

## LETTERS

## Cable has him appalled

As a member of the Southwest Oakland Cable Commission (Farmington Hills, Farmington and Novi), I am appalled that our cable provider, Time Warner, has once again raised its rates for basic services by another 10 percent.

This annual ritual of Time Warner reaching into the pockets of subscribers for more money comes on the heels of some pretty good profit margins posted by the cable provider in recent years, including as high as 50 percent in one year.

As usual, Time Warner uses the time-worn excuse — "they made me do it," to justify their arrogant treatment of their customers.

This time, they are blaming the newly created Fox Sports network and the misnamed "social contract" for supposedly forcing the increase.

Fox Sports replaced PASS in the channel lineup. Time Warner claims that they are losing money because PASS was a pay channel. What they don't tell you is that only 30 percent of the customers were subscribing to PASS and that in many communities PASS was being offered free of charge.

Why should the 70 percent be charged extra for a channel they never wanted and was free to residents of many neighboring communities?

The so-called "social contract" was brought up as a second reason for the 10 percent increase. This is more baloney from Time Warner. The "contract" they refer to was a sweetheart deal between the media giant and the Federal Communications Commission to allow a \$1 a month rate increase each year.

Our commission and our residents who are Time Warner customers had no voice in this decision, therefore it is a hoax to call it a "social contract."

While taking every opportunity to raise rates, Time Warner is refusing to abide by rulings that require it to lower rates and to pay a higher franchise fee to the three communities.

The same Federal Communications Commission they cite as a reason to boost rates \$1 per month each year, has also ruled that Time Warner is overcharging customers by 66 cents a month. Did Time Warner accept this decision and lower rates? No they did not and are using their tremendous clout in Washington to try to reverse the ruling.

Remember, Time Warner is a major player in the giant communications industry whose lobby efforts are so powerful that their representatives were asked to sit in the Congressional committee rooms and help write the law that removed almost all controls over rates.

This is also the same cable company that, so far, refuses to abide by a federal court ruling requiring it to pay higher franchise fees to the participating communities. So far, the amount owed by Time Warner to SWOCC is more than \$80,000 and growing.

To try to reverse some of the rate increases we need the help of the subscribers. If you feel the recent rate increases are not justified contact our SWOCC office, 24021 Research Drive, Farmington Hills 48336 or phone (248) 473-7266. To be considered an official complaint do this after Jan. 1, 1998.

Aldo Vagnozzi, mayor  
Farmington Hills

## Appreciates coverage

Thank you very much for the publicity you gave our recent Pumpkin Patch fund-raiser at Orchard United Methodist Church, especially the photo taken by Bryan Mitchell.

Thanks to your efforts, the Pumpkin Patch was successful in many respects, and the youth are well on their way to earning the money necessary to return to Tennessee next summer to perform work projects for the needy people of the Appalachian Mountain region. They have been serving there since 1981, and this is the largest fund-raiser they have ever conducted. The community voiced their support for it, as well, saying they hoped we would be back next year. We will gladly continue to offer this opportunity to our neighbors in Farmington Hills, especially when we can count on the kind of support we received from your newspaper this year.

DyAnn St. Clair  
Orchard United Methodist Church  
Farmington Hills

## Caring approach

I'm writing in praise of one of Farmington's friendliest businesses — Fresh Approach on Grand River. This is a fine shop that lends itself well to the hometown atmosphere of Farmington/Farmington Hills.

This Halloween, Fresh Approach brought a fun evening to our area. On Oct. 23, shoppers and their families were treated to a haunted house, (complete with costumed characters) a magician, a fortune teller, cider, donuts and treats for all attending the event. This store and its caring, warm "approach" to the community makes it a great business that supports hometown and family values and family fun. It would be nice for our Observer Newspaper to cover these events in Farmington and to recognize businesses out of downtown as well as in the

central area. The proprietors and staff of Fresh Approach are commended for their efforts that brought fun to many costumed goblins!

Diane DeSouza  
Farmington

## Nail in coffin of arts

Is it so necessary that kids and their money decide everything about our life in 1997? Is their money really so important that we must compromise our values and follow the almighty dollar into the gutter? What are our collective values if we allow that to happen?

I was devastated to hear of the death of WQRS, the only classical music station in the Detroit area. The parent company, Greater Media, apparently did not show enough profit to keep the programming as it was. It will now play rock music. I hope that each of the fired WQRS staff members will be able to economically support themselves with their talents, without compromising their standards.

I take the loss of WQRS personally. When an institution like that, which has been in business for 37 years, folds, it is just one more nail in the coffin of the arts. What is next? The Detroit Symphony? Many of the public schools have not funded instrumental music programs any more. How will the arts survive?

Mary Ann Marks  
Farmington

## Proud of force

One of the proudest moments of my police career occurred in Muskegon on Sept. 30, 1997, when Mayor Vagnozzi, City Manager Daniel Hobbs, and I accepted the state's top Community Policing Award from the Michigan Municipal League. I didn't think that moment would be quickly surpassed, however, I was wrong. On Dec. 6, our same trio and other city officials received the National League of Cities, 1st Place National Community Policing Award in Philadelphia. Farmington Hills competed with hundreds of police agencies across the country to earn this prestigious award. These honors are a direct tribute to the abilities, professionalism, and dedication of all sworn and civilian members of the Farmington Hills Police Department. I thank them all for their outstanding efforts and the privilege to be their chief. Each member of the department will be receiving a special Chief's Citation in recognition of their excellence.

Farmington Hills Community Policing involves police officers and members of the community working together in partnership. Together, we successfully operate 40 community policing programs. A special thanks is in order for all of the citizen police volunteers, and the

members of the Citizens Crime Prevention Advisory Board, whose videos are reflected in the operations and community policing policies of the department. On behalf of the entire police department, I would also like to thank all of the citizens of Farmington Hills, and our local government officials who support the department on a daily basis. It was the citizens of Farmington Hills who overwhelmingly supported the department's efforts to pass the 1995 Public Safety Millage. Our successes and these prestigious awards could not be accomplished without the support of the community.

Criminologists write that a police department is "a direct reflection of the community it serves." We are justifiably pleased that our fine police department is the reflection of a great community. Members of the department and residents are to be commended for a 14 percent reduction in serious crime through the first three quarters of this year. At a recent year end citation board meeting, I realized that four members of the police department received life saving awards for saving the lives of persons in cardiac arrest, a baby choking and rescuing numerous people trapped in building fires during 1997. Each of the past 12 years as chief, I have seen the department and community surpass the prior year in positive ways. I am confident that the police and the citizens will find creative ways to interact in a concerted endeavor to keep our fine community safe in 1998.

William J. Dwyer  
chief of police, Farmington Hills

## Remember taxpayers

This letter is to put claim on the money the board of education is to receive from the state for service rendered and paid for by the then-taxpayers paying for school services.

These services were mandated by the state and were not funded by the state. This money really belongs to the taxpayers and not "manna from heaven to add to the kitty."

Just to make it very simple, members of the board — I applaud you for asking the people's advice on how to spend the money. Thanks.

To be fair, it belongs to the taxpayers that paid for the services at that time.

Cut the voted in bond issue by the money you receive. Just pretend this is God's way of allowing you to be a responsible group that does really represent the taxpayer.

If it wasn't so complicated the people of the aggrieved areas would be receiving it. This compromise would make a lot of people happy! And Bob and the board are still the major recipients.

George Strelecuk  
Farmington

## Young changed history forever

Frankly, I was astonished at the enormous amount of attention the news media paid to former Detroit Mayor Coleman A. Young's death.

Part of it, of course, was nothing more than media hype.

Confronted for once with an honest-to-goodness big, breaking story, members of the Detroit media community nearly foamed at the mouth in anxiety to outdo each other.

Live reports from the line at the Museum of African-American History, where Young's body lay in state! Helicopters over Greater Grace Temple, where the funeral service was held! Breaking news when it happens! Film at 11!

Upon reflection, though, there was more content to the mayor's passing than elevated media blood pressure.

Coleman Young was a remarkable man who lived a remarkable life. His career will certainly become an important part of Michigan's history, rising far beyond the domain of current events.

Thomas Carlyle, the great 19th century historian, argued that, "The history of the world is but the biography of great men." And certainly the great man theory of history seems at first glance to have found persuasive evidence in Coleman Young's life.

From his refusal to endure segregation and mistreatment in the Army Air Corps to his leadership in the Michigan Senate and, finally, to his unprecedented five terms as mayor of the largest city in the state, Coleman Young seems as though destined specifically to play a path-breaking role.

He was smart, cunning, rough, willing to play the race card when necessary but realistic enough to realize that separatism cannot work in 20th century America.

Certainly his greatest accomplishment was to raise the hopes and shape the ambitions of the black majority in the city of Detroit.

Remember, you didn't hear much about black folks and their contributions when Al Cobo was mayor, or even Jerry Cavanagh. Coleman Young personified the established demographic fact that black Americans represented a majority of Detroit's population.

Detroit's current mayor, Dennis Archer, caught this point perfectly in his eulogy, suggesting that Mayor Young's "most important legacy was not the bricks and mortar of Detroit, but the spirit and soul of Detroit that he embodied."

So was Coleman Young himself the cause of all the changes that we associate with his career?

Thucydides, the ancient Greek historian,



PHILIP POWER

■ And the future of our state never will be the same.

introduced in his "History of the Peloponnesian War" the distinction between what might be called the proximate cause and the real cause. Proximate causes include things like the outcome of battles, the death of kings, the winning of elections.

Real causes, on the other hand, have to do with underlying factors over the decades such as the stately swing of demography over the decades, the spread of technology, the relationship between geometrically increasing population and linearly increasing food supply.

Look at in this context, what we see at work are underlying trends — causes, if you will — at work throughout this century that finally expressed themselves in Coleman Young's election as mayor.

The good jobs at good pay that accompanied the rise of the automobile manufacturing plants around Detroit provoked the largest mass migration — from the rural South to the urban North — in American history. Later, after World War II, the automobile made possible the growth of the suburbs and the means by which families — originally white, but later of all races — moved out of the center city.

These factors drove the dynamics of demography and, gradually, made Detroit an increasingly black city. And it was only a matter of time until a special kind of black politician turned up in the black majority would express itself in an election.

That special kind of politician turned out to be Coleman Young. And the future of our state never will be the same.

Phil Power is chairman of HomeTown Communications Network Inc., the company that owns this newspaper. He welcomes your comments, either by voice mail at (313) 953-2047, Ext. 1880, or by e-mail at ppower@econline.com.

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