

Survey says . . . Thanks for the kind comments

The Observer is part of living in the Farmington area. It is part of my life! Keep up the good work.

Thanks, anonymous Farmington-area reader, we needed that. Please don't think we're fishing for compliments from our readers. We're not. But here's a reader who likes what she sees every Monday and Thursday when the old Farmington Observer hits her doorstep. We're pleased that she's pleased. There were lots more kind words written about the Observer in the many responses to the paper's recent readership survey.

"Love your paper!" said another favorable response. "Would be lost without it. Can't wait for Mon. & Thurs.'s papers. Great for the local scene."

Obviously, we're overjoyed - and maybe a little surprised.

It was just another one of those readership surveys (Is it just our imagination, or do there seem to be a lot of them these days?) placed inconspicuously on an inside page in a couple of recent editions of the Farmington Observer.

Maybe you responded to the survey, or remember seeing it. There was a graphic of an oversized fountain pen pointing at a list of items normally found in the Observer.

Our marketing people, who have an absolute passion for knowing what turns readers on and off, wanted some indication of what's being read in our newspaper. Respondents could circle or check their favorite topics.

They didn't have to give their names, but some sketchy information such as gender, postal ZIP code and age was asked for. There

was also space for comments.

Respondents had to go to the trouble of completing, clipping and mailing or faxing the thing. Well, Farmington Observer readers, bless their survey-filling-out hearts, did indeed go to the trouble.

How many responses did we get? Oh, we stopped counting at about 80, and they're still dribbling in. They were mailed, faxed and delivered by hand. It was the same thing a few months ago when we asked for volunteers to serve on our Reader Advisory Board. We were swamped with offers.

Good old Farmington - ask and ye shall receive.

As we said, the kind comments have us beaming. Want to hear a couple more? OK. How about:

"Our family loves the Observer," said a 38-year-old woman. Added a 46-year-old woman, "I read the Observer from front to back. It's the best way to keep current on what's happening in the community. You're doing a great job!"

Oh, sure, there were a few not-so-glowing comments on our efforts, but not many. And even those were constructive, not mean-spirited. We're happy to have those, too.

"The paper is bland, probably by design," said a man in his 60s. "You just don't want to make waves."

But we're taking every comment seriously. We're happy to hear them, good or bad. We're also pleased that so many readers checked or circled "editorials, letters to the editor, guest columns or editorial cartoons" as items that they read on a regular basis.

School of tomorrow is here

Students will be returning to school this fall to a world of knowledge no longer limited by the size of the blackboard.

For an ever-increasing number of students, the world is at their back door and easier to access than dad's wallet. And the reason is technology. Not only does technology impact on how students learn but on what they learn, when they learn and who gets involved in the learning.

The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, for instance, is offering an access site and the international communication link for the Global Village Project whereby students throughout the region have the opportunity to share learning activities with students in other worlds. To help prepare teachers to capitalize on global communications via the Internet, an 11-year-old Livonia boy from Frost Middle School recently traveled to Rochester to share his knowledge and experiences.

In Redford Union, South Redford and Farmington Public Schools, parents can learn about their children's homework assignments for the night, or obtain other information about their child's school or classroom, through the HomeWork Hotline offered by the Observer & Eccentric. This is a voice mail application that piloted last year at Warner Middle School in Farmington and is expanding this year. Using the same technology, parents from all 12 communities in which our newspapers publish can obtain a variety of information about the opening of school through our Smart Start school hotline.

In Plymouth-Canton Community Schools, students connect to the nation and world through an interactive cable system which offers limitless opportunities for young people at Salem and Canton high schools.

Several school districts in our circulation

area have obtained voter approval of technology bond issues and are in the midst of modernizing classrooms, computer labs, media centers and other learning opportunities for students. What is happening is much more than toys.

Technology allows schools to combine text, still photography, videos, and other graphics to not only make learning more exciting but bring to the student the most current information possible. This easy access to VCRs, interactive television, personal computers, the Internet, electronic communications, and similar technology truly allows for individualized instruction and self-paced learning in ways unimaginable a few years ago. Because of technology, students can learn more in less time.

Among the school buildings being modernized are Hillside Elementary and Farmington High in Farmington. Farmington has chosen Greiner Engineering, a design firm that plans high-tech schools by integrating computers and telecommunications in different ways.

The schools of the future Greiner is designing today include a school-wide integrated system which will give every teacher keyboard access from the classroom to the media center and its laserdisc, still video, and VCR technology. CD-ROM encyclopedias provide the most current information available while on-line databases allow individuals to access information from other areas in the district, across the nation and throughout the world.

The result of all this should be students who are better trained and better equipped to work in and survive a future world that many adults will be struggling to keep pace with. If our educators are right, and this time they might be, our young people will be far more ready for tomorrow than we are.

ARKIE HUDKINS



LETTERS

Against recall

To: Farmington Hills Mayor Larry Lichtman. Dear Larry: On behalf of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce's Governmental Affairs Committee and the board of directors, we wish to affirm that we support your right and responsibility to vote on any issue after consideration of the pertinent information provided.

We oppose recall efforts based on a disagreement with your vote. Recall efforts should be confined to actions against elected officials when there is malfeasance or misfeasance of office.

We continue to believe that the council's role is to support the city's master plan or in the alternative, concentrate on good land-use planning.

William F. Shile, Farmington/
Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce

People have spoken

My family moved to Farmington Hills in 1956. Since that time I have watched Farmington Hills (then a township) grow from fields and forest to a teeming metropolitan city.

I viewed with great interest the Farmington Hills City Council meeting of Aug. 15 concerning the 12 Mile/Middlebelt project.

Gary Jonna has stated that he is "concerned and responsive." I heartily support that statement; Gary Jonna is concerned and responsive to his own bank account and stock portfolio.

The people of Farmington Hills have spoken. Never before have I seen residents so angry over any project.

The veiled threat of lawsuits from those whose wallets are effected by the denial of a FUD should be met with the same fervor and vigilance that the residents of this community have shown towards the development itself.

Anthony Wayne Kahn, Farmington Hills

She's for development

It is my opinion that Mr. Andrew Nickelloff (Observer, Aug. 11) moved into the area eight years ago, thinking the world would stand still for him.

Thirty years ago this was a suburb when Topp's Department was built on Orchard Lake Road. The community, as a whole, was elated. Within a few years Kmart bought them out.

Up to the present, the merchandizing and mode of operation hasn't changed. To improve or expand after so many years seems natural and inevitable.

The Glen Acres Platt referred to in your newspaper is a very poor piece of real estate.

It's surrounded by a golf course, apartments, strip mall, restaurants, home for mentally retarded, plus a few mediocre businesses.

Most of the buildings are old with no redeeming qualities.

The fact that a big company would invest to build roads, improve existing roads and entrances, install water and sewage system for the area should be viewed as a rescue.

It would heighten the fiscal status of the city at zero cost to the taxpayer. As a neighbor, I invite Mr. Nickelloff on a tour of Glen Acres. This subdivision could be resurrected as a viable tax revenue, rather than a blight.

Without any reservations, I see this corner of Farmington Hills alternative expansion. More apartments. More homes for the mentally retarded or juvenile delinquents. Increase in taxes to all residents.

Our area represents approximately 50 families. Our opinions are often ignored by the most affluent sections of our community. For the past 30 years, most people never knew what space we occupied.

I repeat, even though we are neighbors within a mile of one another, Mr. Nickelloff has never had occasion to explore this niche.

Therefore I'd like to invite him or any interested parties to an eye-opening tour of the landscape he will so sorely miss.

H. Motruick, Farmington Hills

Let's vote on it

The city of Farmington has discovered that a "New Road Improvement Plan" will lower costs. All we need to do is pay more taxes.

This is the same theory that taking out insurance on televisions, dishwashers, cars, teeth, or whatever lowers costs. Preventative maintenance sounds great, but in practice it is great for the practitioners. They stay in business 12 months of the year and don't worry so much about low bids, etc.

This is presented as a 1.6 millage that the low income and elderly need not pay, and promises an income tax deduction for those that do get socked. The fact sheet available at city hall suggests that since our taxes are so low this fine idea could be levied without going to the public for approval, but in the interest of fairness it should be voted upon.

No mention is made that approval will still leave the ceiling open for future adventures like this one.

Hank Borgman, Farmington

Opinions are to be shared: We welcome your ideas, as do your neighbors. That's why we offer this space on a weekly basis for opinions in your own words. We will help by editing for clarity. To assure authenticity, we ask that you sign your letter and provide a contact telephone number. Letters should be mailed to: Editor, The Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336.

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SUBURBAN COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION
Philip Power, Chairman of the Board
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COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:
They're skin-
ning the story
of your life.
Who should
play you?



'Tonya Harding.
I'm kind of like
her.'
Joan Quinlan
Farmington Hills



'Meg Ryan.
She's
respectable. So
am I.'
Julie Zedem
Farmington Hills



'Mel Gibson.
He's appealing.'
Norm Smith
Farmington Hills



'Clint Eastwood.
He carries him-
self.'
Ron Ray
Farmington Hills

We asked this
question at the
Crescent
A&W restaur-
ant in
Farmington.