

Let us 'scud' all silly rules

ONE WAY to take your mind off the war is to get involved in some good, old-fashioned American bureaucracy.

I'm not talking about high-level, government stuff, just petty annoyances — the kinds of things that typify everyday life in America. Like trying to... well, let me start at the beginning.

My wife, who visits our local library at least once a week — sometimes two or three times — has asked that a book be put on reserve for her. On Friday, after she got home from work, she found the mailed notice that the book had come in and the library was holding it.

It was too late to pick it up Friday night. Saturday was hectic and she didn't get to the library. Our daughter had a friend over Saturday night, and they had been promised a trip to a movie on Sunday. The film of choice? "Kindergarten Cop."

I PROMISED to clean the house, scrub the floors, cook dinner and run any necessary errands if I could be excused from this particular field trip. I just wasn't ready for Arnold Schwarzenegger as an undercover cop turned kindergarten teacher. Besides, by Sunday morning the streets were icy and I figured this would lessen the amount of driving that each of us had to do.

My request was accepted on condition I buy a Sunday New York Times, pick up a prescription for my wife at the local drug store, return a half-dozen books to the library and check out the book that was being held for her. Everything went fine — until I got to the library.

I shoved the books I was carrying into the return slot and moved to the new books area to see what was in. I decided to check out "Tenured Radicals" for the third time. Maybe this time I would actually read it.

There were no new computer books, so I got in line at the circulation desk. When it was my turn I handed the librarian my library card, the copy of "Tenured Radicals" and the notification slip that my wife's book had come in.

SHE TOOK THE slip, found the book on the reserved shelf and returned to the counter. "Do you have your wife's li-



Jack Gladden

brary card?" she asked.

I said I didn't. "I'm sorry," she said, "but I can't give you the book unless you have her card. She reserved it on her card."

"I know," I said. "I forgot to bring it. But we've done this before. I don't know how the other librarian handled it, but she canceled out something in the computer so I could take the book on my own card."

"I'm sorry," she said. "The computer doesn't recognize family relationships." "I realize that," I said, "but I don't have her card. She comes in here at least once a week, all the other librarians know her and

"I'm sorry," she said, "but the computer doesn't recognize family relationships." "I realize that," I said, "but I don't have her card. She comes in here at least once a week, all the other librarians know her and

ON MY WAY out I stopped at the information desk and left a note in the suggestion box. The clerk at that desk, after listening to my story, said, "Well, you may not have any secrets in your house, but some people don't want their spouses to know what books they're checking out and we have to respect that."

"Oh, sheesh!" I thought. "Is this a library or the Department of Social Services?"

Out in the parking lot, still feeling irritated, I noticed the dozens of yellow ribbons waving from every light post. I thought about the war again.

I thought about the single-minded computer and the recalcitrant librarian. And I felt a little silly.

It's better than dodging Scud missiles," I muttered to myself.

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

from our readers

United we did stand

To the editor:

May I suggest we make throw pillows out of our Desert Storm and Desert Shield T-shirts?

In our family rooms or in a place that's special (besides our hearts) hang our yellow ribbons and our lapel pins. Keep the flag flying.

We will all be reminded of our wonderful togetherness and heartfelt thanks to the super persons who gave all for us.

For united we did stand.

Vera Scull,
Farmington Hills

Cancel his policy with Headlee firm

To the editor:

Today I had an opportunity to review my personal insurance files. Much to my chagrin and dismay I found that I have a policy with Alexander Hamilton Insurance Co.

As a result of Richard Headlee's spearheading the drive against the children and citizenry of Farmington Hills, I am directing my agent to cancel this policy and find a suitable replacement with which I might protect my family, as Headlee apparently has no interest in the families residing in Farmington Hills.

Robert C. Zaek,
Farmington Hills

Headlee should not do our thinking

To the editor:

I wonder who appointed Richard Headlee and Patrick Anderson of Alexander Hamilton Insurance Co. the financial guardians of Farmington Hills.

First, they decided that \$5.8 million taken from the Farmington Public Schools didn't need to be replaced, so they spent a large amount of money to defeat the recent millage proposals.

Now they're going to pass judgment on the Farmington Hills parks and recreation millage renewal and tell us whether it is worthy of support.

Their arrogance is amazing. Does the head of any other Farmington Hills business get the personal sales pitch that these men received from city officials?

In passing the Headlee Amendment several years ago, I'm afraid we may have created a "monster" that will haunt us for years to come. Of course, this being America, Headlee and Anderson absolutely have the right to express their opinions. But please voters, don't let them do your thinking for you. Learn the issues yourself and then make your decisions.

JoAnn K. Phelps,
Farmington Hills

Tell those with power

To the editor:

Michigan residents who complain about high property taxes aren't going to accomplish anything. Complaining without offering an alternative just doesn't work.

Homesteaded property taxes are unfair for many reasons. But they're not only unfair, they're stupid. What would happen if homesteaded property taxes were eliminated altogether and replaced with an alternative fair and equitable tax spread among all those who work in Michigan?

It seems logical to assume that more people could afford homes. Jobs would be created in the building trades and businesses that make and sell home appliances and furnishings.

Family life would be more stable and secure. People would know that the government couldn't confiscate the homestead. Crime would drop. More income tax revenue would flow into government treasuries.

The economy would become more stable and life would be better for everyone. Renters would benefit

too, because part of the rent they pay goes for property taxes. School funding would be more evenly distributed.

Anyone who reads this and thinks it's a good idea should call — or, better, write — your state senators and representatives, your governor, the editors of the newspapers you read. If you want to do something about it, you have to let those who have the power and ability to make changes hear your wishes.

They are on your side. You can make it happen. Try it. You'll like it.

Keneth Kemp,
Farmington Hills

Not happy with judge

To the editor:

I take great issue with your editorial last week about "Silent Fred." And I consider it blasphemous that you would use the title of a Christian hymn on such a character.

You endorsed him when you knew many negative things about him, so now you are stuck with what you wanted. You have no reason to gripe. Mark my words, there will be more dissatisfaction with his tenure. Just ask some of the people who have gone before him. His arrogance stuns them. The more comfortable he gets with the job, the more he can abuse it.

All you have to do is drive by the courthouse and see the outdoor United States flag that hasn't been taken down since he took office.

It flies both day and night, in all kinds of weather and without being hatched at night.

The only time it has received attention was when the June '89 rains rotted it so bad that the subsequent August '89 winds blew it right off the pole, halyard and all.

This from someone who touted his pilot experience in the Marines as his big qualifier for being elected to the job.

This is the kind of respect for country that he brings to the job. Understand, he has transformed our

public funded courthouse into his personal museum of USMC memorabilia.

His campaign speeches and literature bragged about having served in all three branches of government. But how the road commission, Marines, Wayne County Catholic social services or parks and recreation prepared him to be a district court judge I don't know.

Oh well, you got what you wanted. Now quit crying. It's the people of his town who aren't being served.

Howard Aldrich,
Farmington Hills

Howard Aldrich, a court officer in the 47th District Court under former Judge Michael Hand, was not retained when Judge Fred Harris took over in the summer of 1989.

Fund-raisers are needed for new pools

To the editor:

Let's not worry about what the pool depth (Feb. 21 Observer Sports Section) possibly will be.

Let's just make them five feet, start fund-raisers to help pay the cost, and get the Falcons, Hawks and Raiders back home.

Being from California, we wondered about the shallow pools here. In the west, even home pools cannot have diving boards unless the pool is a certain depth.

If we sit around and wait, the pools will never get the attention they need. If we wait for the school board, they will cost more and be cheap, cheap, cheap.

The Farmington pool will be not only too shallow, but still will be too short. Who was minding the store when it was built?

I'm sure Alexander Hamilton Life wouldn't mind making a donation.

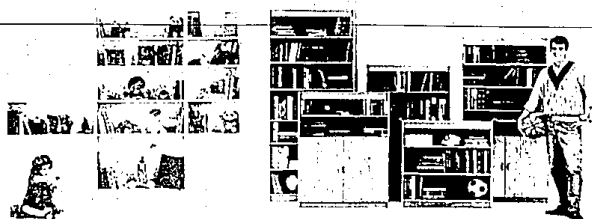
Susan Frump,
Farmington Hills

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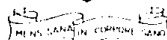
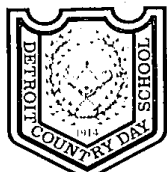
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