

Memories of racial prejudice rekindled

THANK YOU, GERALD Rudolph Ford, 38th president of the United States. Thank you, Carol Teegardin. Thank you, Detroit Free Press.

Let me quote the 62nd and 63rd paragraphs of Teegardin's question-and-answer interview with the former president, conducted recently at the Ford home in California.

Teegardin: "Are you the kind of husband who helps Betty around the house?"

Ford: "Oh, I used to. My principal responsibility was picking up dishes and cleaning up the kitchen after a family meal. That's no so bad."

Teegardin: "You were the kind of husband who helps Betty around the house?"

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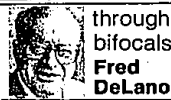
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cluding, "We have a lot of work to do; let's get on with it."

You may have forgotten, or may not have known at all, that Ford had firsthand evidence of the toll a lack of decency and fairness can take. The evidence came from the most racially shameful moment in the University of Michigan's athletic history.

It was in Ford's senior year when he was first-string center on the Michigan football team. A classmate named Willis Ward was the best end and halfback, equally capable in either role. Also, he was black, the first of his race to win a berth on the Wolverine varsity since the turn of the century.

THE OPPONENT On Oct. 20, 1934, at Ann Arbor, was to be Georgia Tech, and Ward was sacrificed at the altar of racial prejudice when Michigan's athletic hierarchy acquiesced to Georgia Tech's demand that the black man be kept out of the Maize and Blue lineup.

I talked with Ward 40 years later, the week Ford became president. By then he was Wayne County Probate Judge and he had this to say:

"Jerry Ford was the first one to make me feel welcome at Ann Arbor. We were close all the way from freshman orientation week together to our graduation together. From a colored-white standpoint, he is one of the finest, most decent sort of guys I know."

"The Georgia Tech game hurt Jerry. It hurt the whole team; it split the team spiritually. I understand indirectly that Jerry called his father to talk over whether he should quit the team because of it."

To report that the Wolverines beat Georgia Tech, 9-2, even without Ward, seems ludicrous. It was their only victory of the 1934 season and was achieved before a "crowd" of 20,001.

Sure, as a student I sang the "victors." But looking back on that week, I think it may have been one of the first times many of us, Gerald Ford included, learned that not all garbage originates from the dining room.

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.

Protection act is move ahead

To the editor:

In November of this year, President Reagan is expected to sign into law the McClure-Volkmer Firearm Owners Protection Act. Finally all the unnecessary restrictions on the sale of firearms, and the harmful bureaucratic authority given to federal regulators will be gone.

Many stipulations of this law were long overdue. Eight provisions will change the 1968 Gun Control Act, all of which are good news for gun owners. With the possibility of two new conservative justices to the Supreme Court, one would think our sacred Second Amendment is beyond defilement.

These recent victories, however, should not be an excuse for complacency. We should not forget the dark days of California's Proposition 15 in 1982. This issue was to place a freeze on the number of existing handguns.

IF PASSED, no more could be bought or brought into the Golden State. Knowing that "gun control" or "anti-gun" would be used to the complete opposite, the measure was called "anti-crime."

Large contributions from celebrities and large corporations gave generously to the coffers of Proposition 15. The liberal bias was apparent when various media gave free advertisements in the newspapers, radio and television all supporting Proposition 15. The \$2 million spent by pro-gun groups seemed too little too late. Surprisingly, when the voters went to the polls in November, Proposition 15 was shot down by a 2-1 margin. How did this happen?

The single person whom private citizens respect most on the issue of crime and gun control is the local police chief, and California's police were overwhelmingly pro-gun.

Do not expect the media to publish the fact that each year a quarter of a million Americans use firearms to defend themselves and their families. Nor will they mention that law-abiding gun owners shot nearly three times as many criminals as police.

DISPUTES regarding the ownership

of drugs, or who will be the seller of drugs in a certain area, account for the greatest number of firearm homicides. These deaths would occur if guns were never invented.

Journalists who try to convince their readers that a home is safer without a firearm are doing the public a serious injustice.

If you are a gun owner, a hunter, or a shooting sports enthusiast, write a nice letter to your police department. Tell them you support a pro-gun group, and you respect and appreciate the fine job the lawmen are doing in your community.

Roger A. Ward,
Hunter Safety Instructor
Sterling Heights

Make spending for courts fair

To the editor:

Fair is a simple concept.

District courts provide services to all our citizens. Unfortunately some courts are presently funded by Oakland County taxes and others by local government taxes.

The result is that people in Southfield, Oak Park, Farmington, Birmingham, Berkley, Bloomfield, Huntington Woods, West Bloomfield, Lathrup, Pontiac, Royal Oak and Waterford pay twice for district court operations.

In the past 14 years, the county subsidy for its district court operations has exceeded \$7 million plus millions for new court houses. And the deficit grows larger each year.

Our county executive and his party leadership on the Board of Commissioners say that they cannot and will not figure out a method to spend our tax dollars fairly in the funding of district courts.

We elect people to treat us all equally. If the present officials say they are not up to the task, then let them stand aside and let others do the job.

Lawrence R. Pernick,
county commissioner
District 20

Host law — It's a valuable tool

To the editor:

I was incensed by the editorial by Steve Barnaby entitled, "Party laws miss the mark." It's a shame that Mr. Barnaby wrote about an issue on which he seems so completely uninformed.

His flippant "supposed" quotes by supporters and politicians had no foundation and were very derogatory. From the beginning, the party law was meant as a deterrent to the "keg parties" that were so prevalent, especially around graduation time.

Many times, parents were pressured into throwing these parties by children who insisted "everybody does it."

With the enactment of this ordinance, parents are now able to defend their stand with, "It's illegal." Police now have an effective tool to often break up these parties before they begin. The success of this ordinance has not been on the number of arrests, but on the great lessening of these types of parties.

Contrary to Mr. Barnaby's statement that the reaction by police is "less-than-enthusiastic," from the beginning it has had the complete support of police. At initial Farmington Hills City Council hearings regarding this ordinance, police officers testified to the value of this ordinance.

Several months ago, a motion was brought up in Farmington Hills City Council by Councilwoman Dudley to dilute said ordinance; and after testimony and debate, it was voted by all but Ms. Dudley to keep the ordinance exactly as it is. Why? Because it is working. The reason so many neighboring communities are adopting similar ordinances is because this ordinance is a very carefully thought out law that is extremely effective as a deterrent.

I agree with Mr. Barnaby that the sale of alcohol to minors by party store owners is a serious problem that should be dealt with, but the "keg parties" is also a serious problem, and the suburban communities that have adopted this ordinance should be applauded for their action. I for one am very glad that it is on the books.

Susan Dolech
Farmington Hills

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