

Opinion

33203 Grand River/Farmington, MI 48024 Bob Sklar editor / 477-5450

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Peace march Motives blur worthy goal...

THE MORE Derwin Success talks about Love Force United's planned peace march and rally for racial harmony in Farmington, the more we wonder about his motives.

"It's just going to be a beautiful thing," says Success, a black Farmington resident in a biracial family. "There's just going to be love."

That's a worthy goal. But in light of concern about public safety since the American Nazi Party plans to counterdemonstrate the event, we're wary of inflammatory comments Success has made.

The Nazis espouse an *enraging set of ideals* foreign to a representative democracy. But they typically try to work within the bounds established by law. To get arrested would strip them of their best weapon — a stage.

Jewish or black residents would have every reason to bristle with hatred as they march by swastika-clad Nazis — and envision Hitler's death camps or crumbling civil rights advances.

But ignoring the Nazis would be the best response. Free speech — and the choice to ignore whatever's said without reprisal — is what has kept Nazism at bay in America.

... free speech is cherished

WE DEPLORE their fundamental tenets — white power, anti-Semitism, deprecation of blacks.

But one of America's cherished liberties — freedom of expression — gives them the right to assemble and spew their invective.

As long as they do it peacefully, the SS Action Group, part of the American Nazi Party, has a right to counterdemonstrate an Oct. 15 peace march and rally for racial harmony in Farmington — a right city officials acknowledge.

To arbitrarily shut the neo-Nazis off is as un-American as their "militant voice of white revolution."

Their interest in the peace march isn't clear. In their letter to the city, they offered: "The pro-

MEANWHILE, THE march is losing its local support base as Success, a lay staff member at a Highland Park church, pursues outside support. Local support for Love Force United has seemingly dropped off since he told the Observer that Grand River could flow blood red after the march.

Racial unity is a cause we deeply believe in. But thanks to Success' mind games, we can't establish the extent of racial discord in Farmington. Police reports don't substantiate a widespread problem. Love Force United's secret meetings don't help.

We also don't know why Success, while courting 1,000 marchers, has been aloof toward the Farmington police, who are trying desperately to assure the peace march lives up to its billing.

Success owes it to the vast number of Farmington residents who view him not as black but just a neighbor to keep pre-march hype non-inflammatory.

Indeed, a locally rooted peace march could be "a beautiful thing." But we fear a clash between people from out of the area in the middle of Grand River could reduce any racial-unity inroads to ashes.

Love Force United, are you listening?

white demonstration will be intended as a peaceful response to an effort by known Marxist agitators to provoke racial violence in the normally placid community of Farmington, Mich."

Huh? What Marxist agitators?

Because the NAACP supports the march, the SS Action Group, whose leaders resort to aliases, views the counterdemonstration as vital to fighting "the Communist influence."

The Communist connection escapes us.

Meanwhile, we abhor the group's call "to wipe out Zionism and every Jew who supports it" and to stop immigration "from non-white nations."

But the U.S. Constitution, which, ironically, the group says it strives to uphold, opposes any suppression of ideas.

Fighting drugs More local action needed now

PRESIDENT GEORGE Bush's message is clear. If we want to rid our nation of illegal drugs, it's up to us.

If it's war we want, we'll have to be the ones who wage it — in our home towns and in our homes.

Though far-reaching, the president's proposal is woefully short of money. Consider this: the federal government will spend just \$32 for each man, woman and child in its new war on drugs. And that is with a \$2.2 billion increase.

The president's speech set a moral tone. For now, however, it's up to us to put it into action. Whatever our disagreement with the president's proposal, now is no time to be sitting on our hands.

WHAT CAN be done to combat drugs? Plenty. First, let's not kid ourselves into believing illegal drugs are solely an urban problem.

If our suburban communities are free from crack houses — and that point is debatable — law enforcement officials agree that dealers live here — even in the nicest of neighborhoods.

Government officials need to understand that Western Wayne County, for example, has a multi-department police task force dedicated to knocking down suburban drug kingpins. Unfortunately, not every community contributes officers.

THIS ISN'T any time to slack off on community pressure, either. Parents need to continue spreading the word about the dangers of drug abuse.

We know of one large suburban community whose parental drug abuse task force has lapsed into obscurity.

But if it's an anti-drug abuse message we are sending, that message should be clear.

We know of another parental task force that financed anti-drug abuse programs through a cocktail party fund-raiser — without seeing the irony in its action.

Our proposed solutions are these: We call on area police to redouble cooperative efforts. And we call on local elected officials to come forth with the money and manpower to make those efforts a success.

Also we call on all of us to re-examine our own behavior. Are we, like that parents group, sending mixed messages?

But if we shouldn't kid ourselves about suburban drug abuse, then neither should we kid ourselves that these steps, alone will be successful.

They, and the initial level of federal spending, establish a beachhead, not a war.

We call on area police to redouble cooperative efforts. And we call on local elected officials to come forth with the money and manpower to make those efforts a success.

WHILE LOCAL police can be wonderfully effective in bringing down local pushers, they can't be expected to wage war against sophisticated South American cartels.

While parental guidance can help a child choose not to use illegal drugs, it is no substitute for the professional guidance needed for those children who have already made that choice.

And while clear, unambiguous anti-drug messages may work for suburban youths, it might not prove enough for urban youths trapped in poverty with no jobs or any on the horizon.

Make no mistake, we believe President Bush's program should be ratified by Congress. But it's only a start. We challenge Congress to come up with more money — without cheating programs designed to benefit poor Americans, as has been charged of the president's plan.

FINDING The \$1.8 billion necessary to pay for last year's Anti-Drug Abuse Act is a start. Just \$1 billion has been appropriated of the \$2.8 billion authorized.

But more money will be needed not only to punish the pusher but also to treat the victim.

The president has called drug users, even casual ones, a major part of the problem. Dealers wouldn't deal, he argues, if users didn't buy.

But health care professionals believe there must be more money to get users off drugs.

There is a national cry for a balanced approach: less law enforcement, another part education and yet another part treatment.

We spend billions on weapons to protect us from outside attack, yet we're bleeding internally. What enemy ever devastated as many lives as illegal drugs? What enemy ever wasted so much human potential?

President Bush has given all of us our marching orders. And we should follow them.

But the president and Congress must realize that while it's war we want, we can't win it without their support.



Faxon went overboard in calling circuit judge

NEVER LOST for words, state Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, went too far in speaking out as a board member for Boys Republic.

The 6th veteran lawmaker had no business calling Oakland County Circuit Judge Jessica Cooper as she prepared to rule on a motion filed by the embattled home for juvenile offenders in Farmington Hills.

At a hearing on Aug. 29, Cooper disclosed that Faxon, who she characterized as a dear friend, had called her to discuss the merits of the matter before her.

She also disclosed that she moved up the hearing one week because of Faxon's call.

To her credit, Cooper made these two disclosures from the bench. She then affirmed her ability to fairly judge the case, but volunteered to ask the chief judge to reassign it if either attorney objected.

When neither side objected, she ruled in favor of Boys Republic, lifting a city-imposed, stop-work order for building renovations on the wooded, 40-acre site at Nine Mile and Inkster.

Cooper ruled that the city council should have sent the land use dispute that prompted the stop-work order to the board of zoning appeals — a



Bob Sklar

position I've held ever since the dispute became public in August.

THE CITY council had halted building renovations until it could determine if the new assessment program not only was a new land use but also was drawing boys more dangerous than those in the existing treatment program.

I can't knock Cooper's decision. She had little to ponder, based on the city's curiously weak defense of the stop-work order.

I also can't fault Faxon for addressing the dispute when the city council hosted a public hearing on Aug. 28. It was clear, to me anyway, that he was there as a spokesman for Boys Republic — a private, nonprofit, social service agency subsidized by the state Department of Social Services.

But Faxon is a state senator. So calling the judge about a pend-

ing Boys Republic matter wrongly politicized the dispute. Maybe he wasn't trying to influence her ruling. But it sure seemed otherwise.

In my view, he blatantly overstepped the bounds of good judgment while in the role of a concerned Boys Republic director.

IF IT'S assigned to her, Judge Cooper has no choice, as I see it, but to refrain from hearing Boys Republic's pending lawsuit to win damages stemming from the stop-work order. If she hears the case, cries of bias from the public could result.

Let there be no mistake. Cooper showed a lot of moxie in disclosing her talk with Faxon. Not every judge would be so open.

But if she were to rule on the pending lawsuit, some might tie it inextricably to Faxon's poorly timed call.

Steering clear is the only way Judge Cooper can assure that personalities don't muddle a judicial ruling that could cost the city of Farmington Hills upwards of \$50,000.

You sure barked up the wrong tree in this instance, Mr. Senator! Bob Sklar is editor of the Farmington Observer.

Farmington readers' forum

Letters must be signed, original copies and include the address and telephone number of the writer. Names will be withheld from publication only for sufficient reason. We reserve the right to edit them. Send letters to Readers' Forum, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River Ave., Farmington 48024.

Musicians say thanks

To the editor:

Musicians of the North Farmington Band & Orchestra thank the entire community for their support in their returnable bottle and can drive held Sept. 9.

Music students canvassed the North Farmington area from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m., and for their efforts, a total of \$2,783.30 was raised.

Proceeds of this drive go toward extra music and music instruction, individual student accounts which offset expenses for equipment, band camp tuition and the Summer 1990 Germany Festival trip.

On behalf of the North Farmington Band & Orchestra Boosters, we, once again, appreciate your support. North Farmington High School Band & Orchestra

March could spur trouble

To the editor:

In light of the recent, unfortunate involvement of the SS Action Group in the planned march of Love Force United, I urge Love Force United to reconsider its decision to march on Oct. 15, not as a sign of defeat or

weakness, but rather to head off any possible confrontation and potential violence that may result.

In Mr. Success' own opinion, this is a very real possibility. Please, for the sake of this peaceful town, do not march.

In his failed attempt to sell his home, Mr. Success saw the hand of God. He said, "The Lord is telling me to stay and fight rather than to move away." But it is possible that God may be giving another, even stronger message now?

There are other ways to combat discrimination. A bigot is a bigot. Marching may raise awareness, but it is not apt to change anyone's viewpoint. If anything, it could add fuel to the fire.

The city council may not have a choice in granting the SS Action Group a permit to march.

We, the citizens of Farmington and Farmington Hills, however, do have a choice of whether to watch these misguided fools do their thing and provide the audience that they seek, or to stay home and not give them the satisfaction of our presence.

Let them have their march all by themselves. It is no fun to play to an empty house.

If the Nazis do march, I urge everyone to stay away from the outlined route on Oct. 15, between 3-6 p.m.

Mr. Success, I dare say to you that the vast majority of the people are sympathetic toward you and your

family and wish you nothing but the best in your quest to peacefully co-exist, something most of us take for granted.

Having lived under the Nazi Regime in Germany all of my childhood and early teens, I feel qualified to express this opinion: We must resist the urge to confront these SS troublemakers. There is no point to it. It is all too obvious that reason and logic will never prevail with them, as it is beyond their limited scope.

It is for this reason I am appealing to Mr. Success and Love Force United. Let us not participate on Oct. 15 and turn a peaceful march into a three-ring circus or worse.

Helga Miller, Farmington Hills

Keep home as it was

To the editor:

As homeowners and taxpayers, we are totally against turning Boys Republic into a prison. It was built for first-time offenders, not felons.

We believe it (the new assessment program) is against the zoning code. Also, we do not like the underhanded way in which this came about.

Philip Abdo, Jean Abdo, Farmington Hills

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