

Politics and disease

On reports, reps and a big ball

Odds and ends . . . bits and pieces of life in the big suburb.

Hats off to state and county health officials for not taking months (or even years) to issue that report on the source of the Legionnaires' disease in Farmington. The report, naming Cattleman's Market as the source, came out in a timely fashion Nov. 8. The people needed to know while the crisis was still fresh in their minds. Some thought it'd be the 21st Century before we saw that report. Thanks also to the local officials who maybe prodded the system just a little. It'll be interesting to see what the Farmington City Council (and the Hills, too, for that matter) will do in the way of increased inspections on buildings. Maybe a landlord or two will get blistered officially over the way they've let some of their older properties deteriorate into health hazards. They know who they are.

Speaking of Legionnaires', we hope people don't avoid Cattleman's because of the report. We all know it could have happened just about anywhere . . . on anyone's rooftop air conditioner. Cattleman's officials disagreed with the findings of the county health department.

Sorry, Raczkowski foes (and we know there are many), but those "thank you" slaps on Andrew Raczkowski's election mini billboards were a nice touch. A winning politician thanking the voters on his signs . . . how come no one ever thought of that before? But we'll be seeing "thank you" on the signs of winning pols after future elections?

And speaking of political signs, we had a good laugh over the Farmington Hills-based FM radio station (aren't they full of stunts!) that paid a bounty (10 cents a sign!) and encouraged people to deposit them at a bowling alley on Northwestern Highway. Of course there were bounty hunters aplenty and dozens of signs were dumped there. The reaction of the pols, who always gripe about sign-stealing, was predictable. "My signs are like two bucks apiece," moaned one candidate. "Taking private property is a no-no," lectured another. Want our advice? Take the things down immediately after the election. The radio stunt took place two to three days after election day.

Another political note (sorry): Cathy Webb, the school trustee who was run down by the Raczkowski juggernaut in the Republican primary, has officially invited the new state rep to address the Farmington Board of Education. If Raczkowski's smart, he'll take her up on it.

The Cornucopia Ball, a new charity event that has occupied this area's movers and shakers these last couple of autumns, seems to be going great guns. We salute all the volunteers who put in so much hard work on the project that benefits the Farmington Hills Foundation for Children, Youth and Families. "Word's getting out that this is the social event of the year," said Richard Dagunno, commission chairman. Some serious money was spent on that auction. The Cornucopia Ball is destined to become one of the community events that ensure the vitality of the Farmington area.

So many need helping hand

The primary purpose of an editorial is to persuade.

In some ways, it isn't unlike writing a screenplay: Set out a premise, give it a twist to make it interesting and then finish up with the point you wanted to make in the first place.

Easier said than done, particularly when writing about holidays and helping those who might be in a position to need a little help this year.

Those who are inclined to help don't need an editorial to prompt them. Those who might consider helping don't want a lecture about their civic responsibilities — in fact, figuratively wagging an admonishing finger at a reader, with the goal of shaming them into action, often backfires.

And those who aren't going to help just aren't going to help, regardless of the editor's eloquence.

The only thing left to do is be straight. This is an unvarnished, plain pitch to take a few minutes you might otherwise use to watch a movie, have a beer, or perhaps head to Somerset, and instead, drop off a check, or a donation of food, to one of many Oakland County organizations that will convert your kindness into something tangible for someone in need.

In Oakland County, there are 64,000 people living below the poverty level. Forty percent of them are children.

They need the same things all of us need. Clothing. A hot meal. A warm place to sleep in a shelter that has sufficient funding to keep its doors open when it's needed the most.

The organizations that help these people run on real slender budgets, but that's OK

In Oakland County, there are 64,000 people living below the poverty level. Forty percent of them are children.

with them — they don't mind. A mark of success for a well-run aid organization is to convert the majority of what comes in into something that people need, and keep overhead and administrative costs down.

That's partially why you don't hear too much from area soup kitchens, for example. They have volunteers ready to do the work, but they need food for the volunteers to distribute and they don't have an advertising budget to plead their case.

To that end, please turn back a few pages. In the first section of today's newspaper, you'll find a story that mentions several agencies ready to help those in need. The name of the agency will be accompanied by a brief description of what the agency does, and for whom; what it needs; and, if you're of a mind, how you can do something to help, right now.

If we missed your agency, it's only by accident. We'd like to hear from you, so we can let our readers know how they can help in upcoming editions. Please call Philip Sherman, who is editing our county pages, at 1-810-901-2575.

If your agency was listed, we'd like to know if you need anything beyond the holidays, so we, in turn, can tell our readers. And if you took a few minutes to send a check or pack a basket, we'd like to thank you for coming through for those who can't just now. It isn't easy for them to ask for help, but the kindness is always appreciated.

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:

How can an athlete avoid injury during competition or exercise?



Good conditioning, proper warmups, sport-specific training, proper nutrition.

Jean Hobkirk
athletic trainer
certified (ATC)
Mercy High



Every situation is different. There's no cookbook recipe to keep an athlete healthy.

Sherie Bennett
ATC
Farmington High



I just play the game and try not to think about it. I stretch before every game.

Michelle Sklar
North Farmington



Make sure you're well-stretched and your muscles are warmed up.

Amy Roble
Harrison High

We asked this question at a girls' basketball district tournament.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thanks to Andrew

Congratulations to Andrew Raczkowski, our new State Representative-elect. I was so pleased to see the "thank you" notes across his large campaign signs.

Usually the signs that are left up after election day are a blight on the landscape, but not these. What a clever way to thank all the voters that made it possible.

Michelle Burley,
Farmington

Why call it that?

As a citizen of the Hills for over 40 years, a customer of Cattleman's since it opened, and a member of the American Legion Post 346, I have a question to ask about so-called "Legionnaires' Disease": Why was it so called?

All I can remember is because a few years back at a Legion Convention at some hotel is where it started. What was the idea of blaming it on us members and not the hotel?

We are tired of being blamed for the disease. I imagine so is the store called "Cattleman's".

This time why wasn't it called the name of the shopping center where air blew out into?

As far as I can see, it was what is called "Act of God," same as floods, tornadoes and earthquakes.

Please give the Legion a break. We had sick members, too.

Russ Hines,
Farmington

A museum update

The Farmington Historical Commission wishes to thank the many buyers of the Farmington historical afghan.

The project has been very successful and we continue to stock the afghans at the museum. (Just a reminder as the Christmas season approaches).

We at the museum feel that we owe a report to our many supporters as to how the profits from the afghans and the donations from various groups and individuals have been spent at the museum.

In the past two years we have installed a new unisex handicapped accessible rest room available to the public attending an event in the museum gardens, (\$15,000); power-washed and restained the Gazebo, (\$2,300); relaid the brickwork surrounding the herb garden, (\$1,300); put a new roof on the back porch, (\$1,800); laid a new asphalt walkway connecting the adjoining church parking area to the connecting bridge, (\$400); and lastly completed the window treatment in the Sun-

day parlor, (\$2,400).

That adds up to \$23,200. We are not attempting to boast of the amount that has been spent but to show how your various donations have been utilized.

Without your support we would not be able to maintain and improve this community asset.

We continue to accept donations from the Victorian era as well as Farmington area artifacts, memorabilia and financial contributions.

Items that will help us to show the pride in our past and which we can retain for future generations are gratefully accepted and acknowledged.

We can be contacted at the museum at 473-7275 or at my home at 476-6257.

Dick Carvell,
Farmington Historical Museum

He says thanks

To the American Legion: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to attend Boy's State this past summer. The experiences I had at Boy's State were incredible and unforgettable. I not only learned about our great country's government, but I also had a great time in doing so.

I was fortunate enough to be elected senator, and I was amazed at all the small details needed to present and make bills and laws.

Learning about our government was not the only reason I had a remarkable time. I met numerous people in a matter of hours. I did not expect to meet so many people, and when I had to leave, it was like leaving a family.

I will always remember the people I met up at Boy's State, especially those that were in my city.

I cannot tell you how grateful I am that you gave me this opportunity to attend Boy's State.

I hope you continue to give students the chance to learn about our government and have the experience of a lifetime.

Todd Afterbaugh,
Farmington Hills

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, 33411 Grand River, Farmington Michigan 48335. Or they can be faxed to 810-477-9722.

MEMORY LANE

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

40 YEARS AGO — NOV. 22, 1956 (ENTERPRISE)
George Steinberger, a resident of the Franklin Knolls subdivision, was elected president of the Farmington Township Civic Association, replacing Arthur Bassett.

Classified ad: "GOOD, ROTTED horse manure, 4 yards, \$10 delivered. 25811 Power."

25 YEARS AGO — NOV. 20-21, 1971 (ENTERPRISE & OBSERVER)
A fine of \$100 a day or 90 days in jail may be imposed on Farmington Township homeowners who still use septic tanks, even though sanitary sewer systems are available.

Police said that residential burglaries were down 32 percent in October from the previous year in Farmington and Farmington Hills.

2 YEARS AGO — NOV. 21, 1994 (OBSERVER)

Some residents said they wanted to take their names off the petitions they signed for recall of six Farmington Hills council members. A state official said there's no clear law dealing with removing signatures.

Todd Lipa, active in Team Farmington, the Special Olympics chapter for Farmington and Farmington Hills, was named the Chamber of Commerce's Citizen of the Year for 1994. "He's just about everywhere in this community where good things are happening," said Hills Councilman Nancy Bates of Lipa.

Farmington Observer

TOM BAER, COMMUNITY EDITOR, 810-477-5450
TOM BYRD, PUBLISHER, 810-901-2537
ROBERT SKLAR, MANAGING EDITOR, ECCENTRIC NEWSPAPERS, 810-901-2563
MARY SCOTT, MANAGER OF CIRCULATION, ECCENTRIC NEWSPAPERS, 810-901-2548
STEVEN K. POPE, GENERAL MANAGER, 810-901-2595

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— Philip Power