

from our readers

Disappointed in coverage

To the editor:

I am disappointed in your choice of words regarding the peace activities at Our Lady of Sorrows this coming weekend. Because this is an emotionally charged issue, words that connote and nuance meanings need to be chosen with care.

For example, your use of the term "anti-nuke" is not a term mentioned at all in any literature or promotion of the peace "vigil." "Anti-nuke" certainly conveys a negative and inflammatory attitude. It conjures up scenes of demonstrations, chanting, and the like. Again, in none of the literature about this peace vigil is the term anti-nuke used. The use of "vigil" again your term, as opposed to "vigil," is another poor choice of terms. "Vigil" specifically refers to the night before a religious feast or observance, in this case the feast of Pentecost. "Rally" again depicts a much different picture, something much more boisterous. The use of "vigil" is a consciously chosen word to clarify the gathering of people for this event.

Bishop Gumbleton is coming to Sorrows to explain the pastoral letter, to clarify questions and meanings, and to shed some light on how the bishops came to finally and overwhelmingly agree on their letter. He is coming to inform. I feel your depiction indicated he was coming to lead the rally or to cheer us on, so to speak. Because Bishop Gumbleton is a controversial figure and is not received by some, in fairness to him and to what he is doing I think it would have been more appropriate to clearly state his intentions for coming to Sorrows. Reflecting on the responses you wrote from the Oral Quarrel, it is clear to me that those who were already against the bishop's stand are now more entrenched. I would have hoped they would at least feel open to attend his presentation to see and understand why the bishops said what they said and to understand the serious care that went into the wording of their letter. I think you could have assisted with that with more careful wording of what is really happening when he comes.

The Farmington Observer is widely read and supported. For me it is the newspaper that gives the most and best information about what is happening in the Farmington-Farmington Hills area. I am particularly appreciative of your coverage of what young people are doing and involved with in the area. I would hope, then, that you would print

information as objectively and accurately as you can, knowing your best interest is in the best interest of the people you serve. As an English major in college, I am concerned about word usage. Again, your paper needs to use words that inform and open people's understanding, not, I think, to incite or rile. I sincerely hope you will continue to find the right words to convey the real situations.

David Murray
Farmington Hills

Fallen friend memorialized

To the editor:

Every year, on the last Monday in May, Americans gather to celebrate Memorial Day. Some people use picnics and softball games, some the Indy 500 to celebrate. In some towns, the traditional parade with the high school band, the VFW, and the American Legion, marches down main street to either the cemetery or a monument in the town square. Words are said, flowers placed and a salute is rendered. The band members fidget while they wait to be released. Then, from behind a hill, the echo of trumpets playing the final tribute, "TAPS." Older men get misty remembering people long since passed away, and the younger children wonder what it's all about.

In February 1981, while stationed at Fort Rucker, Ala., as a helicopter instructor pilot for the Army, "what it's all about" took on a new meaning for me. I had gone into the Warrant Officer Hall of Fame looking to find my little bit of immortality, a guidon used by class '76-77, Royal Blue, my class. But what I found was the name of an old friend, an acquaintance really, etched in brass. ROY K. (Ken) WILLIAMS, Vietnam, July 1969. We hadn't been good friends, just played in the band together, graduated from Farmington Senior High, class of '67. But his name took on a new meaning to me, a fallen brother. In July 1969, I had just completed basic training and was home on leave between assignments, but I don't remember hearing anything about his death.

Today, 14 years later, I stand in Korea just 25 miles from Panmunjon. The talks go on for a war that ended when I was 4 years old. A state of war still exists between the two Koreas. Sometimes at 2300 hours, (11 p.m.), I'll be outside, and the call of a bugle will float across the compound. Every night the eerie, peaceful, very final, last call of the day, "TAPS." (Remembering those who answered the call, paid the ultimate price).

Rest in Peace, Ken
John T. Bailey Korea

Parents' help is needed

Should more money be given to the school system? No, the educational system has not proven itself a sound financial investment. In fact, traditional public schooling in the United States has proven to be a highly inefficient place to put money. We spend about \$28 billion dollars on education each year.

The cost in Michigan per K-12 student is about \$2,000. The recent National Commission on Excellence in Education report tells how much this money has helped educate our children. Change in the approach of the educational system toward schooling our youth goes without saying and has been dealt with in-depth in the recent federal report.

Some sociologists believe as much as 99 percent of school achievement is determined by non-school variables. James Coleman in Equality of Educational Opportunity cited the student (and his self-image) as the most important person in the classroom for determining school achievement. A non-idealistic environment in the home has been cited by many to forecast school failure. Social scientists such as the late Margaret Mead indicate that the way to make a society great is to address the way people become human—the child-rearing process.

What is indicated to help our children succeed in school is support in the child-rearing task.

HOW CAN SCHOOLS HELP? They could promote the concept of a parent-teacher team, but the teacher is the helper of the parent. They could learn how to counteract a non-idealistic home environment. Educational input could be tailored to children's learning styles to maximize learning potential. The substitute parent role of the school could be recognized, accepted and met. More than 50 percent mothers with young children work. A day off school, even a planned day, with no available alternative activity is disruptive to the family unit and can be dangerous for the young child. Schools could work with community agencies to sponsor after- and out-of-school fun, learning activities.

What can the rest of us do? We could work with the schools and other agencies such as the library to offer accessible, acceptable, after- and out-of-school programs with transportation systems that don't depend upon the parent. Community health and child-care programs must be available and accessible.

Margaret R. Spelman, Ph.D., R.N.
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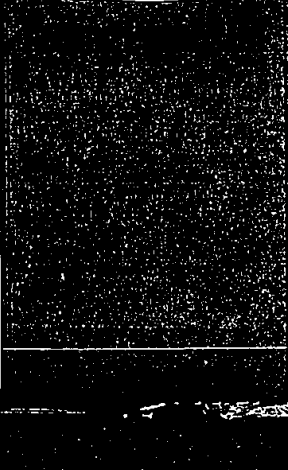
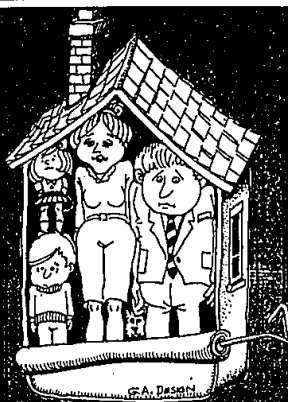
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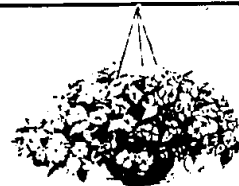
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