

# Kirk will add spice to reunion

I NEED AN IMMEDIATE expansion of vocabulary, wisdom as to the teachings of Plato and a mentality capable of penetrating the murkiness of Washington political thinking.

You see, a week hence I expect to come face to face with a man referred to by his peers as critic, historian of ideas, biographer, novelist, political theorist, essayist, journalist, distinguished professor, lecturer, debater, teller of ghost stories, Michigan's foremost man of letters and "the American Cicero."

WHAT CONVERSATIONAL avenues does one explore with a man like that after an initial inane comment about what a nice summer it has been?

The occasion will be a visit into our neighborhood of Russell Amos Kirk and his wife, brought about by Kirk's desire to attend the 50th reunion of his Plymouth High School graduating class of 1936.

A kindly letter a few days ago suggested we meet and was accompanied by a packet of more than 30 published pieces, either written about him or by him.

The Kirks live in a castle of sorts called Piety Hill, in Cecosta, about mid-way between Mount Pleasant and Big Rapids.

If I bring up President Reagan's letter for a testimonial dinner in which the president wrote, "Dr. Kirk has helped renew a generation's interest and knowledge of the underpinnings and the intellectual infrastructure of the conservative revival in our nation," it would lead to admitting I voted for Mondale.

If I speak well of Michigan State University, from which he graduated and where he served on the faculty following four years in the Army, he might refer me to read again this passage from a Kirk biography published in 1982.

"IN 1953 KIRK left Michigan State College. He was not pleased with what he had found in 'the Petrified Forest of Academe' and noted with some misgivings the majority of students who 'resent the presence of the minority who read books,' as well as the administrators 'who have not read Newman, nor



through bifocals  
**Fred DeLano**

anyone else worth reading, and do not intend to."

"He observed that these administrators 'pander to the silliest impulses in state legislatures and associations of alumni,' and that they 'would establish colleges of necromancy if they thought anyone would enroll.'"

Kirk has written 25 books and countless essays and articles. He was a co-founder with William F. Buckley Jr. of the conservative journal, "National Review." He holds the only doctor of letters degree ever awarded to an American by Scotland's famous St. Andrews University.

This is one time the word "scholar" really fits, yet he also is known as a down-to-earth, unpretentious family man who is doing all he can to alter the route of American education from decadence to classic perfection.

A short man of 5'6", Kirk is described by those who have seen him recently as white-haired, stately and dignified. He will be 69 on Oct. 19. His wife, Annette, is a vibrant former New Yorker and turns 46 this year. They were married in 1964 and have four daughters.

IT STRIKES me that the most interesting time to meet the Kirks will be the day after they have experienced the socializing that goes with a 50th reunion. This thought is prompted in part by Kirk's own admission that back in his school days he shunned social activities because they bored him.

Fifty years ago he was one of 106 graduates, 88 of whom survive. They have scattered to the four winds, but Jeannette Bauman Schreyer tells me many will be there with their marital mates. For Russell Kirk it will be a first.

Yep, a "next day" conversation will be best. There may be a few laughs and if it slows we can talk about the kids, heirs and ours. That's always a safe topic. Biased perhaps, but safe.

## 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

## Judge's decision was 'pat on wrist'

To the editor:

Our words will never bring back the Carionis but many drunk drivers are still here.

I think Judge Norman Lippitt's decision was weak and deserves our criticism. Moreover, if he cannot handle public criticism let him learn. We all have to grow a little.

Some people have to develop more than others, especially drunk drivers. This sentence was nothing more than a pat on the wrist.

Peter Gilleran,  
Birmingham

## He's amazed at Lippitt's action

To the editor:

I was appalled and amazed at Judge Norman Lippitt's sentencing of Laura Pinis. You will recall that Ms. Pinis, while driving under the influence of alcohol in March 1985, caused an accident that claimed the lives of the two teenage Carion daughters and caused permanent brain damage to another young man.

Judge Lippitt permitted the reduction of two charges of felony manslaughter to negligent homicide and dropped the felonious driving charges completely. The judge then gave Ms. Pinis a slap on the wrist with two years probation, which included a six month work-release jail program. He then had the nerve to castigate the parents from

Mothers Against Drunk Driving for writing too strong a letter to the court. Pardon them for stepping on the judge's ego.

With full knowledge of the alcohol-related carnage being wrought on our roads, our government proposes expensive, ineffective and possibly unconstitutional check-points. Now, with a bonafide drunk driver killer standing before the bench, Judge Lippitt slaps her wrist.

Judge Lippitt appears to be very soft on drunk drivers. I wonder if he would have been so lenient if the victims were someone near or dear to him. I and many of my colleagues and friends look forward with keen anticipation to Judge Lippitt's next try for elected office.

Howard S. Goldberg, M.D.,  
Bloomfield Hills

## Readers praise column on judge

To the editor:

Thank you, thank you, thank you for speaking out against Judge Lippitt's ruling in the case of the two Carion sisters' death.

My husband and I have been reading the newspaper since the early 1950's and this is the first time that we have been moved to write to applaud an editorial.

We hope that when Judge Lippitt is up for re-election that you will refresh people's memories with another article. It seems that all too often those elected forget their obligations to fulfill the will of the electors.

Margaret and Stewart Anderson,  
Southfield

## Concert-goer disputes review

To the editor:

I'm responding to Helen Zucker's opinions about the Mamas and Papas concert at Meadow Brook.

Contrary to Miss Zucker's ideas of the concert, it was the worst excuse for a so-called musical event that I have ever seen.

Ever since the tragic death of the only talent in the group (Mama Cass), the group has gotten so bad that they are a disgrace to even be on stage. The fact that each character wears a different outfit does not distract from the music if it's played with taste and no talent. But when a motley group gets together, with no talent, no style, no nothing, then they are disgusting.

To have Miss Zucker tell us the music was even mediocre is an insult to my and anyone's intelligence.

I think you owe it to your readers to have integrity, honesty and taste when publishing a report of this kind. Can a writer just say whatever?

People were leaving in rows not because of the stunks — the music stunk! Also, the entertainers were muttering to themselves and each one acted like they had their own individual show.

The only good thing was that they were on last and after the first awful rendition you were free to leave. Fast.

Kindly ask Miss Zucker to write on a subject she knows.

Leon I. Scholchit,  
Farmington Hills

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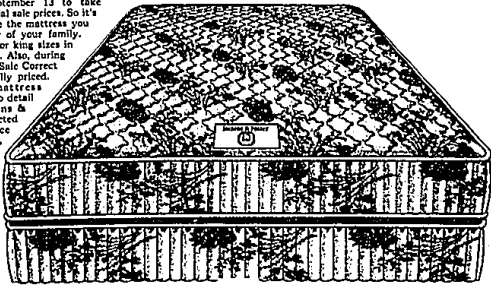
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