

POINTS OF VIEW

LETTERS

Opinions are to be shared: We welcome your ideas, that's why we offer this space for your opinions. We will help by editing for clarity. To assure authenticity we ask that you provide a contact telephone number and if mailing or faxing a letter, please sign it. Letters can be mailed to: Joanne Maliszewski, 33411 Grand River, Farmington, MI 48335, faxed to Joanne at (734) 458-2700 or emailed to jmaliszewski@oe.homecomm.net

My decision

I am writing today about the helmet law recently passed in Farmington Hills. I think it should be up to the parents to decide whether or not their children wear helmets.

Helmets are helpful and a good idea but the government shouldn't be deciding this. The parents should. I don't think this law is appropriate and I know lots of people who feel the same way. The government is forcing kids to wear helmets. If you don't, you're breaking the law and, just like any other law, you get fined. It should be the decision of the individual and his or her parents.

I know there could be consequences if I was not wearing a helmet and something happened, but it should be the decision of my parents and me.

Caitie Leads
Farmington Hills

Rape drugs

The Michigan Women's Commission commends the efforts by the media to educate the public about the dangers of Gamma Hydroxy Butyrate (GHB) and other rape drugs. However, these drugs are often mentioned as "date" rape drugs, which is very misleading. Victims of these unsuspecting drug-induced sexual assaults are frequently drugged by strangers or slight acquaintances - not in a dating scenario. Using the term "date" rape drug leads people to mistakenly assume there has been a dating relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. The correct message needs to be sent to the public - these are "rape drugs."

Important points to remember are:

- Never leave a drink unattended.
- Don't accept any beverage (including soft drinks) from someone you do not know.
- Order bottled or canned beverages when possible; open them yourself.
- Be cautious of anyone inquiring about drinks that you have not tried before, even health drinks. Predators often disguise GHB as a new health aid, or slip it into drinks that you are unfamiliar with, which makes it even more difficult to detect the taste of GHB.

When Gov. John Engler signed the legislation, in July of 1998, to add GHB to the list of Schedule 1 Drugs, Michigan Women's Commission members were present. The commission has been actively distributing GHB brochures to: law enforcement agencies; middle and high schools; colleges and universities; women's centers, shelters and help groups; counseling and rape centers; hospitals and emergency rooms; prosecuting attorneys; churches; etc.

A Schedule 1 Drug makes it a crime to deliver, possess the drug with intent of delivery, or manufacture the drug. Even simple possession of the drug will be considered a felony and using the drug will be a misdemeanor. When convicted, fines and prison terms are applied.

The public can contact the Michigan Women's Commission office at (517) 334-8622 for GHB brochures.

Patti Garrett
Michigan Women's
Commission chairwoman

A reminder

At a time when too many adults in the community are concerned about the negative aspects of our young people, we sometimes "forget" that the young people who get the most attention represent a small

minority of those young people, and while the concerns are real, they frequently shadow the positive signs.

Some of those positive signs were most evident in May as the students of North Farmington High School presented "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," an incredibly exhilarating musical production. As I

enjoyed the performance, I sat mesmerized with an unrelenting smile on my face, a feeling of warmth in my heart, and even a tear in my eye. The energy, enthusiasm, talent, commitment, hard work, and pride were evident from the opening narration to the final standing ovation. If anyone has concerns about the youth of today - a cliché, at best - I encourage them to consider that those talented young people in North Farmington's "Joseph" are also the youth of today!

Congratulations to North Farmington High School on an outstanding production and on a reassuring reminder!

Rhonda
Brown
Farmington Hills

Where to find courage

We approached the Farmington Police desk and two policewomen rose to meet us. They kept their distance even though my wife assured them I was not dangerous. "We were told not to approach the desk until bullet-proof glass is installed." Do police really need protection from citizens?

The SWAT team in Littleton took three hours gathering enough courage

to approach the crime scene. President Clinton wouldn't send ground troops into Kosovo because they might get hurt entering a hostile area.

America has been a land of adventure. We plunged into enemy fire in World War II to make the world safer for our grandchildren, but we did not expect a playground. Recently children hear only, "Don't talk to strangers." "Wear your helmet." "Fasten your seat belt." "Guns kill people."

In The Wizard of Oz the Cowardly Lion asked Dorothy, "Where do I go to find courage?" Where, indeed?

Henk Borgman
Farmington

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