

Memorial Day

Honoring Vietnam vets is right to do

The Vietnam war has long been on a list of events that many Americans would prefer to forget. But when your child lost his life in that conflict, forgetting is hard to do.

Some, such as Helen Robertson and Roy Williams Sr., parents of the late 1967 Farmington High grad Roy Kenneth Williams Jr., killed in action in 1969 — have no intention of letting their son, or other parents' sons, be forgotten in the dusty pages of history.

And rightly so. The war may have been unpopular to many Americans, but the death of so many sons and daughters should not be forgotten, especially in a hometown.

And so it seems Kenny and other Vietnam veterans will get some measure of recognition in this year's Farmington Memorial Day celebration.

Initially, Kenny's mom was asked to wait until next year — to give all attention this year to the 50th anniversary of the Korean War. There's nothing wrong with that except that including Vietnam on the acknowledgement list does not in any way detract from Korean War veterans. Sacrifice and heartache have no boundaries.

A regional representative for the American Legion has thankfully stepped in on behalf of Vietnam veterans.

Following the Memorial Day parade, a Viet-

RECOGNITION

nam veteran from Waterford will escort Helen Robertson to a post-parade ceremony in which she will place a wreath in Memorial Park.

The recognition — as small as it may be — is deserved and a long time in coming. And it in no way detracts from the efforts and sacrifices by Korean War vets.

We hope that such a small effort of recognition will go a long way in helping heal the wounds that have been left in the American society by the Vietnam War and the controversy that surrounded it.

Helen Robertson's voice was loud and clear in her attempt to get some form of recognition for her son and other Vietnam vets, some of whom also want to forget. But recognition for their efforts and sacrifice are well-deserved and the community should pay attention.

We hope that the American Legion planners of next year's Memorial Day parade will honor Vietnam vets in the same manner in which they plan to honor Korean War vets this year.

It's only right.

Parents have choice with video

The world most adults grow up in no longer exists for their children. Today kids are faced with adult topics, such as learning about sexual harassment.

Two videos, one for first and second graders titled "What to Do," and "When You Should Tell" for fifth graders, have caused concern and controversy for parents and the Farmington Board of Education.

The films are part of a board of education-supported and state-mandated "Respecting Myself and Others" health curriculum.

The school board has offered the best of all worlds to parents, especially those who are concerned about the subject matter of the videos.

First, the board has allowed the decision to show the video to remain with the individual schools, not the school board.

Second, parents, nonetheless, still have an opportunity to withdraw their children from seeing the videos.

Third, those parents who believe their children should see the videos may make that choice.

The best example is Hillside Elementary where Principal Janice Collier decided against the fifth grade video because of parental concerns, but chose to show the first- and second-

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grade video, as approved by parents.

We encourage parents to get involved with their children's education, particularly on these touchy subjects. Parents should view the videos before they make a choice to allow their children to see the videos, or not to see the videos.

The school board has made the wisest choice it can. It offers parents and schools a choice — both to keep your children away from the videos or to allow your children to view them.

It is a sensitive and sensible choice. To do otherwise would put the school board in the business of, as member Gary Sharp said, "banning books, banning choice."

Bill protects trucking industry

The struggle between the state legislature and local governments continues with Senate passage of a six-bill package on enforcement of trucking violations.

The bills were passed unanimously, 36-0, on April 6 and represent a compromise between a far more restrictive House package and the position of most local officials.

Under current law, local police enforce motor carrier codes on local roads. Local governments collect 100 percent of revenue from fines levied.

The trucking industry has long complained that local enforcement has been overzealous and that they have been subjected to being ticketed several times on the same day in different jurisdictions.

The new bill would limit the number of tickets that can be written by local police for minor truck code violations. Officers would still be able to enforce traffic violations such as speeding or ignoring a signal. But only one truck code ticket could be issued in a 24-hour period.

In addition, revenue generated by truck code enforcement would be split with 70 percent going to local units of government and 30 percent to libraries.

Under the state constitution, libraries receive all revenue from criminal fines. In 1994, trucking regulations were decriminalized and made civil fines with revenue going to local units of government to pay the cost of enforcement. Since 1996, libraries have not received any revenue on truck code violations.

The current rash of state legislation to limit the powers of local government are based on a perception that local governments, especially in the metro Detroit area, are hostile to business interests.

Local government and police officials argue that shifting 30 percent of their revenue from

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truck code enforcement will effectively reduce needed enforcement against trucks that are overweight, causing damage to roadways, or have dangerous safety deficiencies, such as bad brakes.

The Senate bills correct the more aggressive House measures. The compromise allows regular police officers to stop trucks for violations, while the House bill specified only motor carrier officers could make stops; the Senate bill retains 70 percent of the fees to local government, while the House gave the fees to libraries, courts and road improvements.

The trucking industry has made a good case about the unfair and inconsistent enforcement of the truck code and those parts of the bill that correct those problems are worthwhile.

The Senate bill represents a useful compromise between the all or nothing approach of the House and the "don't change anything" desire of local governments. But still we question the necessity for such sweeping legislation to protect the trucking industry, especially since we have invested so much money in road maintenance.

We find ourselves agreeing with Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff that it is "sad if we have the Legislature wanting to adjust traffic laws to make it easier (for trucking companies and others) to violate the law at the public's expense."

GEOFF 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

Better for it

This is my family's second school year here at Farmington. We have children in the fifth grade, third grade and kindergarten. All of their teachers have been excellent. We moved to this area because of the reputation of the Farmington School District and, specifically, Flanders Elementary School. Our children have greatly benefited from the love, care and instruction they have received at Flanders.

I want to publicly praise the entire staff for all they do. We appreciate Flanders' emphasis in reading, the high standard for children to produce quality work, and their ability to incorporate different teaching methods to accommodate varied learning styles.

This staff is professional and experienced. Our family thinks the staff is doing a great job and so do many other people. Keep up the good work. Our children are better for it.

Michael Mansfield
Farmington

Profound effect

As a community, we must do something about the tragic death of Daniel Lee, who was a sophomore at Harrison High School. Our son was a classmate of Daniel's and this terrible accident has had a profound effect on everyone at Harrison High School and East Middle School.

I think there are measures that can be taken to prevent future accidents. As we all know, the traffic on 12 Mile between Orchard Lake and Middlebelt is dangerous. The cars and trucks travel too fast, and I know by experience that it is difficult to turn right into Harrison High School, and almost impossible to turn left into the school. Posted speed limits must be enforced and a green arrow at the light should be installed, so turns can be completed safely.

The school district should also reinstate bus service to our children. The present policy allows children to be bused only if they live more than 1.6 miles. It doesn't matter if there are no sidewalks, or if they have to cross busy streets or dangerous intersections.

As a result of this policy, many parents and siblings drive the students to school. That is why there is so much traffic and congestion at the schools, and on top of that, the high school and middle school have the same starting time, which adds to the confusion. Everyone is in a hurry to get everyone to school on time, and also to get to work. Bus service could eliminate or at least reduce traffic and solve the dilemma for many parents who have to get two children to two different schools at the

same time.

So, I encourage our leaders to please address these problems, so our children can be safe when going to school. My prayers and thoughts are with the Lee family. Daniel was an intelligent and gifted young man and his death has been a great loss to all of us.

Maureen Kuelo
Farmington Hills

Won't be pretty

Cities, league work to maintain home rule" caught my eye last weekend as I have been keeping a close eye on this issue. I am somewhat disappointed in city officials and the MML that they are exaggerating the consequences of this issue out of proportion.

All citizens deserve stability in both their communities and their businesses, and while I support home rule on most issues, cities have tried to legislate far too many things that go beyond "home rule." It is time for the legislature, MML and local officials to stop the nonsense and sit down and discuss rationally what are truly "home rule" issues.

Clearly an employer's pay scale and benefits are not home rule issues, nor is talking on a cell phone, yet these are the kinds of issues we are trying to put into law. To further complicate the issue local officials continually ask to be "held harmless" every time an issue is presented that may require belt tightening. This seems out of line to me since I cannot recall any local unit actually cutting their budget. They all say how they are balancing it and how we operate at such low millage rates, (not mentioning all the bond issues we have passed), but I don't see efforts to streamline and actually cut cost. I will say that it could be that I am not that close to the budget process, however, usually public officials do like to brag about such cuts.

Further, I hope voters will think hard and long about a Super Majority for budget items affecting local control. The consequences may just be a Legislature unable to pass any spending bills. It takes bi-partisan support to pass most bills up in the state House, and most pass with slim margins. The possibility of getting a Super Majority is unrealistic. Sounds like this is going to be "the" issue of this election cycle, and for the voters it doesn't appear it's going to be pretty.

Linda Jolicoeur
Farmington Hills

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— Philip Power