

LETTERS

Show prudence

On behalf of the students of Farmington High School, we'd like to state our disappointment in the Farmington Observer for printing the article on the comments by Mr. Mergener (Sunday, May 7) and the follow-up editorial.

The story was certainly not worthy of any page of your paper, let alone the front page. We are disappointed because you wrote a complete story based off the words of one student and one parent here at Farmington High. The one account of three minor, isolated incidents now has made our school look like a corrupt school, where teachers are cruel and students speak exclusively in profanity. This is a habitual stereotype that is anything but true.

We are disappointed because you have embarrassed the faculty and the students of FHS. The book *The Color Purple* was an optional reading. This was to be done out of class, on your own. We were warned of the passage, offered the option to skip the said passage, or to read another selection.

The book is a classic, a Pulitzer Prize winner, and should be included in high school education. Knowing of the existence of this passage, many of us chose to read another book for the assignment. We defend the teacher in this case, who was doing nothing different than any other English teacher would — encouraging her students to read great literature. We should also trust the students to be mature enough to make the proper decision on their own.

We are disappointed because the "freak of nature" text was certainly not a direct quote. Nor did the Observer contact and get a comment from any of the teachers. You had no proof that this had in fact occurred, other than one eyewitness account.

"Freak of nature" is a common expression, and knowing nearly all the teachers at FHS, we find it very difficult to believe that this was a deliberate act. Even in the Observer's account, the quote is "by some freak of nature," not "that freak of nature."

These incidents were isolated and minor. Farmington is an outstanding educational institution and has had few problems of any sort in comparison to the problems of other area schools. The "freak of nature" incident may have had some deeper impacts, but if it had, it would have and should have been in the news when it happened, not now.

The Advanced Placement English test many of us took for college entrance had references to feminism, sex, and violence, but no one ever cares about that — not when it is in that context. The passages contained some light profanity and slang.

And what about all the "politically correct" books we are being forced to read about that contain racial slurs that make you feel very uncomfortable reading about them? No one says anything about that. And they shouldn't. Education is to prepare us for the world around us, not to shelter us into a utopian society.

We agree with the editorial on the teacher code of conduct (Thursday, May 11). It would become like the Student Code of Conduct, a mess of rules that are changed often. FHS already has a profanity policy. We agree that parents need to take a role in our education, and for the most part, they do. Few parents ignore their child's education completely.

Finally, we are disappointed with the school and district officials and the superintendent, the very group that is supposed to serve the parents and students and faculty and staff of all Farmington and Farmington Hills students, not just the "straight-A" students

and their parents. I have never heard of any other parent or student getting an exclusive one-on-one session with school officials to lodge complaints, let alone the superintendent. And never has it been covered to this extent by our local newspaper.

The Observer has blown a little matter way out of proportion, embarrassing an entire school based on the comments of one family. This is not the level of excellence in journalism we expect from the Observer. In the future, please be more prudent in your news selections. Thank you.

FHS Juniors: Timothy C. Glas, Bernard P. Brown, Harinder Gill, Charles J. Bopp IV, Hemant Srinivas, Mark Wilson, Katherine N. Kimball, Gregory L. Peszek, Aaron M. Turk, David M. Pinkney, Robert J. Bulson, Andrew Czaplinski, Peter Knepley, Christopher M. Mallott, John Tattershall
FHS Sophomores: Thomas A. Peszek, Michael A. Jacob, Kyle R. Malloy, Atif Ahmed, Amy Elliott, Marya Link, Julia Power
Betsy Luckscheiter
Farmington High School students

Feeling privileged

This is in defense of teachers at Farmington High School, in response to the May 7 article, "High school teachers' behavior concerns parent."

The Color Purple is about the strength of the human spirit. Yes, there are some graphic parts, but like the profanity in *Catcher in the Rye* it is necessary to lend credibility to the situation depicted in the book. Besides, there was an alternative assignment for people who did not want to read the book.

Let it be known that to see any "R" rated movie at FHS every student needs to bring a permission slip signed by a

parent. In fact, even after this has been done, in many classes teachers fast forward through the disturbing parts or warn students to turn their heads if they don't want to see the upsetting parts.

As for the alleged conversation between the two teachers regarding the disabled student, that incident was unfortunate and inappropriate. It is also not typical of FHS teachers. My friends and I have been at FHS for four years and have never even heard rumors of any inappropriate teacher comments.

Basically, we fail to understand what benefits this new, undefined code of conduct would provide, and more importantly, we fear the unlikely educational repercussions and drawbacks.

The first two complaints we addressed are about materials that enhance our education and make our high school education seem applicable to the real world, even if some of the situations are undesirable. How do people expect high school students to grow up and function in the real world if we are never exposed to it?

Farmington High is not perfect, and its teachers are only human, but we feel privileged to be in such a wonderful learning environment where teachers give the extra effort to make their subjects come alive for their students. Some of the classes we have learned the most in are the classes where the teachers can be our friends.

Marya Link
Betsy Luckscheiter
Farmington High School students

Right will win

My name is Patti Wheeler, and I am writing in response to the article written by Tim Smith in the Sunday, May 7, paper. This article discussed many of the problems

Mr. Mark Mergener has with the way Farmington High School is run. I am a student at this school, and I personally found this article very offensive.

Now, one might wonder why a student like me, a senior set to graduate in less than a month, would take the extra step to let you know how I feel. The answer to that question is clear: I care about my teachers.

I have been attending Farmington High for the past two years after transferring from another southeastern Michigan school. I currently have six of my seven class periods with an English teacher. I have never been happier. Every class that I have been in has been interesting and fun. I have been taught about Hamlet, Jane Eyre, what a character sketch is, how to deliver a fantastic speech, and what it is like to be truly passionate about your job. I have never been offended, and furthermore have never spoken to anyone who has.

Since my arrival at Farmington High School nearly two years ago, I have had many different teachers. The ones who stick out in my mind are the same ones Mr. Mergener mentions, only for different reasons. These people have helped me in so many different ways, not just with English, but with life. I feel more comfortable talking to my teachers about different problems that I am having in my life than I do speaking with the kids my own age. This could be because of the tremendous amount of life experience they have, because they give good advice, or maybe even because they are just plain old nice.

The teachers at this school care so much about each and every student that they will go out of their way to do anything they can to help. They are great people and great teachers.

Next year, I will be attending Michigan State University

with a major in English. I want to be a teacher. Every time I see something like this happen, it makes me not only scared of what it will be like when I am in this position, but also so glad that there are such great teachers out there. The people being targeted are phenomenal educators, and we should all consider ourselves lucky to have them teaching us. These wonderful people have committed no crime. They are innocent, and they deserve to be left alone.

I am not one to let things bother me. I have learned from many strong people in my life, most of them my teachers, that life goes on. We needn't be worried or bogged down by problems that will solve themselves. This is not one of those situations. These people have taken too much for too long. I'm not going to let that happen any longer. I will do everything I possibly can to do help out my teachers. If this means going in front of the school board to state my views, then so be it. When all is said and done, I am certain the side that is in the right will come out on top.

Patti Wheeler
Farmington High School senior

Don't settle

On Friday, March 31, a tragic car accident happened in front of Harrison High School. Daniel Lee was killed as a result of this accident. The Lee family lost a son, grandchild, brother, and cousin. My son lost a friend.

Daniel Lee was a quiet teen who was a brilliant student and artist. Dan was a friend to all, liked by everyone, and never said an unkind word about others.

Dan's death has made an impact on all the students, faculty, and parents at Harrison High School whether they

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