

points of view

Lives open to snooping eyes

REMEMBER THAT Florida couple? The man and woman who got a bit... carried away on the bathroom floor of his condo? In front of some blinds that were partially open? About 10 feet away from the common swimming pool?

It's the case that newspapers have dubbed "Sex, blinds and videotape." Some neighbors claimed that the couple could be clearly seen having sex inside the condo by children gathered around the pool. One helpful neighbor grabbed a video camera and taped the action, shooting through the blinds.

After the local sheriff looked at the tape, the couple was arrested and charged with lewd and lascivious conduct in front of a child — a felony punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

WELL, THE local gendarmes dropped that charge, but the couple still face three disorderly conduct charges — second-degree misdemeanors with maximum sentences of 60 days in jail and a \$500 fine. They are accused of taking a "partially" nude swim in the condo pool a



Jack Gladden

week before the videotape incident, of having sex in a hot tub hours after the incident and of entering a bar restroom the following night "with the intent of engaging in sex."

So what are their crimes against society? The prosecutor summed it up: "These people were just conducting themselves in a manner where they were just being obnoxious to the people around them, if you will. If there was a law against being a jerk in public, then this charge would define it."

Last time I checked there was no such law but that hasn't stopped the prosecutor. The couple is fighting the charges, which they say have nothing to do with what they were arrested for in the first place. And they say the videotaping through the

blinds was an invasion of their privacy. But this is 1991. Big Brother is alive and well.

FARTHER NORTH, in St. Paul, Minn., the Court of Appeals has reversed a lower court ruling, in which a jury found a woman guilty of violating a Minneapolis ordinance requiring that homes be kept in a "clean and sanitary" condition.

The charges were brought after a complaint was filed in 1989 and the woman's home was inspected by a representative of the Minneapolis Health Department. The inspector testified that five plastic garbage bags and a barrel on the back porch, clothing on a back yard clothesline, boxes stacked against a wall, used plastic pop bottles and other items found at the home constituted unclean and unsanitary conditions.

A jury found her guilty and a judge sentenced her to 35 days in jail or a \$700 fine. The appeals court found that the ordinance was "vague and discretionary" as applied in this particular case, but not on the face of it.

So if you are a messy housekeeper and you live in Minneapolis, you'd better make good use of the vacuum and the duster. Cleanliness is not just next to Godliness. It's the law.

AND BACK DOWN South, in Canton, Miss., a Jackson woman whose child was born dead has been charged with manslaughter because she allegedly used cocaine during her pregnancy. The charge carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

The assistant district attorney prosecuting the case says a conviction could set a national precedent. The woman's attorney says her client's privacy was invaded.

"It is part of what we see as a trend nationally of the government trying to be involved in the private lives of pregnant women," she said.

Yep, Big Brother is out there. And he's probably watching YOU.

Jack Gladden is a copy editor with Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

from our readers

She agrees with column

To the editor:

In response to Jack Gladden's article on the compulsory pregnancy movement, i.e. Operation Rescue, I wish to concur with his stance.

If "right to life" really cared about life, they would be consistently pro-life and anti-death penalty. They would also make an effort (direct their zealous fervor) towards saving some of the 40,000 children who die world-wide each day from lack of nutrition and medical care.

Instead, they self-righteously bully desperate women into breeding even more unwanted uncared-for children, citing biblical verse.

When men wrote the Bible, there were fewer people on the entire planet than now live in Dallas. Let's give some consideration to quality of life for all, instead of stampeding for even more population. In other words, let's use some logic and responsible behavior.

Irene Brown, Farmington Hills

She's a credit to the paper

To the editor:

Once again, I am writing in behalf of the Junior Group of Goodwill Industries to thank Loraine McClish and your paper for your coverage of our recent plans for raising funds for the handicapped.

In addition to being a fine writer, Loraine McClish has always been generous with time and space in not only ours but any efforts to benefit people.

Our funds go to train mentally, physically and emotionally handicapped people to take jobs. This changes them from a life of hopeless apathy to useful citizens with a goal.

In life. We hope you realize that you have played a vital part in this effort. In these times when so much of journalism is disappointing sleaze, McClish and your paper are a credit to the communities in which your paper circulates by your constant space to worthwhile volunteer efforts.

Nancy Simanek, Farmington Hills

District has an excellent reputation

To the editor:

I retired from teaching in June. My last 25 years were in three elementary schools in the Farmington Public Schools District. In educational meetings around the state, I was always proud to say that I was a Farmington teacher. The Farmington educational system has always had an excellent reputation among teachers.

Now the capable, professional Farmington Board of Education and the excellent superintendent Mike Flanagan, helped by extremely able administrators such as Don Cowan, Pam O'Malley, and Barbara Novatis, to name just a few, and the many truly excellent teachers, are attempting to ensure that Farmington's high educational standards will continue.

Parents who are concerned about the quality of their children's education and who are raising children who are highly motivated to be responsible students should be proud of the education their children are receiving in the Farmington Public Schools. Their concern and support will enable Farmington to retain its excellent reputation.

Nancy Simanek, Farmington Hills

Tummies talk when a crisis hits

WHEN THEY TAUGHT us about food groups in school, they never said that certain foods alert us to crisis.

Consider, for instance, Washington D.C. this past Sunday night — the night of Gorbachev's fall.

According to Frank Meeks, owner of the D.C. area's Domino's Pizza stores: "Around 8 p.m. orders to the White House, Pentagon and Embassy Row took off. Then the press started calling me, asking if I knew if anything big was registering on the old 'pizza meter.'"

Pizza orders at the Pentagon and the White House went through the roof, breaking Operation Desert Storm records, Meeks said. The White House ordered 52 pies, topping their old mark by seven. The Pentagon ordered 102 pizzas, breaking their record by one.

Only the CIA didn't show up on the pizza meter. "During Desert Storm, they started to order a lot of pizza and then stopped once the media got hold of

the story," Meeks said. "This time it was two cancelled calls and then Zipco."

IN OUR COMMUNITIES, it's more generally the old doughnut meter.

Take the night earlier this month when a barricaded gunman was holed up for nine hours on Holland Street in Birmingham. The Birmingham Department of Public Services showed up with coffee and dozens of doughnuts for the contingent of state, Birmingham and West Bloomfield police.

"We specifically asked for doughnuts and coffee," said Birmingham police Chief Ed Ostin. Of course, that was about 1 a.m. — after the sandwiches and numerous deliveries of colas.

Dough shops are a favorite police stop. Ostin says Birmingham police are somewhat hampered because the only all-night doughnut shop is somewhat off their beaten track at Crooks and Maple in Troy.



Judith Doner Berne

"A lot of cases are solved at the doughnut shop," said Birmingham police Capt. Richard Patterson.

"YOU NEED to find the police, you call the doughnut shop," agrees Nadia Jovanovich, who has managed the Keego Harbor Dawn Doughnuts for 11 years.

"They all come in — we only charge our police officers half price." Our police officers' could be from any of

several departments — Sylvan Lake, Keego Harbor, Orchard Lake or West Bloomfield.

Jovanovich speaks with pride of an award from the Tri-City Fire Department after they helped supply firefighters and police with doughnuts, coffee and pop the night Shady Industries burned down in May 1990.

Personally, I will never forget the 1976 tornado which hit West Bloomfield. The Red Cross was on the scene quickly supplying — you guessed it — coffee and doughnuts.

Pizza in D.C. doughnuts around metro Detroit: hearty recipes for crisis management.

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

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