

Farmington readers' forum

Letters must be signed, original copies and include the address and telephone number of the writer. None can be returned. Names will be withheld from publication only for sufficient reason. Letters should be limited to 300 words in most cases. We reserve the right to edit them. Send letters to Readers' Forum, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River Ave., Farmington 48024.

Law Day is special

To the editor:

This year, Americans begin their 200th year of government by the rule of law under the Constitution — the longest lasting document of its kind in human history.

We have special reason, therefore, to celebrate our annual observance of Law Day on May 1. Across the nation, many people will take a bit of time from their normal pursuits to learn about the tradition of law that has allowed our country to successfully protect the liberties of her people.

That success springs from the fact that our government consists of a body of written laws, to which each of us can appeal. Unlike those in many societies past and present, we need not depend for our rights on the good will of those who govern.

Our founders understood the tyranny of the rule of men. That is why — as they looked toward an uncertain future — they embraced the principle of a government of laws and created the durable document known as the Constitution. The foundations of these ideals were laid long ago, beginning with the Magna Carta in 1215, by others who faced trials and tyranny with hope and a passion for freedom.

Events in today's world remind us how precious these foundations remain. As Calvin Coolidge wrote on the first Armistice Day: "War is the rule of force. Peace is the reign of law."

Even as we shudder at events that reflect the rule of force, we sometimes forget how rare and essential the reign of law truly is. Yet we cannot hope to share our principles with the world if we don't fully understand them ourselves.

The pursuit of that understanding is part of the eternal

vigilance" that we have always accepted as the price of freedom. We should understand that complacency about our laws and Constitution can be deadly. We should understand that far from being an obstacle to freedom, law is the indispensable foundation that makes it possible.

And we should understand that in a democracy especially, law attacks the tyranny of the elite. It is law that lets us reach for opportunity and equality. In a Detroit campaign speech in 1912, Woodrow Wilson said: "Law is meant more for the beginners in every enterprise than for those who have achieved. Law is beckoning on to future generations, heartening them, cheering them . . ."

These are the principles that have created our freedom and made Americans the envy of the world. From the barons of medieval England to our 99th Congress, men and women have worked to build and retain these principles — through the rule of law.

We have much to celebrate on this day — our "Foundations of Freedom."

Sherman Sharpe Jr.
Chairman,
State Bar of Michigan
Committee of Law Day

Broomfield does listen

To the editor:

In a recent letter, Arlene Victor of Bloomfield Hills commented that many of Congressmen William Broomfield's constituents feel it is a waste of time to contact him, since he . . . "votes 100 percent of the time in support of the President."

Although I used to agree with her, I must now come to his defense.

I visited the Congressman's Washington office last January to discuss several issues import-

ant to public education in Michigan. At that time I was impressed by his willingness to listen to arguments against educational vouchers and in support of state and local tax deductibility retention.

The viewpoints I presented were opposite to those of the President, however Mr. Broomfield was most receptive. He used the occasion to express his dislike of political lobbies who threaten opposition at the polls if their views are not voted. He convinced me that he is interested in hearing all sides of issues.

Since my political philosophy is usually not the same as his, I do not expect we'll be on the same side very often, but he has earned my respect and appreciation.

I would encourage his constituents to abandon their impression of his "blind" support of the administration and make an effort to alert him to your concerns. I am sure he will listen.

Edith Gonzales, president,
Michigan Association
of School Boards

Artists Club gives thanks

To the editor:

Only recently I read Loraine McClish's article of March 27. You have again promoted the importance of the Farmington Artists Club to our community so skillfully that I felt you deserve many thanks, also in the name of the club members.

Professionalism among the members has truly surfaced in the past years and I am sure with your help we will continue to grow and contribute to the culture of our cities and surrounding communities.

Again, many thanks for your support.

Walter Reddig, AIA
Farmington Hills

Thursday, May 1, 1980 O&E

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May Day

World honors workers today

TODAY IS May Day.

The British in the Middle Ages revived some ancient rituals to celebrate spring and fertility on this day. Children would sing songs and dance around maypoles. For a while this ritual was popular in the United States as well.

In 1888, the Socialist International established May Day as a day to honor workers. Since that time, May Day has been celebrated as Labor Day throughout Europe. As we all know, this is one of the two days every year when the Soviet Union marches its big guns through Red Square. So May Day has a definite red tinge to it, though it is celebrated by workers in most capitalist countries as well.

Did you also know that May 1 is Loyalty Day and Law Day in the United States? I suspect that these two days were established to counteract May Day, just as Labor Day in the United States was deliberately set in the late summer to avoid association with May Day. All of this would be fine if it didn't smack of being a slap at the labor pioneers who really made life bearable for the rest of us by forcing capitalists to share the wealth created by labor.

LOYALTY DAY is especially offensive. It suggests loyalty oaths and blind acceptance of government rule. These are the things, I thought, that we most abhorred about the Soviet system of government. In the Soviet Union there is one party, one point of view on major issues and swift punishment for anyone who dares to question the wisdom of the hierarchy.

Pledging loyalty is not a way to honor and celebrate freedom. What are we pledging loyalty to? The flag — it's a beautiful flag, well designed, colorful and richly symbolic. But the flag represents a nation united in its diversity, forged in revolution and driven forward by constantly conflicting ideas. Pledging loyalty to one



second runs

Hugh Gallagher

idea or one narrow concept of what America is seems very un-American.

I doubt if the fathers of Loyalty Day had the Bill of Rights in mind when they designated May 1 as a day to pledge loyalty to the government. I suspect that the spirit of Joe McCarthy hovered over this one.

The United States government is a servant of its people, a strong executive elected by the people balanced by a legislature representing those people. It is not a monolith, though it certainly serves strong special interests.

A free press, free speech, free religion and all the other rights that are ours, not as a gift of the government but as inherent in our being, protect us from that government or those elements that would usurp or use that government. Those are the principles that I am loyal to and I don't have to pledge my loyalty. To be a good American I can just keep on writing and knowing that I have that right.

LAW DAY is fine. I respect the principle of law. We are a nation of laws, those written by the legislatures and those inherited from British common law. Anarchy would only result in the dominance of the strong over the weak. The law, in principle, keeps us equal.

It doesn't always work that way. And Law Day coming on May Day suggests that we are opposing the unlawful riff-raff of radical labor. In the 1800s, the workers of this country were in a pitched battle with the forces of law and capital. The forces of law were owned by the rich. The

law was not blind and not far. Workers, and at the time that meant a large portion of the population, suffered from unsafe, unsanitary and inhumane working conditions. Children as young as 5 years old were working 12-hour days in mines and textile mills. Wages were meager and most of the money went to buy things at the company store at exorbitant rates.

When Labor Day comes around in September, the talk is always about Samuel Gompers. But it wasn't Gompers and his union for skilled labor that changed things. It was the radicals, the socialists and the industrial unions that took to the streets and brought change. It was Eugene Debs and Daniel DeLeon and even such Wobblies as Big Bill Haywood who brought national attention to the plight of railroad workers, miners and steel workers.

Today all you hear about is union abuse. Unions want too much. They've ruined the economy with their demands. But the truth is, most of us live good lives because of unions and fear of unions. In this country, unionization and the success of strikes took the wind out of socialist and communist organizing. Unions expanded the economy by forcing employers to pay decent wages, which created a large middle class. That middle class in turn bought more of what their fellow laborers created.

Today is May Day, a day to honor the workers of the world.

Hugh Gallagher is a copy editor for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

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