

points of view

There's another side to day care issue

The writer, Ben Marks, is a Farmington Hills city councilman.

AFTER READING the editorial that appeared in the Observer & Eccentric relative to the day care homes (Feb. 16), I want you to know that I agree when you say that day care is a new social problem that must be addressed.

However, where your paper presented one point of view, I believe there is another side to this issue that presents a very serious problem regarding the method in which this issue is being handled by the state legislators.

Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, in his proposed bill, has thrown a blanket over the entire state, assuming that home-rule cities do not

have the capacity, or the compassion, to handle this social need.

We in Farmington Hills, after four months of intensive public hearings, passed a day care ordinance that provides for day care facilities within a subdivision up to six children, and up to 12 children on the perimeter roads. This compromise was reached with the input of the residents of the subdivision and the providers.

What is so disturbing is that Sen. Faxon did not take the time to check his own city or any other city to see if they in fact have addressed this issue.

I recognize that home rule is given at the pleasure of the state Legislators, but it seems incredible that they would not give us a chance to handle our own problems within our

guest column

own cities. Who else knows the issues of a city better than the elected officials and the residents of that city?

Circumvention of local authority by the state is a dangerous action. Self-determination has and always will be a sacred trust worthy of maintaining and fighting for.

IN MY view, the legislators could pass a bill that would prohibit any city from the exclusion of day care homes in any city in the state. This would mandate that every city would have to address this issue to

suit their individual needs after getting the input from their citizens.

Sen. Faxon has forgotten the homeowner, who before buying his home in a subdivision, did all he/she could to ensure that they were buying in a residential area they felt they would be secure in.

Introducing day care homes that would accommodate 12 children in the interior of a residential area constitutes a commercial use. As you know when the number goes above six, you must hire another person. This happens to be the state law.

We understand that certain occupations can co-exist in a residential area, and we, as many cities in the state, have provided for home occupation. These uses have little impact on the area and are welcomed.

However, day care homes of the

size the bill is proposing represent a great impact on the residential neighborhood and are unfair to those who have made the single largest investment of their lives to live in a residential subdivision.

This bill allows commercial to come into a residential area, which destroys the ability of a city to zone in the manner in which the citizens of that city have expressed.

I HAVE implored our senator to allow the cities, townships and villages to have the chance to take care of this social need. If after a reasonable time the local governments do not respond, then the state should have the option to come in and do what is necessary to take care of the need.

Unfortunately, the response I have received from Sen. Faxon is, "we have the votes and we are going to pass it." I think the senator has shown a great lack of sensitivity to both his district and the rest of the state.

When the bill is reintroduced, you can be rest assured that I will be at the committee hearings with a representative of every city in Sen. Faxon's district to make sure the committee will hear the other side of this serious action and how it will impact home rule cities.

Again, all we ask is to allow us to protect our residential areas, keep sacred our zoning rights and do the job we were elected to do, "protect the good and welfare of our citizens."

Listen up lawmakers to these wise words

NOTHING is more important than hearing from the reader — especially when your comments have to do with an issue of overriding social significance.

Lately we've been reading a lot about education, its financing and its effectiveness in educating our children. A while back, you may recall, a concerned teacher wrote to express discontent with academics. Because of its importance, education is always a welcome subject in this column.

Now, a student has written in to express his concerns. I know you'll find the remarks by Hans Wild compelling. Hans, a student at Stevenson High School in Sterling Heights saw a copy of the other column via teacher Marie Brown.

This is what Hans has to say. "The system is going downhill rapidly, and several groups of people are to blame.

"THE ATTITUDES of a portion of the students are totally wrong. As the teacher in the previous article stated, children and teens see school as a 'place to come and socialize,' and this is very true.

"These students are often the same ones who are late for class. Also, a lot of students declare that a certain class, or just school in general, is impossible to pass. However, these are, more often than not, the students who do not apply themselves; they don't try to do well.



Steve Barnaby

'The attitudes of a portion of the students are totally wrong. As the teacher in the previous article stated, children and teens see school as a 'place to come and socialize,' and this is very true.'

— Hans Wild student

These are the students who have the wrong attitude.

"I feel that the acquiring of this attitude should not be blamed solely on the student, but also on the student's parents. All parents should push their children to develop good homework and study habits. "There are also a few teachers who have the wrong school attitude. These are the teachers who hand their students a textbook, assign a

few questions or problems each day, and then off they go, leaving the rest of the day and give a test every other week.

"This is not teaching. "A teacher must know more about a subject than just what is in the textbook. A teacher must teach. He should help students with problems, answer questions, and lecture, in-depth on material that is not found in a regular textbook.

This, in turn, is teaching. "Also to blame for the failing educational system are the administrators. Administrators are very naive when it comes to what goes on in the classroom. They do not see the bad attitudes of the teachers and the students. They do not know what real 'school life' is all about. They live in their own 'office' world.

"When it comes to disciplinary actions, the administrators are much too easy, and therefore, repetitious offenders are common. "It is time that the administrators come down to earth and find out what really goes on in their schools. And when they find out the problems, they must do something to correct them."

"It's nice to see a student with such deep concern. Thus, Hans, for taking the time to write. Maybe the politicians in Lansing will stop messing around and get down to business once they learn what you already know."

Steve Barnaby is managing editor of the 12 Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

Spring baseball: a winner

THERE ARE many important issues weighing heavy on your minds and those issues are very pressing. They are also depressing.

My mind for a day hasn't room for such thoughts. It's too busy drifting back to the stands behind first base at a stadium where palm trees cast shadows over the right field fence. Only a week ago that wandering mind was joined by a body. If you've ever seen spring training baseball, you know why it's hard to leave it behind.

This game was played at the winter home of the New York Mets which, according to spring training guides, is in Port St. Lucie, but according to promotional brochures and billboards is actually in West St. Lucie, or maybe it is West Port St. Lucie. I get confused.

PORT ST. LUCIE is not your household word. As I prepared for Florida, no one I talked with knew where it was. I told friends it was near Port St. Ricky Ricardo and generally got in return that type of look you get when people think you really do need a vacation.

Port St. Lucie has been in Florida a long time. There is even a Club Med there. But the area recently has taken off. The couple we traveled with could document the rapid growth of housing developments, shopping malls and commercial strip developments.



Rich Perlberg

There are now two Port St. Lucie daily newspapers. Can a Port St. Lucie JOA be far behind?

But the Mets are not in Port St. Lucie. They are west of the river in West Port St. Lucie, which, near as I could tell, consists of a baseball park, a golf course and hundreds of acres of flat, grassy land with periodic signs saying, "Site of New Megamall."

ALL OF this is immaterial. I don't care to talk today about the malling of America, the paving of pastures or even the use of government money to build baseball parks to lure major league baseball teams from one Florida city to another. That is what is happening in Florida, where a monument stands in front of the Mets' Florida stadium in appreciation to county taxpayers whose money built the park in 1988.

I don't care about these things, just as I don't care that I was watching the New York Mets, probably the only team I dislike more than the New York Yankees. I even wore a Mets cap.

You really cannot dislike anything at a spring training game. Even the hoots for pouting millionaire Darryl Strawberry were good-natured. In a world of oranges and grapefruits, there is little room for serious raspberries.

BASEBALL is a wonderful sport. There is not the aggression, the taking of turf that marks other sports. How many other sports do you know where the defense gets the ball?

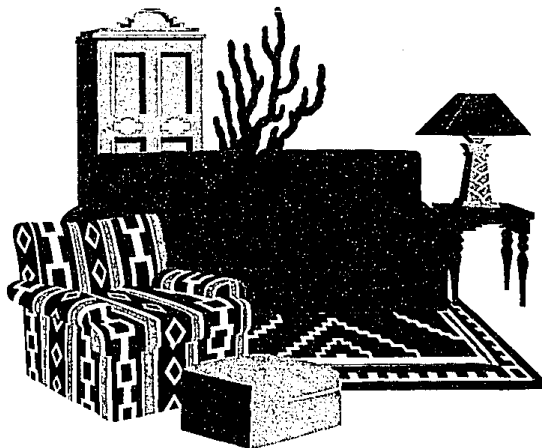
In baseball you get the full measure of your opponent. There is no stalling in baseball. No holding the ball until the clock runs out. The other team always gets its last bats. It ain't over 'til it's over.

As good as the game gets during the season when lazy summer days turn into tension-packed, late-inning rallies, there may be no better time and place for baseball than in Florida in March.

The grass is green, the sky is blue, the sound of the bat on the ball is loud and true. Young men are playing a child's game while children of all ages bask in both the sun and the dreamed-of glory.

Rich Perlberg is the assistant managing editor in charge of Oakland County editions of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

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