

POINTS OF VIEW

Competitive edge

It's 40 years late, but school reform is welcome

Our school system should have been revised 40 years ago. It's been only the past 20 years that the administration reorganized the deplorable state of educating children. Now, in earnest, parents should be happy they have Gov. John Engler's plan. At least he has offered a different system.

Making schools more competitive would put an end to shoving children into classes they don't have an interest in.

In other words, if a school cannot include your child in a special class because that subject is overcrowded, you could shop for the school which can offer that particular choice.

This appears fairer than arguing with facilitators where the parents' objections are glossed over.

Basics would still be compulsory.

There would be less discrimination within the system. Knowing parents could withhold the voucher until an agreement is reached regarding sex, race, rich, poor, smart or dumb.

My deep concern is that the system is cloning robots. Anyone who doesn't conform could be expelled as troublemakers. Now the style is to encourage students to be creative, use their gray matter. But first we must practice honesty, ethics, respect, humility and charity. Youngsters can see through the hypocrisy.

Making schools more competitive makes sense. Major corporations across the country have developed strategies to put forth better service and save money.

Education is a big business. We should dismantle a failed system. Note who doesn't support the "change." It's

GUEST COLUMNIST



HELEN MOTRIUK

My deep concern is that the system is cloning robots. Anyone who doesn't conform could be expelled as troublemakers.

the MEA. It is entrenched in those positions and is terrorizing citizens about the dire consequences and upheavals with "change."

Let new types of schools exist; let religious schools exist; let private schools exist; let institutional or trade schools exist. They may do a better job, cheaper.

We need teachers, not leeches. Teaching students year round might justify their salaries. Down-sizing classes may promote student interest.

All the arts and the appreciation of arts should be encouraged. More health, nutrition and gymnasium classes. Schools should mandate the interaction of humans, one on one.

The quality of education has not improved although the cost is spiraling every year. It's been a proven failure, even as Gov. John Engler has

espoused.

Why would anyone elect more incompetency? We should change the system and then debate "how to fund" the change.

Opinions are like belly buttons. Everyone has one! The plan Engler has advocated was meant for schools to receive equitable monies for value received.

The wealthy would rather be charitable if they get a kickback, but never a charity to a disenfranchised student.

No matter what system of financing is initiated, the poorer districts will always be disadvantaged, but could still have a voice in the education of their children.

Helen Motriuk, a retired bookkeeper, has lived in Farmington Hills for 20 years.

Memoirs of a sister who lost Race for the Cure

Carol Silverman and her friends will be walking the Race for the Cure at 9 a.m. Saturday at the Detroit Zoo for the first time.

Silverman, of Bloomfield Hills, had planned to participate in the annual fund-raiser for breast cancer research last year.

She changed those plans to be in Tennessee, where her sister was undergoing last-ditch experimental treatment for a cancer that had first invaded her breast tissue 12 years before.

Sad, isn't it, that the breast — regarded as a symbol of womanhood — has become for all too many women a vehicle for anguish or death.

Silverman's sister, former Wayne County resident Fanny (Jill) Gaynes, knew that full well.

The first chapter in her book, "How Am I Gonna Find A Man If I'm Dead," is called "Soothing the savage breast."

The book, scheduled for publication later this month, chronicles her 12-year battle against cancer with candor and a heavy dose of humor. She died last October.

For those who are afraid to do or have a breast exam, for those who have had even a small brush with the terror that pulses through you after discovering a lump in the breast and the exquisite relief of finding that it is benign, and for those who have actually been diagnosed with breast cancer, it's a hard read.

But a worthwhile one.

Her up and down battle, trying to keep up with the latest research, trying to keep down the ever-creeping cancer, is a tribute to her spirit, her friends and family and to the medical profession.

"Had she been here, she would have gone in a wheelchair," said Silverman of Saturday's race, which already has



JUDITH DONER BERNE

"Had she been here, she would have gone in a wheelchair," said Carol Silverman of Saturday's race, which already has nearly 6,000 people registered including 300 cancer survivors.

nearly 6,000 people registered, including 300 cancer survivors.

She bases that on her sister's determination to live, her belief in medical research and her dedication to helping others who are still fighting the battle she lost.

"Many cancer survivors are incredible people. My sister impacted so many lives — as sick as she was she was so willing to help people."

In the preface to her book, Gaynes makes it clear she doesn't advocate any particular kind of therapy for a person with cancer.

"What I do recommend is that you ask a lot of questions, do a lot of reading and find out what your options are," she writes. "... Research continues, more results come in and expert opinions change. Again, do that research."

"And never lose hope."

Unfortunately, a lot of us may well need both the document of determination by Gaynes and the medical research, support and education money that the race provides, part of which stays in southeastern Michigan.

That's because nearly 7,000 Michigan women will be diagnosed with breast cancer and 2,000 will die of the disease — just this year.

But I don't have to tell you that. All of us know more people than we care to count who have been affected by breast cancer — as well as their children, husbands and parents.

Walk, race/walk, run or make a donation Saturday on their behalf — and on your own.

Judith Doner Berne is the managing editor of The Eccentric Newspapers. You can reach her at 901-2563. Gaynes' book can be ordered through Borders or Barnes & Noble bookstores.

Court-initiated programs ease civil, criminal load

How does the Oakland Circuit Court accomplish so much? Through hard work, productive partnerships with other county departments and state agencies, and the innovative and energetic efforts of the court's 225 employees.

Let me share some specifics with you:

This court has been awarded more than a quarter of a million dollars from the Office of Drug Control policy and the State Court Administrative Office to help adjudicate drug cases. We were awarded almost \$17,000 from the Michigan State Police for a computerized program so that all felony convictions could be instantly added to a felon's criminal history record.

Another partnership in the criminal arena is in the works. This is our Integrated Justice Data System, which we hope to launch within the next couple of months via another grant application through the Office of Drug Control Policy.

This will link the Prosecutor's Office, numerous district courts throughout the county (including the 62nd District Court), the Sheriff's Department, the County Clerk's Office, the Circuit Court, the Probate Court, and the State Police for purposes of transmitting information on criminal cases.

We recently assisted the Reimbursement Division in setting up a system to go after convicted criminals who have failed to pay court-ordered costs and fees. We estimate this will bring in well over \$100,000 in additional revenue.

Our award-winning SMILE Program, developed by Judge Edward Sosnick and our Friend of the Court, helps the children of divorce by educating their parents on how to help children deal with the trauma of a changing family structure.

Just last month, we began "Children Helping Children Through Art." It's a partnership with area schools to have student artwork displayed at our Friend of the Court office.

Our Settlement Week program was honored in 1991. Since then, we have continued to study the use of intensive settlement programs. We also have embarked on a master mediation project in partnership with the Settlement Center and members of the Oakland County Bar Association.

GUEST COLUMNIST



JUDGE HILDA GAGE

In concert with the Family Law Section of the State Bar and the Family Law Committee of the Oakland County Bar, we have applied to the Michigan Supreme Court to become a test court for binding arbitration in domestic relations cases.

The courthouse is a safer place. In 1993, more than 941,000 people came through the metal detectors, and 628 handguns were checked at courthouse entrances. Almost 2,300 edged weapons were confiscated by sheriff's deputies. Significantly, the sheriff's department reports that each month fewer and fewer edged weapons are confiscated.

But we have some concerns: Our facility is not user friendly. I am advised that the possibility of valet parking is in the works, and I encourage the efforts of the Department of Facilities Management to institute that service to users of the courthouse. I am also encouraged that public seating in the court's corridors may soon be a reality. It is long, long overdue.

In many respects our facility hampers our ability to handle the work that comes before us. We know statistically that well over 93 percent of the cases filed in this court will be resolved by means other than a full-blown trial in one of our courtrooms. Despite this, our facility lacks conferencing and settlement areas.

We judges are a responsible set of people with a precise job to do. It is our duty to follow the law and our obligation to do justice. This is how the judiciary serves the public.

Hilda Gage is chief justice of the Oakland Circuit Court. This is part of a "State of the Court" address she recently gave to the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

Your Helpful Deck Building Experts!

Choose Your Deck Lumber Wisely:

N.A. Mans Building Centers Stocks
Only Quality Wolmanized Ponderosa Pine

MAKE SURE YOUR DECK LASTS FOR YEARS!
PONDEROSA PINE IS: • More stable than yellow pine
• Less shrinkage & warping than yellow pine • Easier to handle (cut & nail) than yellow pine • More uniform appearance than yellow pine

The finest wood finish available
Penofin® seals and protects the mill-bright beauty of natural wood. • Brazilian Rosewood Oil base deeply penetrates and stabilizes wood fibers. • Blocks ultraviolet rays, the number one cause of discoloration. • Microporous finish seals out moisture, yet allows wood to breathe. • Safe and easy to use.

\$13.99 #521600
\$22.97 #521601

FREE Plans and Estimates • FREE Delivery Available
FREE Deck Building Book • FREE Custom Design Service

15% OFF TREATED LUMBER

• Great For Decks • Fences
• Docks or Any Other Outdoor Projects.
• We stock top quality ponderosa pine.

Mans Treated Lumber Policy is to make sure you are completely satisfied. If at any time Prior to Cutting or Nailing any treated board, you are not satisfied with the condition of that board, you may return it! No Questions Asked!

CANTON - Do-It Center
4190 Ford Road, Canton, MI 313-981-3800

MONROE
2754 N. Monroe St., Monroe, MI 313-241-8400

NEW BOSTON
36500 Shelby Road, New Boston, MI 313-753-9346 OR 313-941-3131

TRENTON
3300 W. Jefferson, Trenton, MI 313-476-3000

N.A. MANS HOME DESIGN CENTER:
4190 Ford Road, Canton, MI Windows & Doors 313-981-4445 Kitchen & Bath Showroom 313-981-5500 Creative Floors 313-981-3582