family has been helped by Southfield Human Resources Dept. and Goodfellow's.

"WE'RE PROUD people and we want to be independent," Mrs. Schmidt said. "We don't want to accept charity. Our son's capabilities are limited, but given a chance they may be functioning members of society."

Mrs. Schmidt has her hands full, but right now her primary concern is Johnny. She would appreciate anyone willing to help him learn to do what he most wants to call for at 326-0080. She can also be contacted through Human Resources 324-0064.

The Schmidts are very special parents. They haven't asked for anonymity because the welfare of their children comes before any personal concerns.

The attitude of the family brings to mind a poem, written many years ago by a

mother whose young son was brain damaged. It's entitled "A Special Child."

A meeting was held quite far from earth. It's time again for another birth. Said the angels to the man above. This special child will need much love.

His progress may seem very slow. Accomplishments he may not show. And he'll require extra care. From the folks he meets down there.

He may not run or laugh or play. His thoughts seem very far away. In many ways he won't adapt. And he'll be known as handicapped.

So let's be careful where he sits. We want his life to be content. Please find the parents who will do. A very special job for you.

They may not realize right away. The leading role they're asked to play. But with this child sent from above. Comes a stronger and richer love.

And soon they'll know the privilege given. In caring for this gift from heaven. Their precious child so meek and mild. Is heaven's very special child.

## "Between the lines"

by Carl Stoddard

Yes, Virginia there is a Santa Claus — but only if you include a return address.

About 100 children in Southfield and Lathrup Village annually seal their wishes and wants in letters addressed to that jolly old elf at his northern retreat and toy factory.

Most letters are addressed to Santa Claus in care of the North Pole. In this case no zip code is needed.

The letters usually find their way to the Southfield Post Office and from there are shipped to a mail processing center in Royal Oak. Postal officials there say they get a pile of about 2,000 Santa Claus letters a year from children throughout Oakland County.

Royal Oak is about 3,000 miles from the North Pole, and that's about as far north as the letters ever get.

Do not assume, however, that Kris Kringle doesn't get a peak at those letters. He and his assistant at the Royal Oak VFW Post 1469 do. She can also be contacted through Human Resources 324-0064.

SANTA'S HELPERS at the VFW post sort through the mail and answer every letter that carries a return address. In case you're wondering, Virginia, it is a form letter, of course, it is personally signed.

Letters without a return address are answered on Christmas Day in a different manner.

## She defends teacher cares

Editor

It has become almost commonplace to pick up the newspaper and read ads for teacher education which entice the profession and degrade the educators that represent teachers. It may not be so widespread to the region written by angry teachers attempting to defend themselves when they are ignored by you.

I was disappointed to see the prejudiced piece of journalism that was written by Tim Richard entitled "Teachers Aim to Gild" in the Nov. 18 edition. It would certainly seem that the editors of this newspaper have been chosen because they exhibit a maximum of intelligence, an adequate wit and a semblance of reason. After reading Mr. Richard's editorial, which hypothesized that the National Educational Association favored one third

federal funding of public education so that teachers could enjoy "jummy" salary increases, I am not sure that the gentleman in question has any intelligence, wit or reason.

I am the president of a local association of teachers which is affiliated with the National Education Association, and we are acutely aware of the terrible toll that inadequate educational funding has taken upon the schools in our state.

Because the Michigan Legislature and Gov. Milliken have not had high educational priorities, and because individual taxpayers have refused to bear the brunt of educational costs, school districts all across the state have faced massive cutbacks in programs and teachers.

Music, art and physical education programs have been cut completely out of curricula in hundreds of schools, extracurricular activities have been slashed,

the very heart of academic requirements have been reduced to "save" the curriculum money by eliminating teaching positions, the traditional six-hour day has been cut back to a five-hour day for thousands of junior high and high school students in this state — all of this because of inadequate funding and low educational priorities.

And who cares? Are the communities in this state up in arms about their declining public school system? Not on your life. But the teachers care — the National Educational Association cares — and that's why they are demanding third funding of education. Mr. Richard, not because teachers desire "jummy" salary increases.

ELAINE MILLER  
President,  
Redford Union Education Association  
MEANEA

## Frieda Hils rediscovers herself, the Goodfellows

Frieda Hils wearily sank into the chair, wishing in vain that she was home. It was a hard chair, the sort that officers delight in inflicting upon their employees.

She propped her feet up on the desk and looked at the clock. It was too late for her to be here, in the empty office. But this was her job. She was hired to clean the mess that those daytime office workers left for her.

And today was the worst. You'd think that during the holiday season they'd have enough wretchedness to thank her for a poor working woman.

But that's the trouble she thought. No one thought of anyone, anyone.

Realizing that she was going to work late that night, she fished a crumpled newspaper out of the basket and smoothed it out before her on the desk.

"Even the desk is dirty," she harrumphed to herself. "Whoever uses that one is a real winner."

She removed a day-old candy bar, a half eaten apple and an untouched Dorito's hamburger from the desk top. Carefully, so as not to touch the offending objects, she held them over the top of the wastepaper basket and let go.

Thump. Bump. She watched them land in the soft heap of papers. Some of the paper hadn't even been used.

Turning her attention to the newspaper, she skimmed over the ads and the various holiday appeals.

"Everyone wants money," she said. "Aldul. What about me. I work hard for what I have. No one gave me anything."

But as she automatically turned the pages, she managed to spy an old familiar cartoon at the bottom of the page.

It was the Goodfellows cartoon, drawn so many years ago, to illustrate that man in the sharp business suit, still remained a part of the lattered boy selling newspapers beside him.

"The boy he was," Frieda read to herself.

"Himself. People always forget about others that don't have it so good. I guess."

"But I bet they don't realize that they're still attached to those other people. If they worked their way up, they still have memories of being poor. If they didn't, they still have to realize that they

share the world with people who don't have as much as they," Frieda thought.

She sat back and smoothed out her hair, pleased to have undertaken such a philosophical discussion at that late hour.

THE GOODFELLOWS were as familiar to her during the holiday as itself. But like itself, she learned to ignore them.

Why they'll be out there, on every street corner selling their papers today," she said.

Still pleased with her ability to understand the universe, she hunted for her coin purse, which she kept pinned to the pocket of her uniform and counted the money she'd give the Goodfellows.

"Every child should have a Christmas," she said, remembering a few holidays that she had missed as a child because her family couldn't afford the traditional trimmings, the beautifully wrapped gifts.

As she looked up from her purse, she saw her old friend Wiloughby Wink cruise by the office window. Even in the darkness, she was sure that he was smiling approval at her.

LOUISE OKRUTSKY

HENRY M. HOGAN, JR., Co-Publisher  
PHILIP H. POWER, Co-Publisher

JOHN REDDY, Executive Editor  
ARTHUR LANGER, Advertising Sales Manager

Member of  
MICHIGAN PRESS ASSOCIATION  
SUBURBAN NEWSPAPERS OF AMERICA  
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

## Figure on Saving this Christmas at Macauley's!



CASIO  
MEMORY-8F

The new 8-digit memory calculator features a built-in monthly alarm, a rapid draft function, percent key and a built-in 10% tax key. Also features a 10% tax key.

JUST \$14.95



TEXAS INSTRUMENTS  
INCORPORATED

THE LITTLE PROFESSOR

The Little Professor is a built-in calculator that teaches basic arithmetic to children. It has a built-in 10% tax key and a built-in 10% tax key.

Now \$17.88

Remember! Macauley's is your headquarters for many fine names in calculators.



Shop at any of our 10 convenient locations. There's one near you!

**MACAULEY'S**

Blairwood • Troy Commons • Wundtland

## Holiday Savings Holiday Hearth



Glass Fireplace Enclosure  
by Bennett Ireland

Beautiful picture frame design, bi-folding doors with heat-resistant glass provides a clear view of the fire. Precise draft control saves energy. Antique Brass Finish.

SALE \$89.88

Reg. \$145

Curtain screen for glass enclosure \$10.95



Flexscreens® Hanging Screens

Here's the finest custom screen on the market. The hinged curtains literally float on the Chromo Guide rods. The built-in pulleys run over movable precision-rolled pulleys for ultimate ease of operation. It cannot jam. This screen also has simple adjustments in the height of the Chromo Guide rod for exact curtain level at the hearth, and slug fit of the bar facing across the top of the fireplace opening.

All sizes up to 50" \$49.95

VISIT OUR COMPLETE FIREPLACE DEPARTMENT FOR ALL YOUR ACCESSORIES



CHRISTEN  
FIREWOOD STORAGE  
CRIB 14"

Big 41" diameter, holds up to 1/8th cord of wood. Heavy tubular steel—use it indoors or out.

1518/57-550-3

## TOOL SETS



Save Up To 25%

Special Christmas Gifts!  
• Set of 10 or 15  
• Black or Antique Brass Finishes



BI-FLO DOUBLE BURNER

Available in sizes 18" to 60" to fit every fireplace just right. The cost is less than just 1 season of buying wood if you use your fireplace as often as you should. These gas logs with character add flexibility in stocking the 'wood' and have a 7 year guarantee. Also included is THE DELUXE EMBER KIT.

Other Models from 74" \$99.95

Reg. \$114.95

THE LOGGER

"Roll your own log..."

The Logger is a unique, new concept in fireplace logs. It's a log that rolls out of a built-in container, giving you the look of a real log.

\$12.88

STERNO LOGS

Exclusive Set: Sharing Ship

88" ea. 6/4"

5 MILE ROAD  
41 FARMINGTON ROAD

**LIVONIA HARDWARE**

True Value  
HARDWARE

DINERS CLUB

PHONE  
GA 2-1155 - 837-1611

OPEN  
DAILY 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.

SUNDAY 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Farmington Observer

Division of  
SUBURBAN COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION

STEVE BARNARD, Editor  
352-5400