

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Supports Brouillette

I would like to express my support for Priscilla Brouillette for Farmington School Board.

I have known Priscilla for eight years, in which time I have worked with her in many community activities. From these activities, I know Priscilla to be an intelligent, hard-working leader with particular expertise in the growing fields of computers and information technology, so vital for the preparation of our young people for the future.

Moreover, Priscilla has a deep commitment to the education of our children and to Farmington Public Schools.

She would be an outstanding addition to the school board.

Deborah L. Schueneman,  
Farmington Hills

## Trusts 'Prill'

This letter is in support of School Board candidate Priscilla Brouillette.

I trust Prill with my most important assets, my children. I also trust

Prill's abilities to work toward solid, reasonable decisions as demonstrated by her track record as parent volunteer at Hillside and Dunkel schools, her corporate experience as well as her entrepreneurial background as an owner of a successful software company.

Lisa J. Weeks,  
Farmington Hills

## Priscilla: 'A gem'

Jewels appear in many shapes, vibrances, and sizes. Sometimes they are quite rare with priceless value. People, too, have special qualities, and I'd like to mention one very special gem: Priscilla Brouillette.

Priscilla will be running for the school board election on Monday, June 10. She deserves a seat on the school board simply because she lives and breathes school issues on a daily basis.

Priscilla's gentle demeanor complements her underlying assertiveness and determination to make Farmington Public Schools one of the finest school districts in the nation.

I have had the honor of working side by side with Priscilla professionally over the years at Dunkel Middle School. In addition to her many school committees, she is also an active parent member of the School Improvement Team meeting.

Priscilla is a leader and a listener. Upon learning a new issue, her line of questioning and obtaining information geared to learn the maximum amount is impressive to say the least.

On the other hand, frequently committee members learn and appreciate her expertise and interest on topics ranging from fundamental academic goals to the latest advancements of technology in the schools.

Priscilla outshines others in areas of loyalty and dedication. Numerous occasions enter my mind of the amount of times she has volunteered her time to work with children of all ages, not just her own kids. Priscilla does these deeds of kindness and generosity simply because she cares ... about children.

Karen Halberg,  
Farmington Hills

## 'Ignore AIDS'

In the April 25 article regarding AIDS, no mention was made as to how the AIDS virus is passed from victim to victim. Let some have forgotten, AIDS is obtained from the sexual experimentation between the same sex.

While there are a few heterosexual people who fall victim to the "disease," overwhelmingly the victims are primarily males who explore their homosexual feelings.

Thus, one can recognize that AIDS is not like the diseases that normally befall individuals who occupy the hospitals and homes for the terminally ill.

Heart disease and cancer being the first ones on any list, are brought on by the normal lifestyle or by living so long as to bring about the diseases. Disease is the normal enemy of life.

AIDS, however, is a disease which derives from enjoyment of abnormal activities, and if the abnormal activities would stop, so would AIDS.

Sadly, it is difficult to stop pleasure even if AIDS threatens their life. So

they continue and pressure Congress and the State Legislature to preserve their "longer and fuller" lives.

Like many, one of my best friends was a victim of AIDS. He was social, bright and unmarried. And I argued with him until his death, that AIDS was a "curse" but not a disease, and did not deserve the attention that we were giving to it.

Although a self-imposed tragedy, AIDS was far down the list of problems that the citizens should be giving their undivided attention.

Nationally, heart attacks kill approximately 500,000 per year, while cancer kills approximately 520,000 per year. AIDS kills 24,000, yet here is a newspaper section devoted to AIDS.

If AIDS has its own section, then perhaps we should have portions set aside for heart attacks and cancer also?

The ratio of heart attacks-cancer to AIDS is 40:1. Is that not sufficient? Ignore AIDS. Heart attacks and cancer are far, far deadlier.

Michael Driesman,  
Farmington Hills

## Perpetual tug-of-war prevents a revolution

Since 1789 there has been a tug of war between the federal government and the states. It has resulted in a Civil War, the New Deal and now the welfare reform issue.

The same tug of war goes on between Lansing and the local units. 'Twas ever thus. 'Twill always be thus.

As the state House passed a school aid bill, Rep. David Jaye, R-Macomb County, won support of an amendment to penalize any school district 10 times over for spending money on a chauffeur for the superintendent. Any district? Only Detroit is dumb enough to do that.

Several years ago, the Legislature wrote a \$1 for \$1 provision to discourage Detroit from chauffeurizing its school board members. It would lose \$1 of state aid for every \$1 spent on chauffeurizing. Detroit failed to learn the lesson. It spent nearly \$60,000 on such transit for Superintendent David Sneed last year and sacrificed

\$60,000 in state aid. Jaye showed us an audit.

I beckoned Jaye to the aisle and told him he *understated* the damage, which was actually \$120,000. \$60,000 for the chauffeur service plus \$60,000 in lost aid. Jaye agreed my math was correct.

It was a major loss, even for a big district like Detroit. With \$120,000 it could have paid for teachers, supplies and space for 23 pupils (\$120,000 divided by \$5,153 per pupil). If workbooks cost \$10 apiece, it could have bought 1,200 workbooks.

Anyway, Jaye's new amendment would penalize a school district \$10 for every \$1 spent on chauffeurs, or \$660,000. "The idea isn't to penalize them," Jaye said. "The idea is to get them to quit doing it."

Lotsa luck. One thinks of a former Detroit mayor's heavily-armed bodyguards and the shoeshines a congress-



TIM RICHARD

woman from Detroit demands from her staff, and one wonders if Detroit will learn.

Two other incidents occurred with the universities' budget:

• Sen. Bill Schuette, R-Midland, tacked on an amendment that deducted aid to universities that pay benefits for employees' domestic partners.

• A Jaye amendment orders universities to bargain with

out of their union contracts.

Chief target is the University of Michigan; secondary target, Wayne State University.

Here, however, the Legislature's power over the purse strings is weaker. The Michigan Constitution (Art. VIII) says, "The power of the boards of institutions of higher education... to supervise their respective institutions and control and direct the expenditure of the institutions' funds shall not be limited by this section."

Later: "Each board shall have general supervision of its institution and the control and direction of all expenditure from the institution's funds."

The Legislature is entitled to "an annual accounting of all income and expenditure" by the universities, but there's nothing in the constitution about reducing an appropriation once it becomes law.

What's the difference between

Detroit schools and U-M? A school district is a creature of the state; the state created it, and the state can abolish it; it's subordinate to the state. U-M was created by the people through the constitution; it has a fair amount of autonomy; its officials refer to it as a "coordinate" branch of government.

The genius of American government is that it is neither totally centralized nor totally local. The result has been a constant tug-of-war, but never a revolution, because we are forever adjusting.

The American system may not last forever, but my hunch is that it will set a world's record.

Tim Richard reports on the local implications of state and regional

## Merging transit systems can benefit both labor, business

Anybody who takes a look at the Help Wanted section in the classified ads of this newspaper knows the obvious: There is a labor shortage in Michigan today, especially for jobs that pay \$6 to \$8 per hour.

Equally, anybody who takes a look at the labor force statistics in the city of Detroit knows the obvious: There are lots of people who want and need work, but who don't have jobs.

So how come folks who live in Detroit and need work don't fill the job openings that are going begging in the suburbs, just a few miles away? Simple. Regardless of motivation, they don't have cars and can't get to and from work.

That's what public transit - busses, trains, subways - is all about in most metro areas around the country. Cheap, reliable transportation lubricates the workings of the labor market, moving the people who want work back and forth from the places where they live to the jobs in other locations.

And one of the striking things about the Detroit metropolitan area as compared with others around the country is the lack of public mass transit. Whether it's because the auto companies conspired in the old days to eliminate busses and trains in order to push car sales or because population densities in southeastern Michigan are too low for good transit economics, I don't know.

But I do know that the growth of our regional economy is being stifled by the continuing mis-match between job availability and labor mobility.

That's why the news coming out of the weekend meeting of the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce meeting on Mackinac Island was so encouraging. Officials running the region's two often-quarreling mass transit system - SMART, the suburban bus system, and the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) - announced they are working on coordinating their services.

The idea is to start by consolidating one route - running up along the Woodward corridor - by this summer and add other merged routes - John R, Gratiot, Van Dyke, Grand River, Jefferson and Fort - later on. "We have many times in a day where SMART busses drive by people waiting to get on a DDOT bus and the SMART bus is not full, but they can't. It's silly," said SMART General Manager



PHILIP POWER

He's right. It's not only silly, but it's expensive and hurts businesses whose growth is being hindered by lack of labor. The timing is to try to get a merged transit system in place before the millage expires in August 1989.

Richard Kaufman.

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That's why area business leaders are hoping the experiment in consolidated routes will result in an integrated transit system for the entire region. The Greater Detroit Chamber has set up a task force that is preparing a regional transit plan for release late this summer. The timing is to try to get a merged regional transit system in place before the millage that supports SMART expires in August 1989.

"It is our strong belief that a regional (mass transit system) is key to the continued economic development and job growth in southeastern Michigan," said Claudia Berry, director of regional government relations for the chamber.

She's right. Providing a consolidated mass transit system for the entire region is one of those rare ideas for which there are enormous benefits and virtually no liabilities. It's a good idea whose time has come.

Phil Power is chairman of the company that owns this newspaper. His Touch-Tone voice mail number is (313) 953-2047 ext. 1880.

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