

Survive — and enjoy Founders Festival coming up

We're still surprised that some business sharpie (we believe the modern word is "entrepreneur") hasn't cashed in on our wonderful idea for a bumper sticker with a local flavor.

I SURVIVED THE FARMINGTON FOUNDERS FESTIVAL! the bumper stickers would say. They'd be for sale at booths along Grand River during the festival next week.

Wouldn't that be something to see on vans and pickup trucks around here?

Ah, the Founders Festival, that old standby of small-town merry-making, is coming up. (Can it be July already? Over the past three decades, the Founders Festival has become the big event of the Farmington summer.)

The 120th edition of the Founders Festival begins Sunday, July 9, with a chicken barbecue at the Masonic Temple at Farmington Road and Grand River. For the better part of the week — especially Thursday through Saturday, July 13-15 — the festival will rage in the streets and parking lots of downtown Farmington and environs.

From parades to pageants, from craft shows to comedy acts, the Farmington Founders Festival has just about everything a small-town shindig should have — except an excess of parking spaces.

Now, let us emphasize that we're not being facetious about our festival.

The local whoop-de-do was a great idea when it was instituted in 1964. It's still a good idea 31 years later. It was — and still is — an attempt to graft an economic event on to a strong sense of community.

And, as we do every year, let us remind folks not to forget the founders in the festival. After all, the original intent was to honor the

community's past as Michigan's first Quaker settlement.

But, with encroaching commercialism, it's easy for the historical flavor to fade. One way to remember the community's roots is to visit the Farmington Historical Museum, the former Warner Mansion out Grand River just west of downtown.

The museum, owned by the city of Farmington and operated by the Farmington Historical Society, will be open 1-8 p.m. Friday, July 14, and from 1-5 p.m. Saturday, July 15. Of course, the big event of the festival is the parade, scheduled for the morning of Saturday, July 15, on Grand River Avenue.

On that day — as on every day during the festival, really — people will be packed tightly into downtown. To make the event fun for all, veteran parade-watchers offer the following advice:

■ Arrive at the parade early enough to find a safe and legal parking spot. If you are parking in a neighborhood, be considerate of the people who live there. Don't block driveways or park in no-parking zones.

■ Don't get into a tussle over what appears to be a choice spot for viewing the parade. You can be sure there are many good locations from which to see the parade.

■ Small children should be kept out of the parade route and in sight at all times. If you're taking young kids to the parade, talk to them beforehand about what they should do if they become separated. Tell them to find a police officer. Make sure they know their addresses and their parents' full names.

If a bit of common sense is employed during that hectic week, you'll survive — and enjoy — the 31st annual Farmington Founders Festival.

Fireworks law needs fixing

The legal fireworks in county courts are as explosive and unpredictable as the firecrackers and bottle rockets that prosecutors, business owners and police wrangle over every summer.

The round-robin legal battles — that generally fizzle when July Fourth celebrations have come and gone — illustrate the need for a change in the state fireworks law.

Greater definition and clarity are required in the statute that in general makes illegal anything that moves, spins, leaves the ground, emits a report or shoots.

State law allows the sale and use without a permit of only a limited type of fireworks, such as sparklers, fountains and smoke bombs.

The legal maneuvering, in response to loopholes devised by business owners and their attorneys, circumvent the law that is clearly intended to protect the public.

The law's lack of specific definitions and conditions has become a breeding ground for creative loopholes and loose interpretations. One such scheme used by a Canton fireworks business, which holds a wholesale permit, had consumers join an association in the belief they could buy prohibited fireworks, return July Fourth and shoot them off at a specified site.

Another angle is used by businesses that are permitted out-of-state sales of prohibited fireworks. The businesses turn around and sell to Michigan retail consumers on the premise that they will take them out-of-state to use legally.

Retail customers are not implied beneficiaries of businesses' special permits. Consumers

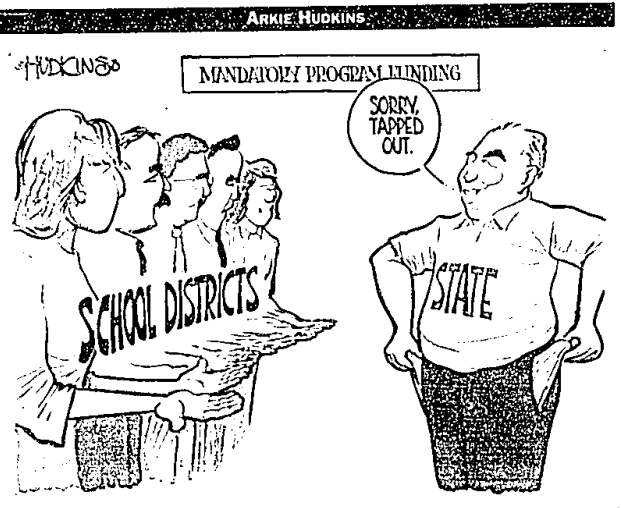


Confiscation: A Michigan State Police officer loads alleged illegal fireworks into a semi-trailer. The confiscation has taken the fireworks issue to courts.

who buy are breaking the law, as are the businesses who sell. Police are doing their job by enforcing the existing law, despite its imperfections.

The vague fireworks law has allowed a myriad of interpretations, creative loopholes and mounting costs on taxpayers for a court system that can't come to terms with the law.

If something is broken, fix it. The state fireworks law is surely broken and needs mending.



LETTERS

Thanks, Observer

On behalf of conductor Paul Barber and the 60-plus members of the Farmington Community Band, we would like to thank the Farmington Observer for coverage of our events during the 1994-95 season.

Your coverage and listing of our concerts helped to communicate to the community the support and cultural enjoyment the FCB brings to the Farmington and surrounding areas.

Thank you again for your support. We look forward to working with you for the 1995-96 season which will be the 30th concert season for the FCB.

Robert V. Whaley, vice president,
 The Farmington Community Band

remind your readers that the council is committed to our mission to improve race relations and to promote a climate that includes all people.

By the end of the summer, the council will have adopted new goals for fulfilling our overall mission.

Residents and other interested parties are also reminded that the monthly forum meetings are scheduled for the second Tuesday from 8 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. at the Farmington Training Center.

The first forum for 1995-96 is scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 12.

Additional information is available from the city managers' offices in Farmington (474-5500) and Farmington Hills (473-9501), and the superintendent's office of the Farmington Schools (489-3339).

Again, thanks to the Observer for effective coverage of the council's activities and, particularly, for its sensitive treatment of the community's response to the vandalism at the Jackson home.

Ann Theresa O'Sullivan, chair,
 Farmington/Farmington Hills Multicultural/Multicultural Community Council

We should be proud

My personal and heartfelt thanks to the Farmington Beautification Committee for its wonderful work, and for making my morning walk more enjoyable.

The beautiful flower pots that have been placed all throughout the downtown area and the care that has been given to all of the details are a joy to see. I've watched it all evolve for the last several months and I for one, appreciate their hard work and devotion.

Our city should be very proud of the people who give so much of their time and effort to this wonderful project.

Pat Thorsen, Farmington

Thanks for coverage

On behalf of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Multicultural/Multicultural Community Council, I want to extend my appreciation to Bill Coutant for the excellent article which appeared in the June 12 edition of the Farmington Observer concerning the town meeting conducted at the Farmington Hills Activities Center on Wednesday, June 7.

The article effectively captured the community's commitment to reassure the Jackson family that the horrible vandalism which took place at their home in no way reflected the values and norms of the Farmington community.

We are also grateful for the ongoing coverage of the council's monthly "forum" meetings.

This is also an appropriate opportunity to

Farmers do better

For many years I used to think eighth-grade farmers sometimes could do better than the politicians in Washington.

Today I wish to say I believe sometimes eighth-grade farmers can do better than some lawyers are doing.

Interestingly, the Bible reads, "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." Another translation better puts it, "For this world's cleverness is a stupidity to God." (1 Cor. 3:10)

Today if a person drives an auto and makes plans (participates) robbing a bank with a second person, both are guilty. Both would be punished.

If a man engineers a plan, furnishes the equipment, delivers it to the individual with instructions to kill (to kill is the purpose or intent), the lawyers cannot make up their minds concerning Dr. Jack Kevorkian.

It is time to bring in some eighth-grade farmers. I understand business is business (lawyers need money), but I think the people of Michigan have waited long enough for some good service.

Lealle E. Swanson, Farmington

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:
 What are your vacation plans?



"I've been up in Canada fishing and I caught a lot of fish. Guess I'm done with vacation."
 Bob Marschick
 Milford Township



"I'm all through. I was in Florida for six months."
 Ray Grice
 Farmington Hills



"I'm going camping in Muskogean State Park."
 Ted Goff
 Farmington Hills



"Chicago in July, Las Vegas in September and lots of roller-blading at Kensington Park."
 Vernon Deed
 Wixom

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 — Phillip Power