

Goodwill

Ball tribute to community spirit

The annual Cornucopia Ball is a tribute to the Farmington area's sense of togetherness and community spirit and goodwill. In its fifth year, the ball is designed to generate money for the Farmington Hills-Farmington Community Foundation, which supports a number of programs, including the popular after-school program for middle school students.

The foundation indeed has spread goodwill with its continuing involvement in programs designed to help children and families with contributions to the Farmington YMCA, Farmington Families in Action and the Multicultural/Multiracial Council.

Unfortunately, the general public rarely attends the Cornucopia Ball, but nonetheless benefits from it. It is because of money raised at the event that families may send their children to after-school programs—alleviating the need for child care—all free of charge.

Unless you are in a situation in which you don't want your budding pre-teen to be home alone after school, you likely can't appreciate the scope of the after-school program, or the activities at and through the YMCA, for example.

But without the foresight of a number of community leaders—among them newly elected Farmington Hills Mayor Nancy Bates, who years ago saw the need to help children and youth—families in the community would definitely be in need.

Planners of the Cornucopia Ball should be applauded for their perseverance and determination to make the event not only fun for those attending, but a worthwhile event that



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL BARKER
Reviewing: Del Cornwell and Sandy Maczko check out some of the silent auction items at the Cornucopia Ball.

does some good in the community.

On the night of the ball, Cathy Webb, event chairwoman, secretary of the foundation and a longtime school board member, mentioned that planning the dinner, dance and auction at Glen Oaks Country Club was like planning a wedding.

Indeed, Planners, such as Webb, have a lot for which to be proud. Changes this year were brought to the ball, including venue, attire requirements and price of tickets. And by all appearances the changes brought more success and more participants.

Kudos must also go out to corporate sponsors, and businesses, and individuals who donated auction items that—with all proceeds associated with the evening—raised somewhere in excess of \$80,000 for the community foundation.

Planning a wedding is tough enough. But planning a major community event, such as the Cornucopia Ball, certainly capitalizes on community spirit, concern and involvement. The evening and the programs it supports are winners.



On the floor: Cathy Webb, one of the organizers of the Cornucopia Ball, dances the hustle.

Remember the spirit of holiday

Every year on the fourth Thursday of November, we sit down to a feast with our families to give thanks for all that we have and for bringing us through yet another year.

We do this in commemoration of a hearty band of English subjects who came to this country on a small sailing ship they called the Mayflower. About half of those who left Plymouth, England, were religious non-conformists who had previously escaped to Holland; the others were people just anxious to leave their old lives behind.

Before disembarking, these two often-contentious groups came together to sign the Mayflower Compact. This document gave validity to the group, which was about to settle in an area north of the official Virginia colony.

As the group settled, they established a more detailed organizational charter, a pre-

cursor of our Constitution. They also made peace with the Indian Massasoit, outlining a just relationship between the two peoples whose ways were alien to each other.

Of course, we know, that relations between white settlers and Indians did not remain hospitable.

We know that the pilgrims and their followers would create an atmosphere of intolerance that others would rise to protest.

But for one brief moment, probably sometime in late October 1621, the white settlers from England who had survived the terrible previous winter and their new-found Indian friends would come together to share athletic games, a harvest feast and the strange friendship of people at the end of the earth.

It is that glorious moment of tolerance, sharing and humble supplication that we honor and hope to recreate in our own lives. May your Thanksgiving be in that spirit.

GEORGE BROOKS



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) 459-2700 or emailed to jmaliszewski@oe.homecomm.net

State must provide funds

Everyone in the Farmington/Farmington Hills community can celebrate the recent decision of the Michigan Court of Appeals that reaffirmed once again Farmington Public Schools' contention that the Michigan Constitution requires state government to fund services which it mandates local school districts to provide.

Now it is up to the Legislature to obey the court and provide the required funding to our school district. The Michigan Supreme Court came to a similar decision in 1997 after a 17-year legal battle between school districts and the state. But, the Legislature quite deliberately circumvented that funding duty, as the Court of Appeals has most recently found. It is that failure to abide by the Supreme Court's decision in the Durant I case that led to the Court of Appeal's ruling in the recent Durant II case.

Since the Michigan Supreme Court ruling in 1997, school districts in Michigan have been collectively underfunded by approximately \$360 million each school year for special education services. In 1998, the Legislature did make partial amends for a few years of past underfunding—as the court ordered them to do—but nothing to ensure the future funding levels for those same services would meet the requirements of the constitution.

While we deserve to celebrate this latest court victory, we need to remind our elected officials that the taxpayers of Farmington/Farmington Hills will not tolerate a repeat performance of legislative evasion and foot-dragging. The court has spoken, and now the Legislature must act. If not, we will continue to experience the sad spectacle of school districts throughout Michigan suing the state to receive funding guaranteed to them by the State Constitution.

C. Robert Maxfield,
 Superintendent
Priscilla L. Brouillette,
 President, Board of Education

Rouge River." That statement is so preposterous it is beyond belief a sane person would write it, and certainly no intelligent person would believe it. There is no basis in fact.

The Rouge River in Farmington Hills is actually just a creek, so small one has to look for it to find it. The volume of water that falls to the ground in this community is so enormous that tiny creek and tributaries could not even handle one percent of it. What actually occurs is the ground acts like a sponge and soaks up most of the water. The water is filtered and cleaned by the soil of the earth. Another large portion is evaporated into the air. The runoff the creeks catch is partially distributed into the larger rivers, much of which is cleaned as it flows over the stream bottoms and much again evaporates into the air.

I do not disagree that lawn chemicals and oil from cars are serious contaminants. But anyone who says septic tanks are pollutants are just plain lying. Once in a while a septic tank gets plugged up and needs to be pumped. But to include septic tanks in this crazy dissertation is preposterous and without knowledge of the facts, nothing more than a scare tactic to further an agenda not in the best interests of the community or anyone. The answer to septic tank problems, what few there are, is to educate and inform the owners of proper care of their septic tanks. Where do you think sewage goes if not disposed of in the proper use of a septic tank? Does it magically disappear, out of sight, out of mind? It winds up directly into the Detroit River, supposedly treated first.

Sure, clean up the creeks and rivers. Properly dispose of contaminants. But do not lie to the citizens of this community by telling them that almost every drop of water that falls on the ground anywhere in Farmington Hills will eventually end up in the Rouge River. That is verbal pollution and I don't like it.

Kenneth Kemp
 Farmington Hills

How many know?

I'm way up in years but will never forget why Nov. 11 is a day to always remember those who gave their lives so we would remain free.

When I attended public school back east, on the 11th day of the 11th month at exactly 11 a.m. everybody in the schools would stand in silence while a bugler sounded the mournful notes of Taps.

How many children today know that it was the day the Armistice was signed?

Milton Rose
 Farmington Hills

Verbal pollution

I am profoundly offended by some of the wording in the yellow leaflet sent to Farmington Hills residents, titled "A Note to Farmington Hills Residents," from the city about Rouge River restoration and public education. It sounds like we are being set up for some grossly independent proposition about to be foisted upon us by the city.

The first sentence of the first paragraph is not even close to the truth and I demand it be retracted. It reads, "Almost every drop of water that falls on the ground anywhere in Farmington Hills will eventually end up in the

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:

What do you like best about the Thanksgiving holiday?



"Getting together with family. Thinking about what you're blessed with."

Kay Lewis
 Southfield



"Living in this country and being able to celebrate the holiday."

Deborah Henderson
 Farmington



"You come together. It is the day we remember people who don't have enough."

Melissa Henderson
 Farmington Hills



"The family gets together, sits down to a meal and enjoys each other's company."

Neil Oliver
 Detroit

Farmington Observer

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— Philip Power