

Monday's Commentary

Police brawl demands outside investigator

An outside investigator should be brought in to seek out all the facts surrounding a brawl between off-duty Farmington police officers and three teens last month.

Any time police officials are involved in an altercation with civilians — especially when violence occurs — a thorough investigation must be launched with a follow-up report to the public.

At stake is the public's confidence in its law enforcement agency. Without that confidence, police are unable to perform an effective job. We've seen it in other communities. It can happen in Farmington.

While it might be preferable for an internal investigation to take place, it is impractical in a department as small as Farmington's Public Safety Department.

Chief Dan Byrnes found that out when he attempted to investigate the incident. A "blue veil" was placed rapidly over the affair by officers involved. It was impossible for him to find out who was responsible and who should be disciplined for this unwarranted conduct.

Already charges of a "witch hunt" have been

made by some of the officers involved. Any city hall insider will meet the same resistance.

Police credibility would be strained rather than reinforced by any internal investigation. Lurking in the minds of the electorate would be the nagging doubt of whether the entire story was told or if those guilty were brought to justice.

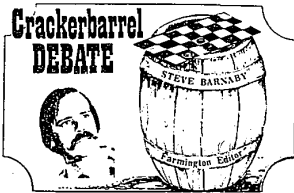
Larger police departments have internal affairs divisions — persons who are a separate and unbiased unit. No such instrument is available in Farmington.

BUT ALTERNATIVES do exist.

For one, the city could request an investigation by the Michigan State Police. Another is to have a private investigator from another community unfamiliar with Farmington personnel investigate.

The public also must have assurances that orderliness of the department is maintained so that day-to-day operations of police business continues.

City Manager Bob Deadman should be lauded and supported by city council for his recommendation



that the police department be run by his office. But Deadman, too, should keep his hand out of the investigation.

Farmington already is losing one fine public servant in Dan Byrnes. It would be ridiculous to risk sacrificing one of the finest city managers in Michigan.

Accusations of a witch hunt also should be discounted. At this point the stories of the fight and what happened during the investigation made by Byrnes are muddled and unclear.

It would be preferable that the officers involved step forward and identify themselves like they should have done in the first place.

If those involved really care about this community and the reputation of its police force, they should be willing to take their lumps.

The Flip Side by craig piechura



Readers' forum

Smith refutes Dupont

Editor:

In response to the letter of Oct. 1 from Lawrence Dupont (who is, incidentally, husband of Barbara Dupont Mr. Donn Wolf's campaign manager) stating that my referring to the primary election results as a "hate vote," I can understand Mr. Dupont's reluctance to be identified as a person who would respond to the fears and emotional outbursts generated by the rumors and lies spread by supporters of candidates to political office (especially if one candidate advertises himself as a former Episcopal minister).

The campaign waged by Mr. Wolf and his pack (Lange and Burwell) is a one-issue harangue designed to confuse and frighten the voters. The deviousness Mr. Dupont refers to is the calculated effort of his own candidate, Donn Wolf, in an effort he launched last fall by his statements that he had a plan that could elect Mickey Mouse to City Council and it looks like that's what he's aiming to do.

If Mr. Dupont worries about the image of Farmington Hills he is several months too late. At a recent conference of the Michigan Municipal League held in Dearborn, Councilmember Jody Sorones was greeted on Wednesday morning after the election, with sad commentaries from delegates all over Michigan concerning the direction in which this community appeared to be heading.

AS A MATTER of fact, it was on Thursday when I, as a delegate, and Mr. Joe Alkateeb, as an alternate delegate, were discussing the election and the results that he remarked to me that the outcome showed a hate vote and I concurred. Contrary to Mr. Dupont's opinion, I know the voters of Farmington Hills care about their city and are concerned with many issues.

PERHAPS it is Wolf's and Lange's ineptness and recent move into their city that accounts for their lack of understanding. I cannot make any comment as to Mr. Burwell's inability to address this problem. Unfortunately the three seem to favor the city's involvement into the housing area, which would create a new department and public housing. That's what Herman Gardens is and the units built by Dearborn are now in desperate need of upkeep because that city is having difficulty in maintaining them as they would like.

It is unfortunate that candidate Wolf through Mr. Dupont found it necessary to interject his vituperative comments against me, but, from the exposure through the public letter box, he must realize he is vulnerable. I hope with all my heart that Mr. Wolf will remember that he came at my invitation to be a

participant on tour to two similar developments by the same builder and again to my home for a discussion on this worthwhile endeavor. At those times, he seemed sincerely to care for what the aim of our citizens' committees was all about and he voiced no unfavorable objections. It is indeed sad to believe that the need for an issue on which to run for council has made him come out against senior housing and the needy and handicapped in our community.

The only education to these citizens I feel council can give now is concerning the senior housing issue. It can be stated in a few sentences.

IT IS for our residents. It will be built by a private builder with bonds sold on the securities exchange bought by private individuals and it will entail no cost to the taxpayer. It is not built with HUD or any government money. Residents will receive rent subsidy from the federal government — their tax dollars and ours coming back to our community. To get 200 units of senior housing we are taking 54 units of townhouses for Farmington Hills families who will be subsidized and 10 units of barrier free design for our handicapped. Hardly an impact on a city of 56,000 residents. The average number of children is less than one per unit. Citizens needing this housing are urged to call the clerk's office as names are being placed on a list. Any of Farmington Hills, will get at no charge a senior center with all the facilities to enable people to keep active, alert, alive and to live as vital human beings — a center for them not just those residing in the development.

So that is my idea of education, Mr. Dupont, reporting to the people of the Hills on the truth of what council and the administration are looking forward to in a privately sponsored development for senior citizens of our city. All the candidates except Wolf, Lange and Burwell are ready to respond to this human need and to those who have built our schools and watched this area grow around them.

JOANNE SMITH, Candidate for council, Farmington Hills

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Voter backs referendum

Editor:

You stated the "upcoming city council elections gives the voters ample opportunity to show how they feel about council decision." Per Wednesday, Sept. 12, Detroit News, three candidates against low-income housing were the leading vote-getters. Doesn't that say something regarding the citizens' view? (In Birmingham, 1978, all city council members were defeated or recalled over a similar issue.)

The point is, if citizens object to a decision (by council members) not on a ballot, what is the objection to a petition drive for a referendum? It seems a citizen hasn't any other recourse. Petitions are one of a few tools available to gain a voice in decisions made by elected officials that are not on the ballot.

Further — many Farmington Hills citizens have no quarrel with senior citizen housing and only want a say regarding low income housing. As you stated in your editorial "... if we disapprove of those decisions we show our displeasure at the ballot box." Displeasure was so shown in the election on Tuesday Sept. 11th. Moreover, displeasure may possibly be shown again by ballot if the issue of low-income housing was put to a vote. No one can know that if the issue is not presented to the public. Council members are representatives of the people and should reflect the decisions of the people.

If council doesn't listen to the people, then we resort to petitions to be heard.

MARCIA D. CAMPBELL, Farmington Hills

At 73, Dr. Olivier W. "Doc" Marcotte of Southfield has been given encouragement from the federal government in the form of a patent.

He now holds Patent No. 4154685 from the U.S. Patent Office. There's an engraving of the U.S. Patent Office Building on top of the document. There's a gold embossed seal on the bottom and the whole thing is bound together with a blue ribbon.

All this is not too bad for a guy who keeps a jar of human excrement on the shelf of his workshop for research purposes. Dr. Marcotte is the inventor of the Marcotte Gravity Flow Septic Tank System.

While some men strive to build a better mousetrap, Marcotte is more concerned about finding a better way of eliminating our unmentionables.

He probably talks more about what happens to human waste than most people can stomach. Such is the curse of any specialist.

Sanitary sewers are anything but, says Dr. Marcotte. When the city gets heavy rains, Marcotte says treatment plants inevitably dump raw sewage into our rivers and lakes. Like American Indians, Marcotte believes it unwise to dump human waste into our water supply.

Septic fields are an improvement over sewers, he contends, but too often become clogged because the design of conventional septic tanks makes for an incomplete bacteriological breakdown of waste.

One soon learns, upon talking to Dr. Marcotte, that bacteria is a "good guy" while "scum" is the culprit. He keeps a clump of dried-up scum around his workshop to graphically demonstrate the point.

The trouble with conventional septic tanks, says Marcotte, is that frothy scum builds up on the surface of the water in the single tank system. The scum soon becomes so thick that methane gas and carbon dioxide can't bubble up through the surface and organisms which break wastes down die. Thus, the fermentation process stops inside the tank and sludgy, toxic discharge is released into the underground septic field, which quickly becomes clogged.

This entails costly repairs such as pumping out the septic tank and digging up the clogged drainage field, as many homeowners with septic tanks know only too well.

Marcotte's system uses four different septic tanks with outlet pipes placed three inches below each inlet pipe. Scum, the frothy "culprit," falls into a silt in a plastic pipe in each tank which keeps the scum from accumulating on the surface. Gravity keeps the water flowing from tank to tank where the bacteriological breakdown continues to the point where it is discharged into a filtration field of creek tiles and gravel.

When water leaves the filtration field, Dr. Marcotte says its good enough to drink and he'll prove it to skeptical health inspectors.

Shirlee's Sallies

From giving you'll receive

Don't try to tell Judith Muehl there's no such thing as miracles.

She'll counter by telling you it's a present-day miracle that her daughter Lynsey is alive, can see, and run and play like other little girls her age.

Lynsey licked Ryley's Syndrome, a non-communicable disease that hits healthy children following a viral infection like measles or influenza.

Lucky for Lynsey, there was help available through the Ryley's Syndrome Study Center at Children's Hospital and Kennedy-Kichigan Rehabilitation Foundation.

Both are Torch Drive-supported agencies, using your dollars and mine to provide service.

Lyndsey was nursed back to consciousness and a slow recovery. After intensive therapy, she is on her way and attends a Head Start program.

The Ryley's Syndrome Study Center is working on research to find causes and treatment for the mysterious disease which is killing children in this area today.

There are 137 Torch Drive-supported agencies that make our community a better place to live.

ENCORE IS a post mastectomy rehabilitation group which combines special exercises with group discussion sessions to help women who have had mastectomies return to normal lifestyles.

The women share information and experiences and give each other support and encouragement they can't find elsewhere. Sponsored by the YWCA, ENCORE is possible because you give to the Torch Drive.

Medical research, vocational training, care for the young and the aged, recordings for the blind, family counseling and neighborhood service are a sampling of the broad range of services provided by United Foundation agencies, supported by your contribution.

Never static, like the needs of the community, the services change constantly. And this year, the shrinking dollar makes your contribution more important than ever.

Although only 5 percent of each dollar you give is used to cover the cost of fund raising and administration, the cost of operating for member agencies has soared for the United Foundation, just as your costs have risen at home.

It's hard to instantly compute the value of contributing to 137 agencies. But if you ever needed kidney dialysis or the help of a visiting nurse or have been involved in scouting programs, you may have some idea how far the UF dollars reach.

Bill McCombs of Southfield took a cardiopulmonary resuscitation class (CPR) in school through the Red Cross. Bill was the only one taking the elective course, but so far he's the only one to use his CPR training to save a life.

WHEN FRED GIBBS suffered a heart attack and stroke last spring, Bill's quick application of CPR restored the ailing man's breathing before the Life Support Unit arrived. If Bill hadn't known CPR, Gibbs would not be recovering from that heart attack now.

Foster care, wheel chairs, artificial limbs, children's camps are just a few of the services UF dollars provide.

Support is there for Michigan Cancer Foundation, Epilepsy Center of Michigan, United Cerebral Palsy Association, Children's Leukemia Foundation and many others.

It's there because your contribution is working in 112 communities and right here in Southfield and Lathrup Village.

You've heard the slogan: "People who need, need people who care." Caring must be everyone's responsibility.

They've made it easy for you, or don't you remember when more than 100 hats were passed each and every year in order to support community agencies.

You can give once for all. Remember, there's no shortage of those who need. What's needed are those who care. Think about that when your neighbor comes to the door for your Torch Drive contribution, or when they hand you the green envelope at your office.

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