Part of HomeTown Communications Ne

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Our fundamental purposes are to enhance the lives of our readers, nurture the hometowns we serve and contribute to the business success of our

Make time for balance Tonight, the City of Farmington Hills will honor a group of people who have discovered the secret of life is something so simple, most of us know it long before we've mastered skills like tying our shoot or reciting the alphabet. The simple act of giving – the focus of tonight's Volunteer Recognition dinner at the Costick Center – seems to come naturally to children. A toddler will share a soggy, half-caten cookie with just about anyone, including the family dog, Kindergartners have been known to break a crayon in half just to help out a friend whose box doesn't have that color. Our pages frequently recount the success of fund-raising drives, food collections and after-school events that reflect the efforts of children and teen-ages willing to reach boyond their own needs to help others. Some people carry that spirit through their entire lives. Some earn special recognition for their efforts, but the vast to help others. Some people carry that spirit through their entire lives. Some earn special recognition for their efforts, but the vast to help others. Some people carry that spirit through their entire lives. Some earn special recognition for their efforts, but the vast to help others. Touch compensated for her aervices with the Founders Festival, Executive Director Suzanne Lichtman is no stranger to the word "volunteer." In most recommendate for her aervices with the Founders Festival, Executive Director Suzanne Lichtman is no stranger to the word "volunteer." In most reagen to the word "volunteer." In most provided the community. Lichtman realized she was missing something, something the foundation of the caperione of the community. We don't mean to single her out, but draw the same kind of story to tell. In fact, millions around the nation do, as well. In Minnesota, a school teacher coordinates a volunteering schedule with her foundater, getting the double benefit of the submitted of the community where you now. It is a submitted to the community of the community where you now have the community o in life by volunteering

Afterthought: On Monday night, the Farmington Hills City Council will consider whether to assess homeowners who live on gravel roads for dust control. We said it last year and doen't result in permanent improvement - should be part of the services tarpayers fund. We type Mayor Nancy Bates and council members Vicki Barnett and Barry Brickner, who voted against the assessment lasts year, to renew their objection to what amounts to double taxation for residents who willingly or unwillingly live on gravel roads. This isn't a luxury; residents shouldn't have to put up with clouds of dust kicked up by passing traffic. Making people pay for something everyone else receives simply isn't fair - so dust off those "no" votes, Council.

Time is of the essence with Greenway grants

prom Oxford to Southflied to Ply-mouth, preserving green space lies at or iter the top of most residents' wish lists. - but not always for elected officials. - That should change with the new GreenWays Initiative, a private grant program coordinated through the Com-munity Foundation for Southeast Michi-

From Oxford to Southfield to Plymouth, preserving green space lies at or tear the top of most residents' wish lists: but not always for elected officials. That should change with the new GreenWays Initiative, a private grant grogram coordinated through the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan.

Over the next five years, dozens of communities and volunteer groups could reap the benefits of up to \$25 million in GreenWays Initiative grants. Those grants could create a greenbelt stretching from Ann Arbor, through Oakland County, to the shores of Lake St. Clair and federal matched the conditional state and federal matched from the Kreage Foundation from the Kreage Foundation from the Kreage Foundation and the generous \$10 million could easily turn into such more as communities use it to gath the state of the st program constants among an examinating from a factor of the man of the factor of the f

riverbanks and lakefronts.

Almost all our region's major parks and recreation areas ultimately could be linked via the newly created trails and revived waterfronts.

The Paint Creek Trail, which connects green areas from Rochester to Lake Drion, provides a hint of the benefits of a begional trail system. That trail was built 20 years ago and the idee of a regional trailway system dates back at least that here.

far.
: Western Wayne County residents, meanwhile, can envision what a restored

plete the muit-community, muit-county greenbelt.

Such a green belt is more than just a tree-hugger's dream. It would provide a vital, quality-of-life marketing tool to help bring business to our area as well as retain the ones we have.

It would also provide safe, healthy recreational activities for all our area's residents.

recreational activities for all our area's residents.
Even more, it would provide a link between our region's too often fractious cities, townships and villages. We can only imagine what future benefits that would bring.



LETTERS

Library's tops

Again, our library earns a top performance rating, this time for its up-to-date, comprehensive internet Web site. The wonderful resource this web site provides its users deserves recognition. Just one of the many valuable information topics it contains is the "Consumer Resource" segment located under the "Best of the Web – Quality Sites by Subject" option. It provides a wealth of resource date on such typical consumer purchase problem areas as automotive transactions (vehicle sales and service), chari-

on such typical consumer purchase problem areas as automotive transactions (vehicle sales and service), charities, and bank/insurance transactions. Consumers are also well served by its information links, such as to the Attorney General's Office and Better Business Bureau, to product comparisons/evaluations, and to health/medical consumer data sources. I thank Gerald Furl, Elyes Streit, and the other contributing library staff for this special gift to Internet users. Also, I invite Observer readers to take some time and visit 'www.farmilb.org' to see for themselves just what an asset our community has in its talented library staff. If they do, I'm confident they'll add this site to their favorites list.

Yes, I care about quality city services for our tax dollars, and quality is what we continue to receive from our library system.

James F. Vandenberg, CFE Farmington Hills

■ Teach REAL sex ed

While watching the 11 p.m. channel 4 local newscast on March 1, I could not believe what I was hearing during a live interview with some parents and students attending a Novi School Board meeting.

The board was meeting to discuss literature and materials being used recently to teach sex education to area high school students. I am sure the Farmington Schools have a similar if not identical program.

Apparently during the week, one class involved an instructor demonstrating to the students how to "properly put on a condom." I watched and listened and thought, "is this for real?" In the year 2001, seally but truly, any teenager, make that any 10 year old with half of a brain, could figure out how to use a condom if they wanted to, "I' being the important word here. Do the members of the local school boards believe for one minute that there is a single teenager alleve who is sexually active, yet doesn't use a condom because they can't figure out how to open up the package and elip it on? If so, these board members do not belong in positions where they are responsible for designing and approving educational materials for our young children that my be completely inappropriate and unnecessary.

Sexually active teenagers are not protecting themselves against diseases and pregnancy because it is either to convenient, too expensive, too uncomfortable, or too uncool. If you don't believe me, just ask any teenager.

We as a society have been bombarded with information on "safe sex," whether we like it or not, and any teen who has semily under a rock. I wonder if there will be a "follow-up demonstration" to the kids about what to do when their contraceptive choice falls, as they very often do.

Will there be a demonstration show-ing what a lifelong commitment raising a child will be? Or what a lifetime tragedy catching a sexual disease, or HIV is?

tragedy catching a sexual disease, or HIV is?

I have a great idea: How about I volunteer to demonstrate to a high school class how to change 10 dirty dispers a day, suck green snot from my sick thilds nose, give breathing treatments every three hours around the clock for seven nights straight to my three astimatic children, try to soothe my colicky baby — all day, every day for three months, plus do the 1,000 other things that go along with being the most loving, devoted parent I can be. Does it sound like I am complaining? I am not, but I am 38 years old and have four young daughters, and although my life isn't glamorous, I wouldn't tride jest's glamorous, I wouldn't tride jest's with anyone. The joy of raising children is the greatest joy on earth, but tenngers have such an unrealistic view of parenthood. If teenogers could only see the value of waiting to have sex until they are in a loving, committed, dare I say "married" relationship, especially at their young ages, when they should be looking forward to the rest of their lives. The safest sex for teenagers is and always has been no sex.

Let's work on a demonstration and

always has been no sex.

Let's work on a demonstration and promotion of that.

Carol Burke Farmington Hills

■ Effort unappreciated

I couldn't help but laugh at the editorial "Festival Needs Help to Survive."
I volunteered last year and demonstrated art work for seniors; I demonstrated cartoning for 600 klds. In the past I'd get \$25 for my troubles (It cost me \$700 for color handouts for every-

me \$700 for color handouts for every-one. I got \$15 last year, 7 lins year, I guess they'll want money from me. No thanks from anyone.

I know wealthy jewelers who'd be glad to write checks for \$20,000-\$50,000 for tax write-offs. The Farm-ington Arts Club refused these offers of money for their treasury.

ington Arta Club refused these offers of money for their treasury.

I was supposed to write guest columns for the Observers; no response. I passed out, at my own time and expense, hundreds of leaflets, informing the public of our Arts Festivals. I got bawled out for doing this. I quilt I stopped attending Arts Council meetings because no one had manners, one says hello, and no one is politic.

I wrote publicity to all the newspapers in our surrounding communities; we got torrific write-ups and attondance. I played piano for hours during interludes at the feativals. No thanks, no publicity, and no appreciation for my dedication. My kids won prizes for the yearly Police Poster Contest, no thanks to them, nor me. (From my elementary school students where I teach). Photographers came to pretend to take photos of my kids, and their outstanding corkboard artistry; not photos and no publicity for them.

When there is no self-respect, and no respect for volunteers, nor the paying public, nor storekeepers, how do you expect to build anything positive out onegative co-operation, ill-mannered persons in charge, who are paid for doing nothing? And, when the media does not give proper respect nor credit for good, honest efforts, etc., how can you build up profitable, worthwhile, entertaining projects for everyone to benefit and enjoy?

Leon I. Schoicht!

Farmington Hills

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■ Say no to gravel tax

Every year at this time, members of the Farmington Hills City Council debate whether or not to charge resi-dents of unpaved roads with dust con-trol costs or consider it a part of regu-lar maintenance and pay for it out of the road maintenance fund.

the road maintenance fund. It is not a large sum of money and the actual cost has never been an issue with residents. What is at issue for many of us, is that dust control is described as an improvement by the City, therefore enabling them to pass the cost along to residents of unpaved

roads.

Are we being penalized by choosing to live on dirt roads? Could road grading costs be passed along to us somewhere down the line? Probably not, but having to pay for three or four applications of calcium chloride each summer raises the question of what may be next?

raises are quession or mext?

Dirt roads provide an alternative choice to subdivisions. We may have n sidewalks but we do have bigger lots with more trees and roadside vegetation. Our roads ofter walkers and runners a safer choice for exercising and bring a pleasant balance to living in Farmington Hills. There is a lot to be said for living on the roads less traveled.

cled.
If you support this issue as one of simple road maintenance, please plan to attend the City Council public hearing on this issue at 7:30 p.m. Monday, March 19, in the Farmington Hills City Council Chambers, 31555 11 Mile Council Chambers, 31055 11 Mile Road, and express your opinion. Let's take this opportunity to convince Council members to repeal this unfair special assessment.

Irene Kernicky Farmington Hills

■ The Farmington Observer welcomes longer articles as guest columns.Send them 🦨 to the editor at 33411 Grand River, Farmington, Mi. 48335 or e-mail them to jhubred@oe.homecomm.net

Share your opinions

We welcome your letters to the editor. Please include your full name, address and phone number for verification. We sak that your letters be 400 words or less. We may edit for clarity, space and content.

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