

New Kid encounters a cat-astrophe

MONDAY, NOV. 26, 7:30 a.m.
I'm working the day shift on the copy desk, but I'm not scheduled in for another hour-and-a-half. Meanwhile I'm doing KP duty at home.

• 7:35 a.m. I hear a loud scream coming from an upstairs bedroom. It's followed by sobs and the sound of feet running down stairs.

A few seconds later the complainant enters the kitchen. She appears to be about 7 years old. She's carrying a body — a body with no arms!

"Look what they did to him! Look what they did to Jonathan!"
"I see. Ripped his arms right out of the sockets."
"No, they CHEWED them off. Look!"

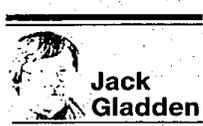
Sure enough. She opens her cupped hands and reveals dozens of tiny pieces of plastic — the remains of what had once been Jonathan's arms. The sobs start again.

"Do you know who did it?"
"The cats? It could have been the dog. What about the dog?"
"No, it was the cats. The dog wasn't in my room last night. Besides, look at the teeth marks."

She's right. The teeth marks are small. Tiny. Cat size.

• 7:40 a.m. I call my partner and inform her of the incident. The complainant insists on talking to her.

"Mom, do you know what the cats did to..."



Jack Gladden

• 8:40 a.m. I drop the complainant off at school and proceed to the office. The boss is already in... as usual.

• 9:15 a.m. I learn that Jonathan has been known to frequent a place called Children's Palace. I make the first phone call.

"Do you have a Jonathan in stock? I believe he's part of a

group called New Kids on the Block."

The clerk is familiar with the decision, but says they only have Donnies and Joes. Whoever they are. Also, she volunteers, they don't have Jordan, either.

"I asked about Jonathan, ma'am. I didn't say anything about a Jordan."

She hangs up.

• 10:05 a.m. A dozen phone calls thrash all traces of Jonathan. I begin to feel frustrated. I decide to do some leg work on my lunch hour. Meanwhile my partner has called in an outside investigator — her mother — to help with the case.

• 1 p.m. I return to the office af-

ter visiting three toy stores, two department stores and one shopping mall. I encountered dozens of Joes and Donnies but no Jonathan. And no Jordan, either. Things are not looking good. And I missed lunch.

• 1:01 p.m. My partner calls. She tells me she's found Jonathan. Actually, her mother has found him.

"She went to a dozen different stores, and all she could find were Joes and Donnies. Then she finally found one Jonathan... somewhere."

"What about Jordan? Did she find a Jordan?"

She ignores the question and hangs up.

• 3:05 p.m. I pick the complainant up at the day-care center.

"Did you have a good day at school?"
"It was O.K. Except for Jonathan."

• 5:31 p.m. My partner arrives home. She's carrying a package.

• 5:42 p.m. The complainant is on the couch, watching television. Jonathan is beside her again. I look at my partner.

"Well dear, I think we can say that 'This case is CLOSED.'"
"No. You can't say that."
"Why not?"
"It's the wrong show."

Jack Gladden is a copy editor at the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. He lives in Canton Township.

from our readers

Schools face huge challenges

The Farmington School District faces enormous financial challenges in the months to come. It is imperative that the community be well-informed about the financial realities of the school district.

At a public meeting of the Secondary School Boundary Committee, there were numerous parents claiming that building additional to existing middle schools was the only acceptable decision.

This "fact" was proclaimed in spite of sufficient capacity in middle schools and in spite of the likelihood of a proposition for a 3-mill increase required to support a reduced educational program.

How would the addition be built? More importantly, with the "streamlined" budget, who would staff the addition once it was built?

There is a desperate need for an informed community if the education of our children is not to suffer from the plundering of our education budget by the state.

The Farmington Observer has been a faithful reporter of the activities of the school board and the administration. There is a need now for the newspaper to be a faithful re-

porter to the community about the financial resources and needs of the school district.

The financial realities we face must be identified and explained so that informed decisions will be made to protect the quality education of our children from the irresponsibility of the state.

I ask for and expect the Observer to play an active role in this effort.

David L. York,
Farmington Hills

Volunteers are needed

To the editor:
I am a 24-year-old who on Thanksgiving Day volunteered my help at two local nursing homes. I saw so many depressed people that I had to fight back the tears.

It's bad seeing people suffer from old age. It's even worse seeing them suffer further by spending the holidays alone.

I tried to comfort those I met. I heard things like "You made my day," and "I have no family," and "I thought my son would come to see me," and "It's so lonely here."

One lady who was partially paralyzed from a stroke, but still very alert, said an orderly stuck a towel in her mouth as punishment for wetting herself. I just couldn't believe my eyes and ears.

The message I am trying to pass on is please be aware of all the lon-

ely and needy elderly people out there. Anybody can volunteer by calling any nursing home in the directory.

I would also advise family members to visit often and look for signs of neglect or abuse. Family members may think that the patient does not remember them or their visit. But the staff will remember, and it may make a difference in the quality of care.

Tammy Conner,
Farmington Hills

Brownies offer thanks

To the editor:
Larkshire Brownie Troop 3303 is sponsoring a blood drive for service men and women in the Persian Gulf.

When we first decided to complete this project, we found that it was much too expensive for our troop to handle without some outside financial assistance.

We are happy to report that several area businesses came through with the cash required. We were able to turn the project into a neighborhood-wide effort.

Michigan Metro Girl Scout Neighborhood 71 — which includes scouts from Larkshire, William Grace and Beechview elementary schools — are now participating in this book drive.

A special thanks to the following contributors: John Carney, a Livonia

attorney; John Growney, of John Thomsall Insurance; Botard General Hospital; and Bob Sellers Pontiac.

Without their donations none of this would have been possible. We will continue to collect and ship the books until our funds are depleted.

Thanks again to all who have assisted with this worthwhile cause.

Michele Oras,
Brownie Troop 3303 leader

This 'loser' says thanks

To the editor:
I would like to thank you for your endorsement of my candidacy for the seat in District 15 of the Oakland County Commission. I'm sure it was instrumental in what turned out to be for me a rather healthy showing.

And thank you, too, for your recent editorial — "To the losers." It's the kind of encouragement that candidates need, especially in areas of opposite political persuasions.

A thank-you also to all those who voted for me and who worked so hard on my campaign.

I promise all the residents of District 15 that I will continue my deep interest in the issues that face Oakland County. I will do all I can to address those issues.

Thank you again for your endorsement, and for not forgetting the "losers."

Al Zelton,
Farmington Hills

Tell PSC about rate proposal

To the editor:
I wonder how many other residents become as angry as I do when they open their telephone bill and read the amount they must pay for zone calls.

Before the federal government approved deregulation of the telephone company, we were able to purchase a service named metro calling which called you to call, for a flat fee, anywhere in the greater Detroit area.

Metro calling has since been discontinued by Michigan Bell. Upon speaking with someone at the telephone company about an error on my bill, I mentioned this and was told that proposals are before the Michigan Public Service Commission to revive a service similar to metro calling. This would save everyone a lot of money each month on their bills.

The Michigan Public Service Commission has a toll-free number 1-800-292-9555 which I called to ask that they pass this proposal. If you are concerned about your high telephone bills, please call this number and voice your opinion. There is power in numbers.

Lydia Chan,
Westland

Opinions are to be shared

Opinions and ideas are best when shared with others.

That's why the Farmington Observer encourages its readers to share their views with others in the From Our Readers column.

Letters should be mailed to the editor, The Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336.

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