

## POINTS OF VIEW

## Editorial misleads

In an April 2 Farmington Observer editorial "Keep close tabs on concealed guns," a statement reads: "Under Michigan law, a person with a permit to own a gun may carry that gun; he or she just may not carry it concealed."

This is simply not true. Had the newspaper researched this subject properly, this erroneous statement would not have been made. Taken at face value, you could be responsible for a person believing he may carry a weapon, unconcealed, legally. Such a person would quickly find himself in need of legal representation.

On the same page, under the Farmington Observer "Our Mission," Philip Power states "...We regard ourselves as both accurate journalists and as caring citizens ..." While not doubting your care, you missed the target on accuracy.

Whatever the position of the newspaper on the gun control issue, the right of free speech and free press demands a corresponding responsibility to be factual and truthful. You owe it to yourselves, and the community, to provide the truth as accurately as possible. If not, we all may face future free speech restrictions, possibly up to and including a five-day waiting period, to publish the news. One begins to question the total content of an article, if not the political ambitions of the newspaper itself, if inaccuracies of this type are not rectified.

While not always in agreement with your editorial and letter responses, thank you for letting the citizens be active in response to important issues. I personally will be contacting my state legislators urging full support of concealed weapons reform in the state of Michigan. I see this reform as a positive step to protect the lives and safety of our citizens.

I would challenge you to research and write an article regarding Article I, Section 6, of the Michigan State Constitution. It follows Section 6, which gives you the right to free press and the responsibility thereof.

Roger Suter  
Farmington

## Editorial opposed

Those who value freedom and liberty should take great exception to the Observer's stance against Second Amendment rights, as stated in the recent editorial regarding House Bills 5551-5559.

These bills do not create a Vermont-style "shall-issue" policy, as was implied. If anything they would increase the gun boards' power to deny law-abiding gun owners their rights, while requiring them to state a reason for doing so. The reference to one bill giving "potentially abusable discretion" to gun boards is laughably

ironic. To find abuse, one need only look at the current system. The gun board in the county with the highest crime rate (and, by the way, the highest ethnic minority population) routinely denies permits to all but the most elite and/or politically well-connected applicants, while across Eight Mile Road, suburbanites enjoy a de facto shall-issue policy.

The Observer not only endorses it, but propagates the charade, declaring "each county has a board which reviews requests and approves them if the applicant can prove a reason to have the permit." Talk about arrogance!

In Wayne County, there are basically three "good reasons": (1) You're a police officer. (2) You're an elected official or politically well-connected. (3) You're a business owner who carries a lot of cash. What if you're, say, an abused woman in mortal fear of the man who said he would kill you if you left him? You get a restraining order.

What if you once looked down the barrel of a robber's gun and fear that the next robber might not be so kind as to just cock it, watch you sweat, laugh and walk away? Not a "good reason."

The editorial also makes the absurd claim that "under Michigan law, a person with a permit to own a gun may carry that gun; he or she just may not carry it concealed." There's a minor problem called the Brandishing Act, which recently took away even that right. Look it up. The great injustice here is the very existence of county gun boards, which these bills do nothing to eliminate.

Gun control advocates exploit the uninformed among us, who think safety is derived from laws that only affect the law-abiding. Just look at the reduction in crime in the 30-odd states which have granted concealed-carry rights to the law-abiding citizen. I say: If guns cause crime, matches cause arson.

Ted Gomulka Jr.  
Livonia

## Bravo on 'West Side Story'

We would like to congratulate the faculty and students of North Farmington High School for the superb performance of "West Side Story." It was a truly magical evening. The singing, dancing and acting was outstanding.

Thank you for a job well-done. Bravo!

Cheryl and Jerry Brickner  
Bingham Farms

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.

## Affirmative action hits home

Responding to an aggressive national campaign against affirmative action, California voters in 1996 passed Proposition 209, a law that banned use of race, sex, color or ethnicity as factors in university admissions.

Since then, the concern has been over just what kind of impact the new law would have on minorities seeking access to the state's fine public university system. According to data released last week, the impact is devastating.

The number of African Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans offered places in this year's freshman class at the University of California's flagship campus at Berkeley dropped 61 percent compared to a year ago. Places offered at UCLA fell 36 percent, and similar declines were reported at other system campuses.

University officials expect further declines this fall, when those few minority students actually accepted go to college out of state or at private universities unaffected by Prop 209.

The evidence from California is important to us here in Michigan, where the debate over affirmative action in admissions is proceeding.

A conservative Washington-based legal advocacy outfit, Center for Individual Rights, alleges the University of Michigan is using unconstitutional race-based weighting in its admissions practices and has brought suit. A petition drive is under way to get a Prop 209-type affirmative action ban onto the ballot. Bills to the same effect have been introduced in the legislature.

Should courts or the voters ban use of race, sex, color or ethnicity in university admissions decisions, I can see only two outcomes:

As in California, the first almost certainly would be to re-segregate the campuses of public universities in Michigan. What a sad and perverse outcome for our public higher education system that is among the finest in the nation!

The second, oddly, would be to eliminate the use of any academically-based factor (such as high school grade point average or standardized test results) in admissions decisions. Already, some people in California are arguing that ACT or SAT tests are intrinsically unfair to minority students and that a fairer system would be to admit kids to college by random lottery. What an equally sad and outcome for a wonderful university like the U of M, which has gained its stature by being highly selective in admissions!

One of the reasons I cherish serving on the U of M Board of Regents is my conviction that when the historians get around to writing up the history of 20th century America, they will conclude that the signature contribution of our society has been the creation and support of seriously excellent public universities.

The ultimate purpose and special claim to moral distinction of these great universities has been to provide the widest possible access



PHILIP POWER

for the greatest diversity of students.

That is why attempts to restrict great public universities from taking into consideration factors such as race or ethnicity are so unfortunate. Wouldn't it be odd if the job of making the full opportunity of America maximally available wound up in the hands of the same private universities that not so long ago were citadels of bias?

There will be a lot of argumentation about all of this, most of it probably couched in legalisms.

I find more compelling examples like that of Donald R. Deskins Jr., a professor of urban geography and sociology at the University of Michigan and an African American. Raised in Brooklyn, Don was drafted after high school and served in the infantry in the Korean War. After his discharge in 1957, GI Bill in hand, Don had to decide where he was going to go to college.

He chose Michigan. Why? "I always saw Michigan as a place offering unlimited opportunity for all kinds of kids - blacks, middle-class whites, poor whites, Jews, immigrants. Michigan was known as a place that was open all kinds to bright people from all over, a place where kids got a chance to show what they would do on their own."

Don did pretty well in Ann Arbor. Played starting tackle on the football team; graduated with honors; eventually became a full professor; married and had three girls, respectively a physician, a lawyer and an electrical engineer.

Don Deskins is a living example of what public universities are all about in providing opportunity to the full diversity of our people and why they are so enormously precious if our society is to be truly to offer opportunity to all.

Phil Power is chairman of HomeTown Communications Network Inc., the company that owns this newspaper. He also serves as a member of the Board of Regents of the University of Michigan. This column expresses his individual opinion, and not that of the university or its Board of Regents. He welcomes your comments, either by voice mail at (734) 953-2047, Ext. 1880, or by e-mail at ppower@online.com

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