

## Try again, please Walled Lake needs the help

There's a small segment of a school district population that's feeling disenfranchised, and that group of parents and students needs a little help.

The group includes about 678 students, more than half of them in elementary school, who live in Farmington Hills, but are part of the Walled Lake School District — just barely.

The district boundaries dip south just enough to encompass their square mile of the Hills, around 14 Mile and Halsted, and apparently they don't much care for their current situation.

It's a hard spot to be in. Some of these parents feel they're paying Farmington Hills taxes, so their children should have the benefit of Farmington schools.

That's not too hard to understand. The Farmington Schools, like many in Oakland County, are very good.

However, the parents are upset with the current state of affairs. The Walled Lake District has tried, but failed, to pass three separate bond issues.

Each attempt, in part, would have provided for capital expenditures to build new schools and refurbish old ones, both of which are desperate needs in the growing Walled Lake district.

These bond failures, coupled with a recent decision to move 475 students from Maple Elementary to a school Walled Lake has leased in Birmingham, as a temporary solution to ease overcrowding, have made the issue worse. The parents now want out of the Walled Lake district.

That's nothing new, really. Seven school districts — including Farmington — each lay a claim to part of West Bloomfield, with students attending classes all over the township.

Many parent groups, over the years, have discussed separating from one district to join another, just for reasons like this.

We don't believe it's a wise move, but not because we're not sympathetic with the affected parents. It's not wise because if one group succeeds, others will follow, and soon elemen-

tary and secondary education will be more loused up than it already is.

Walled Lake Schools are well thought of — it's not as though parents think the quality of education is somehow inferior.

But they're now affected by a question no one seems to want to address, much less answer: How will the Walled Lake district perpetuate itself if it continues to deny necessary funding to its students?

Everyone seems to want to reap the benefits of, and take pride in, an excellent school district, but not enough Walled Lake District residents seem willing to fund such an endeavor.

If that attitude holds its course, then the families around 14 and Halsted will have a lot of company — everyone will want out of the district because it will no longer be economically viable.

Another tough question to ask, that most go out of their way to avoid, is this: What did some people expect when they moved into the Walled Lake District?

It seems they wanted large, beautiful homes on unspoiled acreage. However, areas such as Walled Lake eventually grow because everyone wants the same things, but then no one wants to pay for them.

If that's the case, then perhaps the outspoken critics of the bond issues should have moved to well-established districts, where capital expenditures already have occurred, populations have stabilized and additional funding requests would be much smaller. You can't have it both ways.

We think the district should prepare a pared-down bond proposal and try again.

That would give the Farmington Hills residents in the Walled Lake District a little hope while doing something good for the district in spite of itself.

We believe everyone wants the best for their students, and we also believe that as soon as they realize it isn't going to happen unless they do it themselves, the situation will improve.

## A good dad is worth the fuss

Father's Day is coming and that should gladden the hearts of those who make their living in greeting cards, men's wear or fancy restaurants.

On Father's Day — Sunday, June 18, this year — many of us lucky enough to have a father will celebrate by providing him with a card, some article of male clothing or perhaps a dinner out.

Yes, Father's Day is another of those special events — rendered not so special by their very numbers — which dot the calendars and where the spending of time and money is required.

But fathers are so very important, we think, when it comes to effective parenting. Research over the years has shown that a father is a key part of a loving and strong family.

They're certainly worth celebrating, these fathers, especially as they've been overlooked and underestimated in this well, this double-decade of the woman and mother.

A good father traditionally provides for his family and acts as a disciplinarian, but truly dedicated dads do a lot more. Today, many men actively share parenthood with their wives. They consider child-rearing every bit as important as their careers.

Successful fathers must be a lot of things — including around. That can be difficult today when fully half this nation's youngsters do not live in traditional nuclear families. A divorced dad must somehow always find a way to become involved in his child's life.

Good dads are also always willing to log quality time with the kids. So many studies have shown that involvement by a father can be a critical factor in a child's development.

A father cheers the success of his sons and/or daughters. Kids need to know that dad thinks of them as future achievers. The absence of such support can affect a child's life, studies have shown.

There's more, so much more. A good father must somehow be tuned into his kids' concerns. He must be understanding in a conflict. On and on it goes.

When you begin to look at all that is involved in being a good father, you'll see that it's the most difficult — and important — job he'll do in his life. And you'll be happy to spend the time and money for the card, the neckwear and the Sunday dinner out.

A good dad is worth that — and a lot more.

ARKIE HUDKINS



### LETTERS

#### 'Sincere Thanks'

The Salvation Army of Farmington Hills would like to express sincere thanks to everyone who donated food, and to all the postal employees who picked up the food on Saturday, May 13.

The tremendous outpouring from the community provided about 35 tons of food which will be distributed to families in this area who are in need.

Our thanks again for the understanding and compassion of all who participated.

Capt. Homer F. Smith Jr.,  
Salvation Army

#### 'It's unfair'

To use Michigan tax money for any private industry without a vote by the people of our state is not right and is unfair. To do so would start a precedent. Then casino owners will be next asking for money and so on.

It would also seem reasonable, if Michigan tax money were used at all, the stadium should be placed in the center of the state.

If funds were received from the state would it be a loan or a grant? If I was a politician representing the people of the state of Michigan I would not want to have anything to do with such fear of bad investment consequences.

I favor having a stadium, but I'm not sure regarding the location. I favor forming a corporation. To sell debentures and stock.

From them, receive interest and dividends. There are many who have money in Detroit. If they have money for casinos they should have it for sports.

Weigh the results. Sports will bring fun to young and old, pride and happiness. Gambling most of the time brings sadness. Who likes to be a loser?

Many will go broke. More people for the city to pay welfare and sometimes much worse than that.

Leslie E. Swanson, Farmington

#### No HHS basher

His letter is in response to Diane McQuiston's column in the May 25 Observer.

She was upset, and rightly so, that her son's car was broken into in the Harrison High School parking lot. Some items were stolen. We understand her anger and frustration over this incident, and would feel the same way if this had happened to our son.

But we object to the fact that her column

turned into a general bashing of Harrison students and faculty.

Although Harrison does have problems, as does every other high school in this country, we feel its good qualities far outweigh any negatives.

For example, members of the 1995 graduating class received hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarship awards.

Several of the boys' and girls' sports teams had championship seasons. The marching band received many awards for excellence. A marvelous musical was presented this year.

Additionally, one of the foreign language teachers used her spring break to take a group of advanced Spanish students to Mexico to study Mayan ruins.

Parent involvement is increasing at Harrison. Several parents volunteer weekly in the offices, and help teachers. Sports and band booster parents are constantly at the school.

Parents also organized a salad luncheon for the faculty and staff this spring in the cafeteria, which was greatly appreciated.

All these, and many, many other activities at Harrison involved students, faculty, staff and parents working together to create an exciting learning environment.

This is our perception of Harrison High School — an active school, with many good students and staff.

Gary and Nancy Vessell,  
Farmington Hills

#### More on Dick

Critic Dick Landback has found a set of global temperatures he likes. The sum is one-half degree higher than mine. He contests my use of "seldom above freezing."

His averages are from the Antarctic coast. I referred to the Interior Ross Ice Shelf which holds the gigantic volume of ice generally considered important. Here I could have used "never above freezing."

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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— Philip Power

### COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:  
What are your dreams for the future?



"To become a sociologist and to be the best I can be and to never give up."  
Anita Ayer



"I want to be a pediatric doctor. I hope I can finish."  
Rome Ayer



"To make my goals for college, to find the strength and the opportunity to fulfill them."  
Nicole Jones



"Much more success. It won't be easy, but certainly it will be rewarding."  
Rhonda Martin

We asked this question of graduating seniors at the recent Mercy High School commencement at Oakland University.