



Hurt: Above are two of the remaining orphaned baby raccoons that were taken to a wildlife rehabilitator in Livonia.

Killing wildlife

Neighbors should turn in culprits

The recently publicized shootings and bludgeoning of seven mother raccoons and their babies in Farmington Hills is despicable.

But Department of Natural Resources officials, who are investigating, say at this point the case is still based on hearsay—even though the babies who survived the attack are recuperating at the home of wildlife rehabilitator Denise Nitschman in Livonia.

According to the hearsay, a couple of Farmington Hills men grew tired of the furry, masked intruders wandering into their yards.

The story says the men went so far as to set live traps to capture the mothers. Instead of releasing them and their offspring into any number of areas set aside for such efforts, the men—or should we say cowards—then shot the animals. Apparently the men figured they could more adeptly find the orphaned babies if they let them starve in the nearby woods without their lactating mothers for a few days. The babies would come out of hiding and it would be easier to beat them to death. The men were right.

The baby raccoons that survived and remain with the rehabilitator are proof that something nasty happened.

We must remind these men, brave hunters that they are, that it is illegal to use a firearm in the city of Farmington Hills. Should we also mention the basic notion of kindness and caring for other creatures?

Clearly, neighbors—some who have

anonymously called the Observer—are aware of this incident. It was one of the neighbors who took the surviving babies to a wildlife rehabilitator to save their lives.

Unless neighbors step forward, these men will go unpunished. They will honestly believe they can get away with it and do it again, and again. With any luck, no one's child or pet will be in firing range next time.

Many people bought homes in Farmington Hills because of longtime efforts to maintain somewhat of a natural environment in the community. Trees that in many communities would have long been cut down remain standing here because it is what the public wanted.

Yet many of these residents who came here for the woods and streams and general flora and fauna—that will undoubtedly draw wildlife—are the same ones who balk at the idea that animals might cross their yards on their way to better pastures. Or heaven forbid, some of these animals during the spring might use their yards to give birth and raise their young without danger.

When we hear of this type of needless wildlife tragedy, we are at first shocked and repulsed. Then we remember we are in suburbia. That's where a lot of people want the appearance of beauty and serenity, but none of the responsibility.

We urge neighbors who know of this attack on wildlife to step forward. Fear of retribution from these men armed with guns is understandable. But consider the type of neighbors you are protecting.

Withdraw support for wine bill

No Tax or Duty shall be laid on Articles exported from any State. No Preference shall be given by any Regulation of Commerce or Revenue to the Ports of one State over those of another: nor shall Vessels bound to, or from, one State, be obliged to enter, clear, or pay Duties in another...

— U.S. Constitution

Ever notice that when lawmakers conspire to take away one of your constitutional rights, they always have some really noble cause in mind?

So it is with House Bill 4752. It's intended to crack down on the sale of alcohol over the Internet to youngsters. A noble cause indeed.

Unfortunately, it will also have the effect of making it difficult, if not impossible, for Michigan consumers to get access to more than a thousand small wineries across the country.

These aren't foreign wines. They aren't being imported from exotic locales. They're U.S. wines.

Not your issue? You don't drink fine wines from out of state? So you don't care?

OK. But when lawmakers find some noble cause for restricting access to a product you do use from out of state—electronics, lumber, clothing, movies, software, computers, furniture, etc.—perhaps you will realize it started here.

HB 4752, sponsored by Rep. Nancy Cassia (R-Nov) and approved last week by the state

Senate, not only blocks sales to minors but funnels purchases of out of state wines through the state's current "three-tier" system of wholesalers and retailers. In doing so, it gives preference to the largest producers, the ones which make enough product to keep wholesalers interested in stocking supplies.

The bill was amended by Sen. Bill Schuette (R-Midland) last week to allow for personal importation of those wines for personal use, but in order to do that, consumers will have to travel out of state to make the purchases.

It's supposed to be an improvement, but it's not. Imagine if you had to fly to various states to buy each product you wanted—electronics, lumber, clothing—in order to ship it or carry it home.

Simply put, the effect of the bill, however noble the cause of restricting sales to minors, is an attempt by wholesalers to retain their monopoly in Michigan over the distribution of alcoholic beverages here. And the state is happy to do it in order to insure the collection of taxes on those sales.

The bill goes back before the House June 20 for a concurrence vote.

We urge the proponents of this bill to reconsider whether they really want to violate the constitution by enacting a restraint on trade.

And we would urge others in the House of Representatives to withdraw their support for this flawed legislation.

CLARIFICATION

An editorial urging donors to check out charities and their spending records before turning over their money incorrectly referred to the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Michigan as spending most of its income soliciting donations. Actu-

ally, a 1998 income tax form shows the organization spent about 75 percent of its income on program services, which means granting wishes. We regret any inconvenience caused by this error.

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

Responsible support

As you know, I have for many years been concerned about the state's failure to meet its obligation to adequately fund special education as specified by the Headlee Amendment to the Michigan Constitution. As I said in a recent guest editorial, the members of the current legislature did not create this situation. However, they do have the opportunity to resolve the problem.

I am pleased to report that earlier this week, Rep. Andrew Raczowski and other members of the Oakland County representative delegation stepped up to their responsibility in supporting an amendment proposed by Rep. Pam Godchaux from Birmingham.

Specifically, the amendment makes it possible for a House-Senate Conference Committee to consider proposals which would go a long way to resolving the continuing special education funding problems. Rep. Raczowski's leadership in this and related educational matters should be commended.

Hopefully, we expect that the Oakland County representatives and senators will continue to strive, once and for all, to resolve these important issues involving the state's responsibility to adequately fund all educational programs.

C. Robert Maxfield
Superintendent

curriculum; those aspects only contribute only to the setting of the novel.

We can learn from all novels, no matter what they contain, whether it is not to do what the characters do, or if we should follow their examples.

In addition, one parent most certainly should not be able to make decisions for every student in the district. He definitely has the right to make decisions for his own children, but as for the rest of us students, it is not his choice what we read. That should be left up to our own parents.

Emily Morris
Farmington

High caliber

On Saturday afternoon, June 3, I attended a tea at the Governor Warner Mansion (the Farmington Historical Museum) on Grand River, put on to benefit the mansion by the Quakertown chapter of the Quakers of Farmington/Farmington Hills.

The tea was extremely well done. The "servers" were young women and men, most of all of whom were students at Farmington High School. This was a labor of love for them, done for "community service," not for pay. They all were delightful, did very well at their "jobs," and added bright, smiling faces to the pleasant occasion. With young people of this caliber, we need have no concern for the future.

Beatrice F. Keeber
Milford

Not his decision

In response to several articles the Farmington Observer has printed about a certain parent's ideas of how the school system should be run, I would just like to say, as a student of Farmington High School, I am appalled.

This person thinks no books should be recommended to students if they contain profanity or sexual themes. Does this man think we should stop reading *Of Mice and Men*, or the amazingly well-written book *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

After all, *Of Mice and Men* contains excessive profanity, and one of *To Kill a Mockingbird*'s main characters is being accused of rape, and the book contains incest. Of course these books should not be excluded from the

Prom's a winner

Thank you and your photographer for that very fine picture he took of us at the senior prom, which we enjoy every year.

It may have the effect of getting some more seniors involved in the many interesting activities our community offers.

Milton Rose
Farmington Hills

Farmington Observer

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— Philip Power