

Remember your community roots

IT SEEMS appropriate during Thanksgiving week to speak of our history, not in the sense of dry and dusty assignments to memorize names and dates from a textbook but rather to give a pat on the back to the hundreds, maybe thousands, among us who bring the past to life through their local and state historical societies.

My teachers of long ago made history seem a continuous march of politics and war, leaving untold the economic, social and cultural matters. It may have been global in one classroom, national in another, but never of our own backyard — Michigan.

I think things have changed. If so, it's because a host of organizations have pointed the way with the enthusiasm of volunteers along a route well defined by a gracious philanthropist in the early '70s when she donated money for construction of the Dunning Memorial Building as the home of the Plymouth Historical Museum.

Margaret Dunning said its purpose would be to provide all who enter "knowledge of our forefathers, enjoyment of our heritage, encouragement toward preservation, and inspiration to continue progress, for without a past there is no future."

I DOUBT if anyone ever had the audacity to tell Margaret Dunning, "If the shoe fits, put it on," but I don't mind suggesting that her words have no geographical limits.

Nor does it matter whether the evidence of the past is exhibited in a solitary municipal attic or throughout the two floors of a 15,000-square-foot building such as Plymouth's. Roots are personal to a community and it's nice to know from whence they grew.

Be it Birmingham or Northville, Rochester or Livonia, the Farmingtons or Canton, and on through the alphabet, we all have a heritage of which to be proud. Our freeways have replaced the Erie Canal of 1825 for spreading out the population, but it matters little. Roots are what matter.

What prompted this trail of thought was recent discovery of one of the best kept secrets in southeastern Michigan museum circles, although this may have been more from lack of a press agent than anything else.

It so happens that one particular program of the Plymouth museum, called "Then and Now," features five social history classes for school groups. They are "hands-on" discussions under the direction of Betty Childs, the wife of a frequent golfing companion of mine,



through bifocals
Fred DeLano

and they are called "Michigan Indians," "Pioneer Families," "Great Grandma's Trunk," "Let's Go Shopping" and "What Did They Do For Fun?"

THIS WAS originated just a couple of years ago, fliers were sent to every school within a 50-mile radius, and in two years more than 10,000 students have benefitted through advance reservations by their teachers.

Meanwhile, Betty put together an exhibit for a museum association convention where she heard comments from delegates such as, "We don't know what to ask you because this sort of thing just isn't done!"

One of those delegates was a representative of the renowned Smithsonian Institution. She spent a day in Plymouth studying the project, returned to Washington, and then with the Plymouth example as a model created what the Smithsonian calls its "Discovery Center."

Where I sit that's called high praise.

Now, with the holiday season drawing near, to say nothing of Michigan's official sesquicentennial salute to statehood on Jan. 26, festive historical links are being planned in many communities. A spokesman for the Historical Society of Michigan, headquartered in Ann Arbor, has told me there are at least 200 such local groups in the state.

Your participation where you live will be more than welcome, I am sure. However, if you feel left out and if history has passed you by, "Come on down," as they say on the Bob Barker show.

COME ON down (up, over, or whatever) to Plymouth, Saturday, Dec. 6, for a Christmas Gala Open House Benefit from 8 p.m. until midnight at the museum (which is smack dab downtown, splitlin' distance from city hall), or the Sesquicentennial Open House on Sunday, Jan. 25.

For that matter, society president Bruce Richard suggests, come for both. We need members, we need volunteers for the many ever-changing seasonal projects, and maybe we need a press agent.

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.

Election view very partisan

To the editor:

As an attorney and a resident of Farmington Hills, I have read with interest and chagrin Tim Richard's series of articles and editorials on the recent Oakland County Circuit Court race.

Since I am an attorney, it would be improper for me to comment directly on the election or on the qualifications of any particular candidate or judge. However, I do not believe it is improper for me to comment on the qualifications, methods or motives of your staff.

Mr. Richard's articles were so obviously partisan and one-sided as to cast serious doubt upon his motives and journalistic integrity. Although, as an attorney and a member of the Oakland County Bar Association, I am honored that he has placed so much trust and faith in the ability of a small group of unidentified attorneys to select a judge for the entire population of Oakland County, modesty requires me to decline the honor.

However, I think, once and for all, the issues should be laid to rest. Judge Cooper has been selected by the overwhelming majority of voters of Oakland County and will shortly take the bench. Whether Mr. Richard supported Judge Cooper or not, she has now been elected by the people in a democratic nonpartisan election and should be accorded the honor and dignity due her as a circuit judge. Continued "poisoned pen" editorials, quoting discredited and stale statistics and election slogans, does not serve your readers and engenders disrespect for the bench.

Although Mr. Richard's latest editorial does not require direct refutation, I think it should be pointed out that his statistics are not convincing. Thus, out of 3,000 members of the Oakland County Bar Association, only 30 percent took the time to respond to the "poll." Since the results are largely anonymous, no indication of the location of those 30 percent or of the nature of their practice or their knowledge of Judge Cooper or Mr. Ternan is available or released. Out of the 900 respondents, a small

minority, representing 5 percent of the total membership of the Oakland County Bar Association, apparently rated Judge Cooper "not qualified." This is an even smaller percentage of all of the lawyers in Oakland County and surrounding counties that have practiced or know both Judge Cooper and Mr. Ternan. Most significantly, however, this number is only eight-one-hundredths of 1 percent of the number of people voting in the election in Oakland County.

As long as the state selects judges by popular vote, the opinion of the majority of the electors will mean much more than the opinion of a few disgruntled or partisan attorneys. If a judge is truly "not qualified," these attorneys would seem to have an obligation to notify the Judicial Tenure Commission and seek a complete investigation.

Judge Cooper is one of the obviously most-respected judges in the county and will make an excellent judge of the Circuit Court. She deserves your apology and the respect she has earned.

I would hope that you would focus your efforts on more productive and honorable pursuits.

David L. Haron
Farmington Hills

Checking IDs draws praise

To the editor:

Congratulations to Farmington Hills Chief of Police Bill Dwyer and Farmington Hills City Council for their recent action of the crackdown of establishments which allegedly sold and/or served minors liquor.

The concern of our community leaders and the responsible, positive reporting by the Observer gives support to parents who want to see Farmington Hills youth drug-free.

We strongly support those businesses which took the time to check IDs. Keep up the good work.

Farmington Hills Market, 24223 Orchard Lake; D&D Discount, 28857-A Orchard Lake; 7-Eleven, 29318 Orchard Lake; Great Scott, 29555 Orchard Lake; Nor-West Lanes, 32205 Northwestern.

Ginopolis, 27815 Middlebelt; CJ's, 29505 Nine Mile; Mike & Sons Party Store, 31511 13 Mile; Perry Drugs, 30830 Orchard Lake; 7-Eleven, 22069 Farmington; Grapevine, 29970 12 Mile.

Betty Nicolay
Farmington Families
In Action

FDA confirms safety of MSG

To the editor:

The article "Food for Thought — Nutrition expert cooks up cable TV show," appearing in the Aug. 11 issue of the Observer & Eccentric, refers to monosodium glutamate (MSG) as a cause of headache.

The Glutamate Association, an organization of manufacturers, national marketers and processed food users of glutamic acid and its salts (including monosodium glutamate), would like to provide your readers with the following facts.

Some scientific research has identified a transient feeling of pressure in the temples alleged to result from an intolerance to MSG, usually at atypically high levels. Although there are individuals who may refer to this pressure as headache, there is no research evidence of which we are aware, that shows that MSG acts to dilate or constrict blood vessels.

Many people (nearly one-half of the American population) experience alternating discomfort following ingestion of many common foods and food ingredients. Garlic, pepper, chocolate, wheat, corn, strawberries, shellfish and other foods and ingredients too numerous to mention are sometimes implicated.

MSG is one of the most thoroughly and exhaustively tested food substances in use today. More than 600 appropriate studies conducted in a variety of animal species including man, and careful reviews by regulatory and scientific organizations worldwide (including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization) clearly confirm the safety of MSG.

Juile M. Wilgus,
staff associate
MSG Association

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