## Let criminals know they're not welcome

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OUR POLICE chiefs said this week that crime has declined overall in our communities, which is good news.

The only concern now is how to keep it out.

Do we build a "Great Anti-Crime Wall" with barbed wire? Line our forces up at the border? Take a cue from the riot patrols in Miami and keep a line of patrol cars driving round and round the border?

Just as government belongs to the people, so should our houses, streets

and neighborhoods. The best way to help avoid crime is to get involved, know what's happening in your neighborhood and your city, and let the criminal element know they're not welcome.

Farmington public safety director Frank Lauhoff attributed his city's 5 percent crime decline to the active Neighborhood Watch program, in which 70 percent of the city's resi-dential neighborhoods participate.

He sald the program activates citizen awareness and stimulates com-munication between his department and the residents they serve.



IN FARMINGTON, the city is small enough for the police to work closely with everyone. Each suspi-cious circumstance can be followed up by a visit from an officer and an investigation, if necessary.

Here, the system has worked well having residents be the eyes and ears

for the police. Farmington Commander Chuck Lee, who has coordinated the local pregram since list inception five years ago, said residents are not encouraged to patrol by car or on foot, and they are told not to investigate.

But what about larger, urban and suburbans settings where the police can't get to the scene as quickly? Or belarger, rural settings where residents rely on a county sheriff's department or one state police post to handle the calls?

One citizens' group in the Los An-

One citizens' group in the Los Angeles area has taken its cause to the street. Called the Beat Keepers, the group comes out of their homes —

sometimes in groups of 20 — to put out a presence and let the crack kingpins that roam their streets know they don't own them.

They refuse to play the traditional role of being victims and witnesses, and are more than eyes and ears for police.

SOME DISMISS them as vigilantes, and liken them to New York's Guardian Angels.

But the Beat Keepers do more than deal with crime. They have neighborhood subcommittees to paint over graffiti, work on garden, find jobs and other things relevant to

hoods.

Lee said although the physical involvement on the crime side can cause some problems, "I could quickly take a position on either side of it."

of it."

Maybe it's just an idea to encourage people to be neighborly — before any trouble has a chance to start. Knowing your neighborhood and how it works might just discourage crime from increasing.

Casey Hans is a staff writer for the Farmington Observer.

## Democracy makes sense even on the silliest days

YOU'VE JUST got to wonder what the Soviet children staying in Birningham think of what they've seen in the last week or so. Oh, I'm not talking about the drugs, the crime or other maladles the commonly afflict societies around the world.

around the world.

No. I'm talking about the mixed signals they see coming out of this democratic republic when it comes to free speech.

After examining a few incidents this past week in our suburbs, it's no wonder that folks of the conservative lik never cease to confound the leftist mind.— especially the minds of leftists who just now are winning the battle for free speech in their country.

In Bloomfield Hills we have Terry

In Bloomfield Hills we have Terry Rakolta, populist star of sorts who is taking a chapter out of the Ayatol-lah's book of bad manners by seeking to get a television show taken off the air.

Her tactic: Put the public opinion squeeze on advertisers for promoting their products during a program called "Married". . With Children, aired locally on Channel 50.

Bringing her the most notoriety was Coca-Cola's wow to keep a better tab (no pun intended) on that program's content and a firm maybe on



a threat to withdraw sponsorship to-

DOWN THE road in Farmington tally.

DOWN THE road in Farmington Hills we have businessman Patrick Anderson, who is seeking to pry information out of the Farmington School District. So reluctant were public officials to fork over the information that Anderson has been forced to use the Freedom of Information Act to obtain the data to which he has a perfect right.

Unlike Rakotla, he is without allies in the soft drink Industry.

Readors should note that Anderson, an Alexander Hamilton Lile Insurance Co. executive, is working closely with Richard Headlee, conservatives tradard bearer servatives tradard bearer chought and, on the other, we have conservatives to only the conservative trying to obtain Information that is being suppressed by a

government body.

As a leftlst who has lived all his
life in a country that has gone to
great pains in maintaining most
forms of free speech, I feel obligated
to unravel this mysterious contradiction for our guests from the Soviet

Union.

Please understand, glasnost or not, the battle for free speech is often delincated by the equation "money + power - influence."

ey + power - influence."

NO MATTER how much a country develops the traditions and laws that reinforce a right to free expression, citizens must always stand guard against those who would rather censor ideas and information.

The guarantee of free speech is on paper, the execution of the guarantee comes from the hearts of those who have the courage to defend it.

Fear of information transcends id-colory — left. right or center.

Fear of information transcends id-cology — left, right or center. Whether out of a fear of embarrass-ment, loss of power or threat to life-style, the results are the same. Certainly, you, my Soviet friends, understand how and why govern-ments suppress information. Your lived with tait for many years. Gov-ernments in this country are often the same. Steve Barnaby is managing ed-itor of the 12 Observer & Eccen-tric Newspapers.

## Mother of adopted kids seeks change in system

Regarding Tim Richard's column (Points of view, Dec. 29) on adoption: It would be wonderful If beautiful people had beautiful bables and gave them up to more beautiful bables and gave them up to more beautiful people. In reality, this in not happening, however, with only minor changes in our "adoptive system," this could occur more often . . and at a tremendous savings of our tax dollars.

oous savings of our tax dollars.

In the past, we participated in the Youth For Understanding exchange student program. One of our exchange students returned for a visit ... and had an American abortion. She was very healthy, one of the most brilliant students in the world and the father was in his residency at a foreign hospital.

We've rated our own for the contraction of the contraction

We've raised our own family, adopted three additional children and have had as many as four foster care children in our home at any one time. We would have loved to have had our foreign daughter's child...

quest

column

but were not given the chance.
We currently care for two (beautified to us) foster care bables. Both have been in our home since their birth. Both were cocaine addicted at birth. One is black and the other white. The latter has alcoholic syndrome.

white. The latter has alcoholic syndrome.
One baby has been in our home nine months, the other 20 months. When they leave the foster care system, the odds are that neither will still be a baby . . . and so many parents want to adopt bables!
When the mass media give publicity to the needs of an individual, the public responds! One picture and a story can bring forth 30-40 prospective adoptive parents in even the most heart-rending situation. In our

society, there is a place for both the beautiful and the underprivileged children programs could be developed to resolve these problems:

(1) Educational programs in our schools to encourage adoption.

(2) Arranging release for adoption of bables during the pregnancy.

(3) A statewide "Realior type" listing service to match children with interested adoptive parents.

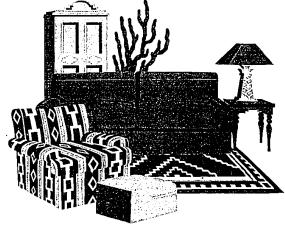
(4) Changes in adoptive laws to recognize the rights of children present laws are overwhelmingly in favor of parents. . . even ones with no interest in the children. Nationally, 19 TV stations in "Major Markets" have public service exposures on a weekly basis.

(6) Meckly TV and newspaper "Spots" about individual children. Nationally, 19 TV stations in "Major Markets" have public service exposures on a weekly basis.

(6) A Governor s Task Force to identify the problems with our present adoptive system and to develop legislation to resolve the disruptive issues.

These measures would help children on the welfare roles and significantly reduce welfare costs.

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