

Heeere's Andrew!

New rep deserves support

Andrew Raczowski, meet Farmington-area officialdom. Officialdom, say hello to your new state representative.

There. Now that an introduction of sorts has been made, it's time for Andrew Raczowski and the folks at the city halls and school headquarters to mend fences and build bridges . . . and forget political squabbles.

Raczowski and local officials need each other. And the community needs them both. There's work to be done.

Let's be honest about it: There's no love lost between Raczowski and the power structure that has ruled Farmington and Farmington Hills for so long.

Republican Raczowski, the brash young man with the crew cut and military bearing, defied the local power brokers to capture the Farmington-area State House seat Nov. 5.

He formed a grass-roots organization (or at least was in the right place at the right time to profit from it) with enough energy to win a four-way GOP primary in August — the real election in these parts. Then he easily defeated Democrat Steve Dibert in the recent general election.

And he did this without so much as a "mother-may-I?" to the people who usually play such a large part in deciding these

things.

Imagine: A huge block of local voters casting their ballots for an outsider. Officialdom will never admit it, but its socks were down and its head was hanging after that primary.

Ah, but the elections are finally over. Raczowski's in and officialdom's darlings are out, at least for the next two years in this particular office.

Raczowski's going to be looking out for our interests in Lansing, and he needs to work hand-in-glove with local officials if important issues like roads and revenue sharing are to be tackled.

We were heartened to learn that Farmington Mayor JoAnne McShane invited Raczowski to speak at a city council meeting. We hope he accepts.

The Hills Council and the Farmington Board of Education should extend similar invitations.

Raczowski, for his part, needs to be out and about the community, speaking before any group that'll have him, meeting people that aren't part of his tight little organization.

We hope he's a good listener and a fast learner. And we wish him well. All of the Farmington area — especially its officialdom — should do likewise.

Hospice care eases the way

It's an intriguing alternative to physician-assisted suicide, itself a headline grabber amid Dr. Jack Kevorkian's embattled right-to-die crusade.

Hospice care is "an underpromoted alternative to pain and suffering on the one hand, and suicide or euthanasia on the other," says Oak Park's Barbara Lewis, communications director for the Southfield-based Hospice of Michigan, a two-year-old, nonprofit, state-licensed service organization that served 7,000 patients and families across the Lower Peninsula last year.

November is National Hospice Month, the perfect backdrop for a rigorous look at hospice care, designed to let people enjoy living until their life reaches its natural end. "While hospice care is not intended to prolong life, it can greatly increase quality of life," says Lewis.

One of Kevorkian's tenets is that death is a natural extension of relieving acute pain and suffering. The retired pathologist from West Bloomfield argues that in the process of extending such relief, his patients die — on their own terms.

Whether you agree with physician-assisted suicide on legal or moral grounds, it's nonetheless becoming an increasingly accepted practice. Bingham Farms attorney Dave Goreyca's stunning upset of incumbent Dick Thompson of Clarkston in the Republican primary for Oakland County prosecutor last August underscores that. Twice this year, Thompson unsuccessfully prosecuted Kevorkian for assisting in suicides. Goreyca is now prosecutor-elect.

People with the personal capacity to make reasoned decisions should be compelled to live in anguish, says Kevorkian's flamboyant attorney, Geoffrey Fieger, a West Bloomfield resident with offices in Southfield.

There's growing support that assisted suicide should be regulated but not banned. Sorely lacking are legislated guidelines to help prevent abuse against people who are frail, infirm, elderly or not lucid — and, at the same time, to help give physicians a clear picture of the part they should play.

Explaining the role of a hospice, Grosse Pointe Park's Carolyn Cassin, Hospice of Michigan president, says: "Dying does not have to be painful or lonely." HOM care teams strive to help patients live out their last days

OAKLAND WATCH



BOB SKLAR

with a degree of comfort and a sense of dignity.

HOM accepts patients of any age with a terminal diagnosis. Most are cared for in their home or that of a relative or friend. Some live in a nursing home or a residential program. Patients whose pain and symptoms can't be managed at home receive short-term admission to one of 60 HOM-affiliated hospitals. HOM operates a hospice residence in Detroit and is building one in Farmington Hills. More than 600 volunteers assist a professional staff.

HOM, with 22 office sites statewide, raises money in the community to pay for bereavement services, to care for uninsured patients and to offer quality-of-life extras like telephone service. Extended grief support is a key component of the HOM mission.

A National Hospice Organization study revealed that hospice care for Medicare patients with cancer costs one-third less than traditional care yet was much more intensive. I've ridden the emotional rollercoaster of close family members slowly and painfully dying in a hospital amid the horrific pain of cancer and stroke. Those experiences help me understand Carolyn Cassin's compassionate belief that "no one should have to suffer pain or isolation simply because they are nearing the end of life."

Hospice care isn't the answer for everyone but it can be for some. Assisted suicide isn't the only option.

Bob Sklar is managing editor of our Oakland County editions.

MEMORY LANE

This week in history as reported in past editions of the Farmington Observer and the Farmington Enterprise.

40 YEARS AGO — NOV. 15, 1956 (ENTERPRISE)
The Harlem Globetrotters basketball team was to perform at Farmington High School Dec. 2, 1956, in an event sponsored by the Farmington Township Lions Club, president Gene Tolton said.

Final preparations were made for "Lo and Behold," a comedy to have been staged by the Farmington Players at the Junior High auditorium on Thomas Street. Alan Thayer played the lead role.

25 YEARS AGO — NOV. 17, 1971 (ENTERPRISE & OBSERVER)
Brad Pease rushed for 180 yards on eight carries and scored a touchdown to lead North Farmington past Farmington High, 41-13, in high school football.

2 YEARS AGO — NOV. 10, 1994 (OBSERVER)
Republican David Honigman outpolled Democrat Vicki Barnett, 21,074 votes to 11,531, in the race for the 15th District State Senate seat in the Nov. 8 general election.

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:

What are your hopes and dreams for your children?



We asked this question at Dagwood's Deli and Stride Rite in downtown Farmington.



Happiness in whatever they choose in their lives.

I want them to be happy in the work they do. I want them to be honest and do a good job.



That they grow up healthy and that they're successful in their endeavors.



I have 28 nieces and nephews. Hopefully, they'll get good educations and good jobs.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thanks for the clinics

On behalf of the Oakland County Health Division, I would like to thank Farmington Community Schools for providing free, easily accessible childhood immunizations to the Farmington community through sponsorship of two special immunization clinics.

Currently Michigan's children under two years old are the most poorly immunized children in the country. The immunization clinics held at the Farmington Community School is ample evidence of the broad based community cooperation directed toward improving the lives of children.

The clinic participants deserve recognition for their patience and good cheer. The enthusiastic response to this special clinic meant that people waited some time to be served.

The children who participated in this clinic will have a greater chance for good health in the years to come. Keep up the good work.

Mary Strohe, BSN, RN,
Oakland County Health Division,
Immunization Action Program
Facilitator

About that village

It has become fashionable to say that it takes "an entire village to raise a child." A child does live in a city, township, port authority or a village, and interacts with the corner druggist and the cop on the beat. But it's mom and dad who impart the morals, mores, and values he needs to lead the fulfilling life.

Want village involvement? Get on a fast boat to China where they have been warehousing kids for years. Taken from parents in early years, children may not see their parents for months or years at a stretch.

It's not likely that Hillary Clinton had such extreme child-care measures in mind when she wrote and spoke of the village's importance, but there isn't any doubt that she advocates big government influence on the rearing of our children.

Big government, according to Hillary and Bill Clinton, should be responsible for a considerable part of the child's education and ideological orientation.

Neil Goodbred,
Livonia

On handicapped spots

Iwrote a lengthy column (Sept. 5, Community Life) on handicap parking, but apparently it had been ignored or not read.

With and heart, this past month we wrote, as two handicap parking enforcement volunteers, five tickets to drivers who parked in handicap spaces.

To all drivers: The handicap sign heading the parking space is all important despite the colors of stripes painted on the pavement or lot.

It's not mandatory for stripes to be painted blue. Throughout our communities many handicap spaces leave stripes painted white, yellow, brown, etc.

It's preferable that all spaces are painted blue for instant recognition, but some building owners or managers are lax in complying with this request.

We have been trying to work with these absentee landlords and building managers to repaint stripes and logos blue to minimize doubts, but it's been a slow process. This disheartens.

Pavement or parking lot stripes are often concealed by snow and ice in the fall and winter, anyway, making the signs all the more important to abide by them.

In reference to landlords and building managers, we would also like to remind them to advise their snow-removal crews to keep the handicap spaces free of snow and ice.

In the past, we have had a few instances of parking lots cleared of snow, which eventually was piled high in inaccessible handicap parking places. It becomes costly to double back to remove this snow.

Sam Ross,
Farmington Hills

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— Philip Power