

from our readers

Be fair to FHS '11'

To the editor:

I just wanted to let someone know how disappointed I am in your sports editors for the comments made about Farmington High's football team in the Oct. 3 issue.

Usually local newspapers try to support their local teams, but apparently your writers (Brad Emons and Dan O'Meara) prefer to add personal problems and derogatory comments instead of praise or hope.

Their statements about Farmington fans constantly complaining and not wanting to play Harrison High School were inappropriate and unprofessional, especially since this is the only section of the newspaper most of the players will read.

Farmington is having its best season in a long time. Even though their toughest competition is yet to come, how about letting the kids enjoy it?

David M. Deany,
1981 FHS grad,
Farmington Hills

Please see Hills police

To the editor:

A letter to the motorist who hit our son:

Do you remember? I'm sure you do.

Oct. 1, 1991, approximately 8:30 p.m. just north of 12 Mile on Farmington Road.

I'm sure you remember my son's bicycle and most probably the expression on his face when your car slammed into him.

What you did not know whether he was dead or alive as you left him lying in the street.

Life is surviving.

TRAFFIC PASSED by with no one stopping to render aid. To get attention, he pitched parts of his bicycle into the traffic lane, but I'm sure you're not aware of this.

I thank Loretta Wallace for stopping to assist, also the many additional emergency and police personnel soon to arrive. What you do not know is that his father and brother had the opportunity to watch the EMS team stabilize him with his elbow shattered and the bone from his twisted leg protruding into the asphalt.

I thank the specialist team of doctors and nurses at Botsford Hospital who were summoned from home and

worked most of the night in the attempt to save my son's leg and reconstruct his elbow with bone removed from his hip.

The road to recovery (optimistically) with no complications, will take at least six months to a year. Indirectly, a theft could have been prevented, one of my son's friends bicycle was stolen from the hospital while he was visiting him. Maybe you slept well that night. I will guarantee you that his parents did not for many nights after that.

Please contact Farmington Hills Police with information relating to the above.

Marty and John Firment,
Farmington Hills

Telford pins labels on us

To the editor:

Self-described "multiculturalists," such as John Telford, are always finding new labels to pin on us poor unenlightened masses. First we were "racist," then "sexist" and "elitist." Next came "Eurocentric," "ethnocentric," and "homophobic."

But now Telford has really outdone himself. In his Sept. 28 column, he calls us "geocentric." Gee whiz, is there no bottom to the depth of our depravity?

I've aspired for years to join Telford among the morally anointed multiculturalists, but now I discover that Telford and the cultural avant-garde have moved on to become multiglossolal.

Thomas Roelofs,
Farmington Hills

Parochial bashing must stop

To the editor:

After reading and listening to continual parochial school bashing, I feel compelled to write in response to Lawrence Niblett's letter of Sept. 30.

In his letter, Niblett is pleased that the school board has "stopped spending quality education tax dollars on private academy transportation," correcting an abuse of public money. He urges the board to "come to the taxpayers with a clean record of spending money prudently."

Excuse me, but the last time I

checked my assessment, I was still paying taxes (along with all the other "private academy" parents), contributing my "public money" to public school education. The public schools are benefiting from our choice of private school education; i.e. more tax dollars can be spent per public school student, since parochial school children are not costing the district any valuable and expensive classroom dollars.

So, please, stop turning the transportation cuts into a parochial school complaint. Providing transportation to private school students is not an "abuse of public money." Rather, it is a small attempt to provide some equity and accountability to a large number of taxpayers.

Sheryl Swital,
Farmington Hills

Teachers not overpaid, reader says

To the editor:

In response to T. Bower's letter in the Observer last week, I don't know if he has school-age children or not. If so, he surely realizes the importance of a teacher's job. A teacher guides a child through the most important years of his/her life and has everything to do with how the child views the learning process, which in turn carries through the child's career.

A child spends six hours a day, five days a week with his/her teacher. I myself like to know we have qualified, caring teachers who are compensated according to their qualifications.

I do not think teachers are overpaid. Teaching is one of the most important jobs. No, I'm not a teacher, just a concerned parent. Remember, you get what you pay for.

M. Hadaway,
Farmington Hills

He questions recycling fee

To the editor:

After 29 years of having my garbage collected and paid for through taxes, why do I have to pay extra now?

Either I'm stupid or I don't understand this new method. The way I figure it, the cost of collection should

be less now. Maybe I'm overlooking the fact that one of the fastest growing corporations in the country, Waste Management Inc., may be behind all of this.

Recycling is one of the best things happening in this country, and now that we are involved I have these comments and questions that I'd like answers to:

• Prior to July, all the garbage was taken to a landfill, and it cost the collectors X number of dollars per cubic yard for disposal. Now only a percentage of the garbage is taken to the landfill so the cost should be lower — not?

• Another portion of the garbage is taken to an area to be made into compost. No landfill fee for this portion, right? Compost is reusable. I've been doing it for the past 20 years. So where does that compost go eventually? And at what profit? And who gets the profit?

• The third portion — glass, paper, metal and plastic — doesn't wind up at the landfill either. Another savings. It goes to manufacturers to be made into other products. Those manufacturers pay for that scrap. But even if it's given to them for free, the garbage collector still saves on landfill fees — right? And if the recyclable material is sold, who gets the profits? — the city or Waste Management?

So with the conclusions that I have arrived at explain to me where I'm wrong. And don't tell me that it takes more crews to handle this because the garbage volume hasn't changed and each crew just covers more ground, each day than previously and each truck makes less trips to a disposal area than before.

A couple more questions: If I'm on vacation for a week or two, or consider those seniors who go south for from four to seven months, the recycling "fee" is paid for recycling nothing.

Taxes at least are used inefficiently elsewhere. Since this "fee" (tax I call it) is imposed only on single homes, how do businesses, condominium dwellers and rental dwellers get away without recycling? Is recycling important only for single family homes?

Michael Svadeba,
Farmington Hills



His vision calls for new haven

THE NEW DIRECTOR of the Michigan Department of Mental Health has a dream, or rather a vision.

It is to complete the move to community-based mental health care, providing nearly all of the state's mentally ill treatment and housing close to home.

You are responsible for every person in the community," James Haveman told several hundred mental health professionals mainly from Wayne and Oakland counties assembled at a conference sponsored by the Alliance for Mental Health Services at Wayne State University last Friday.

"I want people to receive treatment in their communities," Haveman and other nationally-known speakers were there to address "The Future of Mental Health Care."

Haveman's vision includes: • Re-creating an image of mental health, not as a social service, but as health care with a variety of service providers: profit and nonprofit, public and private.

• Reorganizing the state's mental health department to lead and monitor the system.

• Creating community mental health authorities which aren't part of county government.

• Promoting inclusiveness in the schools, moving away from special education.

His vision was crystallized from the recommendations of citizen committees set up during his early weeks in office.

IT IS A LAUDABLE vision — one that began back in the early '60s when President Kennedy signed the federal act to move mental health services out of state-operated institutions and into local communities. WSU professor of psychiatry Dr. Melvin Bornstein, training analyst of the Southfield-based Michigan Psychoanalytic Institute, reminded the audience that was "a time of exhilaration for mental health."

New drugs and the scientific and social acknowledgment of chemically-triggered mental illness allowed many hospitalized patients to return to their families and communities.

Haveman admits that some for whom there is no known treatment may have to stay under state care.

THE NEW DIRECTOR's attempt to complete the shift to community-based mental health is complicated by politics, by hard economic times and by stereotypes and fear.

And it comes at a time when more homeless are on the street, many of



Judith Doner Berne

them the so-called products of closing state institutions and, if they have no children, are now cut off from welfare under the Engler budget.

It comes at a time when mental health units in general hospitals are being closed in favor of more lucrative specialties, while insurance companies are refusing to pay for the treatment necessary for effective substance abuse and longer term mental health treatment.

"The lamps are going out in psychiatric units and substance abuse units all over the state," warned Dr. Elliot Luby, a resident of Birmingham who is chief emeritus of the psychiatry department at Harper Hospital.

He described it as a tug of war, with the administration of private hospitals wanting to close units versus the state wanting them to take over.

AS FOR STEREOTYPES and fear, community officials and residents continue to show their outrage when the state dictates that a group home be placed on their streets. So rather than confront the more affluent, more organized communities, they are often placed where there is less political clout but also less safety.

Yet, many of us have neighbors who may be alcoholic, cocaine abusers, under treatment for anxiety or depression or have a developmental disability. Do we knock on their doors and tell them they are hurting our property values and they must leave?

As we move away from special education toward inclusive education, our young people will have an opportunity to learn first-hand about the worth of people of varying abilities.

At the same time, we adults need to become more inclusive on our streets so the new "asylums" — meaning safe havens — can be our communities.

But Haveman's vision is only as good as the dollars and people that must be part of it. And there doesn't seem to be enough of either.

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

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