

# Be mine for V Day, but safely!

IF LOVE MEANS never having to say you're sorry, then this could be the safest Valentine's Day on record.

It could be, that is, if what seems to be the latest trend catches on. Then again, maybe it will just be one of the strangest ones. Who knows?

In the first place, February is National Heart Month (that has nothing to do with the hearts and flowers — and candy — usually associated with Feb. 14). So if you really care for your lover, you won't give her (or him) chocolates. Bad for the cholesterol level, which is bad for the heart.

That information comes from a news release sent out by the Shaklee Corporation, the vitamin people, who are pushing something called Heart Plan, a fruit-flavored drink that the company claims contains five grams of soluble fiber per serving, the same amount you'd get by eating six apples or 3½ bowls of oatmeal.

If you're concerned about your valentine's health, forget the chocolates. Give her a glass of fruit-flavored fiber.

AND WHILE we're on the subject of press releases, the folks at Fanny Farmer sent one out reminding us that chocolate is still the gift of choice on V day and that that company gets started in the middle of November to produce more than 100 tons of chocolates (which contain 70,000 pounds of sugar and 25,000 pounds of nut meats) to meet the demand.

Speaking of sweets, the chairman of the American Sugar Alliance joined the press-release corps to say that Valentine's Day is a fitting time to give thanks to the farmers who produce all that sugar.

She points out that, thanks to the sugar-producers who generate a total of \$18.5 billion in wages and revenues annually, the average American pays less for a pound of sugar than does his counterpart in 14 other leading world capitals. And that, according to the release, is "the Valentine gift our farmers give us."

That message is a bit saccharin for my taste.

I'm more intrigued with the ac-



**Jack Gladden**

tivities of some people who are trying to keep this holiday for lovers safe in another way.

"Down in New Orleans they were passing out the traditional purple, green and gold Mardi Gras beads with a little something extra attached — a condom."

"People laugh when you give them beads with a condom on them," one of the distributors said. "But at some point you have to take those beads off and when you do, you have a condom right there if you need it."

NEW ORLEANSIANS aren't the only ones pushing this kind of safety. A Bloomfield Hills company is distributing something called "Safe Sox" — a pair of socks in your choice of colors — white, black or white with pink trim — with a brightly colored latex condom stuffed into a Velcro-locked pocket in each sock.

They go on sale today through the Midwest AIDS Prevention Project. And another group is marketing earrings that look like those little chocolate coins wrapped in gold foil. Only instead of chocolate, each foil-wrapped earring contains a condom — always there if you need it.

And down in Springfield, Ohio, the West Central Ohio chapter of Planned Parenthood is selling combination packages of heart-shaped chocolates and foil-wrapped condoms in a campaign to link Valentine's Day with National Condom Week, which began Sunday.

I have to admit, with the critical and still unsolved problem of AIDS all around us, I think it's a pretty good idea.

Still, imagine the feeling if, in a dimly lit room with "Monty Python" playing on the stereo, that special someone opens the gift you've just offered, reaches in for a cherry cordial and comes up with — you get the idea.

Feb. 14, 1991, Valentine's Day in America. Be safe.

## from our readers

### Save gas: turn off motor

To the editor:

Enjoyed the Feb. 7 editorial page with its two pieces on energy consumption. But neither mentioned one obvious way to save fuel oil and avoid pumping noxious fumes. Just turn your engine off.

Of course, it isn't practical to shut off the car at stop lights. But when the accident ahead makes it clear you're in for a long wait, just shut off the engine.

I keep reading matter in the car against such a possibility. Train tracks are another place to turn off the car and reach for a magazine.

Another place to save fuel is in the drive-in line at the bank or fast-food outlet. You just don't know how long that person ahead of you will take. I don't even move up until it's my turn, as long as the line in back of me isn't out into the street.

A pet peeve: literally hundreds of gallons of gas a week are idled away in school parking lots while dozens of parents per school sit with motors running 5-10 minutes. Turn the car off.

There are occasional temperature extremes which may make leaving the car on necessary. And I once had a car with such a bad starter that I dared not turn it off away from my destination.

But most of the time, we can conserve oil and save the environment just by turning a key.

Mary Power, Farmington Hills

fits are less than 30 percent of the budget, it is obvious that mass layoffs of our educators is not the way to solve our budget deficit.

As any businessman who has managed multimillion dollar budgets in the past, I know there is a tremendous amount of fat in a budget of \$92 million.

In looking at the budget I can point to a variety of non-manpower cuts that can achieve the budget reduction without the threatened layoffs of our educators.

I propose that the school board set up a committee of concerned parents and administrators to work together on reducing the Farmington Schools budget.

Many of the parents in this community run businesses with budgets larger than this and have had to deal with balancing their budgets on a daily basis.

If this were to be done the school administration would hear the priorities their parents place on their kids' education and assign funds accordingly.

Thomas and Susan Maas, Farmington Hills

### Do we vote on Social Security?

To the editor:

Now that area seniors have blocked a millage increase which would have maintained the quality of Farmington schools, let's consider another modest proposal.

If the easily justified taxes are those which benefit us directly, when do the rest of us get the opportunity to vote on Social Security payments?

Senior citizens received subsidies from the government far in excess of the amounts they actually contributed during productive working years, and it is the younger population which supports this system.

The argument is ludicrous, of course, because it runs counter to the utilitarianism that the generations have to one another in our society.

It is unfortunate that our elderly citizens do not understand that everyone is affected by underfunded schools.

When teaching salaries and bene-

When property values decline because this school district is not attractive to buyers, when students without extracurricular programs turn their energies to more destructive pursuits, when our graduates cannot compete because of excessive class size and inadequate supplies, then our entire community will be at risk, young and old alike.

What consolation will it be that millionaire Richard Headlee saved himself \$40,000 in property taxes? Shame on those who put self-interest above the interest of us all.

John Klemme, Farmington Hills

### Good teacher may not last

To the editor:

Congratulations to Marilyn Greenstein of our own Highmeadow school for being named a Michigan Science Teacher of the Year. She was featured recently in the Detroit Free Press for the unique, interesting way she teaches science. We are lucky to have one of the Michigan's finest science teachers in Farmington Hills.

Unfortunately, Greenstein's seniority is low relative to many teachers in the Farmington school district. On Feb. 5 we may have voted to lay her off.

Mark F. Mokris, Farmington Hills

Editors' note: Marilyn Greenstein's accomplishments were detailed in the Feb. 11 Farmington Observer.

### Put money where it will do most good

To the editor:

I am a millage supporter. But now that it has been defeated, I'd like to see the school board, school administration and the teachers' union act responsibly to decrease expenditures

without compromising the quality of education to students.

I see the overwhelming no vote as a voice of the taxpayers saying:

- Use your money more efficiently.
- Run the school district more like a business.
- Reward merit, not just seniority.

What we are afraid of is that the newer ambitious teachers who bring fresh ideas and approaches will be automatically cut, while the high-seniority teachers and administrators will be retained without review of the quality of their work.

The school board must focus on the fact that it can't please all employees or all parts of the public. We must put money where it will do the most good for the most students.

Early retirement: The school board should evaluate whether an early retirement program should be adopted for the 1991-92 school year.

Transportation: 1. If students and families elect to attend a high school out of their attendance area or to the Highmeadow magnet school, they should provide their own transportation. 2. Middle school and high school students should walk to the entrance of their subdivisions or to main crossroads (up to a mile) to be picked up, thereby saving gasoline, money and time. As a result of these changes, we may need fewer school buses.

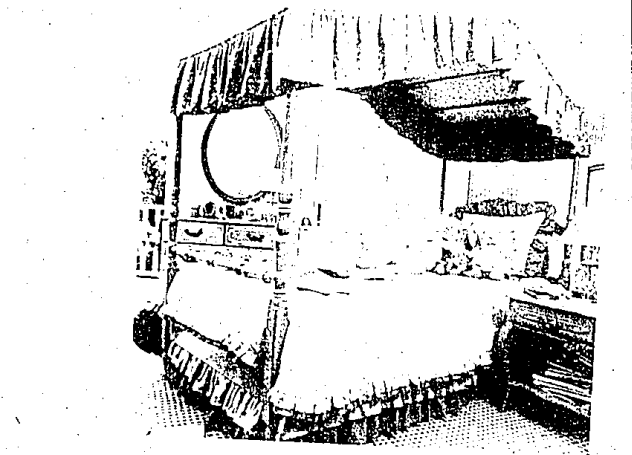
These ideas are not original. These ideas alone will not solve the money problem. We offer these thoughts primarily to serve as a catalyst for other concerned citizens to come forth with their ideas.

Ed and Hilary Mahon, Farmington Hills

### Opinions are to be shared

Editor: I am writing to you regarding the recent election of the Farmington School Board. I am a millage supporter. But now that it has been defeated, I'd like to see the school board, school administration and the teachers' union act responsibly to decrease expenditures

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