

Opinion

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Education key to AIDS battle

SEX EDUCATION has become a matter of life and death.

The way to prevent sexually transmitted AIDS is through the use of condoms, knowing your sexual partners or abstinence.

Teenagers must be aware of these options if they are to survive this epidemic.

For the first time since the polio epidemic of the 1940s and '50s, the American public is facing a disease on the rampage, undefended by any life-saving vaccine.

AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) will kill tens of thousands within the next five years, according to medical experts. It will kill hundreds of thousands more if a massive educational campaign isn't launched almost immediately. The Vietnam death toll will seem minuscule in comparison.

NO MAGIC cures, no vaccine will be available in the foreseeable future to stop the spread of AIDS. Only education will save lives.

But unlike the battle against polio, the fight to stop AIDS is hampered by a social dilemma — the morality of sex education. The stigma that many in society associate with homosexuality makes the debate an even more complex one.

But with the advent of AIDS, the debate must change if we are to save our children.

Because of the urgency, the public school system is the only realistic outlet

to relay the message in time.

But school administrators, always a cautious bunch, are balking at the idea. Like all bureaucrats, they are waiting for their bosses to give the go-ahead. In this case, the bosses are you, the public.

PARENTS AND teachers must unite in efforts to urge adoption of sex education programs that tell students the truth about AIDS — how it is transmitted and how it can be prevented.

Unfortunately, a lot of bad information is floating around about AIDS. Many people believe that AIDS is a disease reserved for homosexuals — that heterosexuals are protected. But that is a deadly misperception.

Although the homosexual community was one of the first groups to be attacked by AIDS, the disease is spreading into the heterosexual lifestyle.

Drug users who use contaminated needles are now the high risk group.

BUT MOST importantly, teenagers need to know that AIDS can be transmitted through male/female sexual intercourse.

The onset of teenage pregnancy and curable venereal disease pale next to AIDS.

A person can't have just a little bit of AIDS. You either have it or you don't. And if you do have it, one thing is for sure. You will die.

— **Observer & Eccentric Newspapers**

Name city park for civic leader

A monthly peek into Bob Sklar's notebook —



Bob Sklar

PRESSING, IT'S not.

But naming the new youth athletic fields northwest of 13 Mile and Farmington roads is important. Park names say a lot about a community's values.

However well-intentioned, the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Commission's original suggestion, Youth Park, was downright dry and uninviting. The city council was right in kicking it back to the parks and rec folks for reworking.

Jim Ellis Sports Park — now that's a worthy name.

Hills resident Bev Ellis recently suggested such a name in memory of her late husband. She wasn't trying to grab headlines. Simply put, her suggestion was a thoughtful gesture in memory of a giant of a civic activist.

SOME PARKS commissioners had never heard of Jim Ellis. Many newer community followers hadn't either, including yours truly.

But there's plenty of background material that punctuates just how deeply the 35-year resident gave a darn about this community and its greatest resource — its young people.

True, many deserving people have given of themselves on the community's behalf. There can't be memorials for everyone.

But there certainly can — and should be — memorials in cases where contributions are unusually lasting and significant. You'd be hard-pressed to name someone with a richer community service record than Jim Ellis.

He was a community sparkplug long before many current residents even moved to Farmington Hills.

GREGARIOUS AND forthright, Ellis was a shaper of the Farmington area's first organized youth baseball and football leagues. He also organized Farmington High's athletic booster club.

But his dedication to the young extended beyond the diamond or the gridiron.

For many years, Ellis headed up the Farmington Rotary Club's vocational scholarship program.

At varying times, he served as president of the Stroman Acres Civic Association, a delegate to the Farmington Township League of Subdivision Associations, a dad adviser to Farmington DeMolay, chairman of the Farmington Hills Zoning Board of Appeals, treasurer of the Farmington Youth for Understanding chapter, president of Boys Republic and a member of Farmington Public Schools citizens advisory councils.

That's involvement.

But that wasn't all.

Although some Rotarians may think their responsibility ends with attending weekly luncheons, Ellis made the most of his Farmington Rotary Club membership. Long active, he was president in 1978-79 and district chairman of Rotary International's Youth Exchange Program in 1981.

In 1984, Ellis deservedly was named Farmington/Farmington Hills Citizen of the Year.

In his nomination letter, then-Farmington Rotary Club president Harold Wolkind wrote, "Jim embodies all that is right in our society and truly is dedicated to the theory of service above self."

Even after discovering he had cancer, Ellis didn't quit. He battled to the end — and humbled many along the way.

Capturing the essence of Jim Ellis, Councilman Ben Marks said at the time of Ellis' death in March 1985, "He emulated the caring and dedicated person that all cities need to prosper to grow."

Jim Ellis Sports Park — now that's a name with a truly special ring.



Lucas ran against the tide

IN THE END, in the last weeks, it was not a pretty sight, Bill Lucas' tottering campaign. He hung on, as all was, articulate, buoyant, hopeful, but it was obviously turning into a rout.

No one in the last days gave Lucas a glimmer of hope. Some were predicting the biggest loss in modern Michigan politics. It was interesting, the prognosticators were calling it a Lucas loss, not a Blanchard victory.

Lucas trudged on with his family and his campaign staff and little else. Dennis Nystrom, the man who engineered Lucas' victory four years ago and who steered Lucas into the Republican party and into a bid at the governorship, wasn't around, at least not publicly.

He had been axed in a dispute with Lucas' wife, the chroniclers of such travails told us. Easily understood. A man's wife has to be closer than a political partner, no matter how talented.

IN THE END, Lucas appeared to be a lonely figure, even if it wasn't true. Some Republicans were out and out disclaiming any ties to the Lucas candidacy. The unmerciful polls were being trumpeted in the dailies. The writers and columnists kept up a barrage about the failed candidacy.

The Lucas campaign was a shambles, the experts told us — not organized enough, no good issues, no charismatic candidate to turn the public on.



Bob Wisler

The truth is that Lucas' campaign was doomed almost from Day 1. Whatever Lucas' ability, he had far too much ground to try to make up to catch an incumbent governor who was in office during a remarkably kind economic turnaround.

Lucas took his trips outstate while county executive and appeared before chambers of commerce but in the end he was still a black from Detroit to a good percentage of outstate voters, including normal Republicans who might have voted for a white candidate from outstate Michigan.

AND BLANCHARD, ever since his first disastrous few months in office, when he was being lambasted for raising the income tax, skewered for his appointments and harpooned for his helicopter rides, has been on one long roll.

Even raising the income tax has turned to his advantage. People have come to respect the strong stand he took.

But, no matter how bad or good a job the governor has done — and it has been

very good — he was an odds-on favorite to be returned to office because voters simply don't turn out incumbents when times are good unless there are extremely compelling reasons to do so. There were none here in Michigan in 1984-85.

The large political contests are image and flash and here is where Blanchard always had the edge: the image, the all-powerful image being built up in the conscious and subconscious minds of the public, the seven-second snippets of television tape that appeared three times a week on local television stations speaking as our leader.

HERE IS the governor at the flood. Here is the governor at the bridge. Here is the governor. Here is the governor. Here is the governor. . . . Until the governor becomes a part of our psyche.

How did the GOP expect it to work? Lucas, a black Detroitite with some modest successes as Wayne county executive, a Democrat turned Republican for the occasion of the race, a candidate without a single issue that could make him look good and Blanchard had, a man with only a smile, a hope, a nice blue suit and a small coterie of supporters and well-wishers.

He appealed to people to allow him to make history, by making him the first elected black governor, but in the end, as in the beginning, he was running against the tide of political history.

Car buying lesson for execs

ROSS PEROT and Len Poger are on the same wage length. Both have figured out what's wrong with the auto industry brass.

Perot is the better known in the business world. He's chairman of Electronic Data Systems, now wholly owned by General Motors, and GM's largest single shareholder.

A Texan, Perot brings an outside view to the auto industry of which he is now part, and he made known his views, in explicit terms, in a copyrighted interview with Ward's Automotive World magazine.

GM'S TOP people are "isolated, insulated" in their 14th-floor executive offices of the General Motors Building in Detroit. "It's a time warp."

Some Perot proposals: "I'd get rid of the executive dining rooms. I would urge the senior executives to locate their offices where real people are doing real work — live with them, listen to them, spend time with them, find out straight up what it would take to win, and do it."

American-made cars continue to take a beating from the imports, and recently GM's earnings took a 49 percent nosedive; it actually lost money on its vehicle operations.

Let us skip over Perot's suggestions



Tim Richard

on internal management and get to the nub of this column:

"To my knowledge, I'm the only senior officer or director that refuses to accept a car from General Motors. I buy my cars from the dealers and pay for them and just stand in line. . . . and get them fixed and take whatever comes, just like any other customer."

LEN POGER is editor of the Garden City and Westland Observers. He was the first person I know to suggest that auto executives' outlooks would change immediately and drastically if they had to buy cars from dealers the way we poor slobs do.

Not only top brass get their cars through the companies, but relatively minor managerial people and engineers do, too.

Buying a new car from a dealer is the worst experience in the commercial world. More nerve-racking than buying a house. Worse than arranging a fu-

neral. Even worse than Ann Arbor traffic and parking meters.

That's not my opinion and Len's, if I may speak for him. In a quick survey I found all 10 of my respondents loathe buying a new car.

And it's an experience the auto company managers miss.

I FOR ONE have no serious complaint about how cars are made. Maybe that's because I buy 'em stripped down. The fewer gadgets, the less that can go wrong.

It's hard to know where to start in describing the buying experience. The blizzard of options . . . the tricks with trade-ins . . . the slippery prices . . . the accursed warranties.

Dealers' shops are even more dreadful. I'll never, ever, forget the time my Chevy dealer not only didn't do half the work I asked for, but lost my owner's handbook and couldn't replace it, so I didn't know what VP on the 14th floor to complain to. My car all got worked on by the friendly Amoco garage a mile from the office.

That Chevy ran beautifully for 165,000 miles, and the guy I sold it to got 20,000 more wonderful miles out of it. But those dealers! Yikes!