Mayor: Report both views all of the time

The writer, Terry Sever, is mayor of Farmington Hills.

I ACCEPT the challenge of reporter Joanne Maliszewski in her May 18 "Points of View" column to identify inaccuracies and unfair reporting listed in an article published Monday, May 8.

At the May 15 city council meet-ing, the only open forum I have as mayor. I questioned the mis-representations and lack of opportu-nity to respond to questions you and

a resident raised in your article of Monday, May 8, titled, "Resident riled by closed-door land dealings."

You interviewed me by phone for that article, an article in which you failed to give me an opportunity to respond to several items, including:

· Topics discussed at an execu-

The purpose of a meeting with some residents and not with others;
A resident's concern about a condentity of the conden

guest column

I acknowledge that yes, you did give me a chance to respond in a news article three days later. Your

reporting of the opinion of one resident without an official response, leaving a three-day gap of the facts, was, in my opinion, undir to the residents of this community.

I received phone calls because of the Monday, May 6, article but none after you clarifled my position in an article of Thursday, May 15. I have to ask the question: Why didn't all the information appear in the first story?

story?
I have clearly taken the position that if we, as a community, could acquire 60-70 acres of land for ball

fields-soccer fields and/or have an 18-hole golf course without increasing property taxes, we should strongly consider doing so.

I have not backed down from that postition and stand on my presentation first discussed in January with residents in Quaker Valley. My objection to the coverage of this story is that all of the facts should have been pointed out inthe first article of May 8.

The council, mayor or eity mana-

of May 8.

The council, mayor or city manager should always, from the start, have the opportunity to respond to

accusations you choose to print in any story pertaining to city govern-ment activity.

Had the story on Monday, May 0, been accurate, the story on Thursday, May 11, would not have been needed. But I guess two stories are better than one, even if the residents are misled for three days.

Thank you. I look forward to improving, for the betterment of the Farmington Hills community, my working relationship with the Farnington Observer.

Grass-roots efforts: key to easing garbage crisis

AS YOU scrounge in your pocket or purse for that last bit of change, consider this: a supplier in Owosso, Mich., is required to put a 5-cent part in a \$2 shipping package as part of his U.S. government contract.

That same 5-cent part must be packaged in \$2 worth of Styrofoam, a non-blodegradable material. This, as our garbage costs soar because landfills are overloaded with garbage that takes hundreds of years to disinterrate.

It's expensive and a threat to our environment. And we're not just talking about pocket change.

It's inoile our environment is being threatened by the Fed, which mandates spending millions in local dollars to clean up our rivers as it fills our nation's dumps with packing material that won't disintegrate dur-ing our lifetime, or our children's.

The Owosso parts vendor has com-plained, but it will likely take an act of Congress to dissolve those allly

WITH POLICIES like this, Uncle



Sam is literally stealing the last dime from our collective pocket to pollute, then spending more giving grants to local communities to clean everything up. Then we're spending local tax dollars to supplement the clean-up effort.

It's all your tax dollars at work. And the situation has gotten out of

In an odd sort of grass-roots ef-fort, a consortium of six area citles recently banded together to study just what we can do about this effort.

the formation of a Solid Waste Au-thority that could better handle gar-bage disposal on a local basis. They would work in conjunction with Oakland County, but still retain Casey # Hans a local presence.

THE CONSORTIUM proposes to reduce by 50 percent the amount of garbage going to landfills by the year 2010; the remainder would be re-used, composted or recycled.

To make a difference, we must all be aware of what we purchase, how these things are packaged and try to aid in the effort. It will ultimately affect us all.

Kudos to these local leaders, and shame on Uncle Sam and his rela-tives who continue needless policies that are damaging our environment and hurting us all.

We need to encourage more indi-vidual and city-based grass-roots movements like SOCSWC to try and make a dent in years of environmen-tal abuse.

Casey Hans is a staff writer for the Farmington Observer.

Start at home to remove barriers

KNOCKING DOWN the fences between suburbs and city, in many case between whites and blacks, isn't an easy task.

It has to start at home — and since many of our homes are citades of prejudice themselves, part of the solution has to lie in the classroom.

ne souton has to lie in the chas-room.

A West Bloomfield elementary school recently those to focus on the importance of Detroit to its subtract by taking busineds of students to its late. The property of the con-troit of the control of the con-trol of the control of the con-troit of the control of the con-trol of the

their corridor into the Eastern Mar-ket, where one day they offered a "Taste of Detroit" sampling of fruits

"Taste of Detroit" sampling of fruits and vegetable.

• Music teacher Gordon Bleich's com gave equal play to the DSO and Motown. And a poster highlighting Detroit's nevest refurbished landmark, the Fox, sparkled nearby. They also learned about Detroit and its wealth of offerings, from such personalities as Detroit police Commander (ill (Beverly Blills Cops) Hill; Attic Theatre players and Sparky. And Detroit's economic impact on them — spelled CAR — was



Judith Doner Berne

highlighted through a display of an-tique and new cars on the school lawn and a speaker from GM.

A RESULT: "We got to learn about different things that go on the downtown Detroit and what's important to us," said Green School fifth grader Reenie Kraus.

Reenie said she had been to Detroit on a fairly frequent hasis with her family. But she may be the exception.

her family. But she may be the exception.

According to Gail Barget, who directed the project, Boho was the
only major Detroit sight to which at
least half of the students had gone.
That was based on a "Raise your
hands if you've been here" survey.
Students also learned about the
needy in Detroit. "We bilized them
with who they would be helping."
Barget said, At the "Jump for Detroit" high jump fund-raiser, "We
hoped to raise \$1,000 - and exceeded what we thought."
The message wasn't a pedanticPrejudice is wrong. Rather, subur-

ban Detroit students were shown the

THIS IS where it must begin. On our college campuses students are calling for mandatory studies ad-dressing racism, serism and dis-crimination. But they are just play-

crimination. But they are just play-ing catch up.

The classrooms we must look to are those of the high schools, middle schools and elementary schools through programs such as "Hello De-troit."

troit."
Every school in our suburbs can do this — at some level — and should. And you, as a tazpayer even if you're not a parent, have the right to insist on it.

Why? Because of statements such as this.

as this:

"I was afraid to go down there. I thought someone would shoot me. I feel differently now." said fifth grader Kyle Shelko.

Shelko, htterviewed as he stood on safety patrol, coincidentally turned out to be school principal Katherine Shelko's son.

Judith Doner Berne is assistant managing editor for the Oakland County editions of the Observer & Eccentric.



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