

Farmington Observer

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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 customers.

Remember Mother's Day in a different way

This year, perhaps more than any other in history, it's important for us to remember how and why Mother's Day began. It's important to remember the intent of the woman who first brought it to America, Julia Ward Howe.

Because all Mrs. Howe really wanted was what most every other mother in America wants right now: peace.

A writer, poet and author of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," Mrs. Howe co-founded the New England Women's Club which eventually became the American Women Suffrage Association.

A fierce patriot and women's advocate, she also worked for the cause of peace around the world.

Saddened by the barbarism she perceived in the Franco-Prussian War, Mrs. Howe wrote the following in her reminiscences:

"The question forced itself upon me, 'Why do not the mothers of mankind interfere in these matters, to prevent the waste of that human life of which they alone bear and know the cost?'...The august dignity of motherhood and its terrible responsibilities now appeared to me in a new aspect, and I could think of no better way of expressing my sense of these than that of sending forth an appeal to womanhood throughout the world, which I then and there composed."

Her appeal called on women to "solemnly take counsel with each other as the means whereby the great human family can live in peace, and

each bearing after her own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar, but of God."

Even today, those words ring true. The mothers who gave birth to fatherless children after Sept. 11 understand all too well the terrible cost of war. The mothers whose sons have died in helicopter crashes and explosions, the mothers whose husbands have been sent to places where lives are lost in conflict

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understand.

Gold and silver star mothers, who had nothing left of the sons they lost in wars past but a banner to hang from the window, understand.

Howe's "Mother's Day" and the national observance intended by Anna Jarvis of Philadelphia have long been lost to commercialism. We're not saying you should eschew the card-buying, present-giving, take-Mom-to-dinner festivities associated with this historic holiday. Just take some time to visit the Farmington libraries to learn a little more about it all.

And just to stay in the spirit of things — take Mom along.

Businesses need help

Last week, a group of Farmington and Farmington Hills business people presented city officials with a petition that said "ENOUGH!"

These are folks who have lost more than half their business to road construction. They're angry. They're afraid.

And we don't blame them.

City officials have done a great deal to soften the blow, but the fact of the matter is, this part of the road's going to hurt. A number of businesses that were affected when the road closed south of 9

Mile last year are being hit again this year as the project boundary moves north.

What can be done? Sadly, very little. But we applaud officials for at least considering the idea of finding a way to speed up construction. The key is to keep everybody talking and looking for ways to help, ways to help promote and strengthen local businesses, the life's blood of our cities.

Do your part. Brave the construction zone. Shop locally.

Time to clear up rules on liquor licenses

Given this state's fierce loyalty to home rule, Michigan's liquor license laws are a bit of a mystery — one we believe it's time to resolve.

The problem, the local government officials say, is that a change in the law two years ago allows businesses that sell liquor to put their license into escrow when they close up shop. They can hold the license until they get back on their feet or they can sell it, to anyone within their home county.

Yes, cities have to recommend approval of the transfer — and the Liquor Control Commission relies heavily on their determinations — but what local official in his or her right mind would say no to a new business with a decent track record?

No open licenses in Livonia? Check out one of eight escrowed by businesses currently listed on the Liquor Control Commission's Web site. Interested in opening a bar in Redford Township, but can't get a new license? Ten from that area are in escrow.

And if you can't make a deal there, look elsewhere in Wayne County. Canton Township, Plymouth Township and Westland are also among areas cities that have licenses on the current escrow list, licenses that are counted against their quota.

And there's the rub. Even though the number of liquor licenses allowed in each city or township is based on population, there may actually be fewer licenses held than are allowed.

In Farmington Hills, for example, the city's growth over the past 10 years netted five additional liquor licenses. But Farmington Hills has lost six Class C liquor licenses through the escrow process.

"We don't have the number of licenses

we should have, based on our population," said City Clerk Kathryn Dornan. "The council's concern is if that's how they're going to distribute them ... something needs to be changed."

We couldn't agree more. If the state doesn't want to issue more licenses, then it should at least even the playing field by counting them fairly, allowing a license for each one lost and taking away a license for each gained.

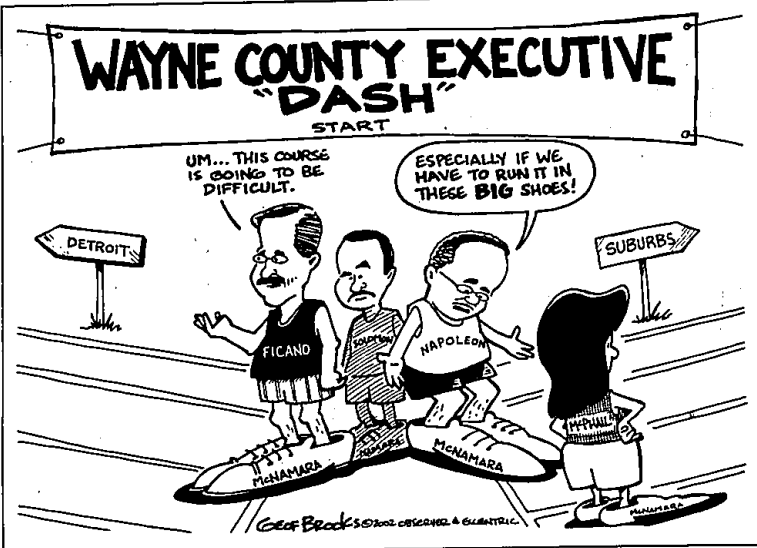
And while they're at it, maybe lawmakers ought to carefully examine how these valuable permissions are being handled in a competitive market.

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In the highly competitive restaurant business, that's the kind of hurdle some entrepreneurs won't be able to get over. And considering licenses are issued by the state without cost, turning them into a money-making venture is simply wrong.

It's time to level the playing field for cities and for business owners when it comes to liquor licenses — and give those documents the respect they deserve.



LETTERS

Shared time opinion

I have been following the articles written in your paper as well as the letters found in the church newspaper from Monsignor Hurley.

First, I was extremely upset about the lack of presentation of both sides of the issue in the Observer. I do understand that the Observer has presented the opinion of people who do not support the shared-time, however, the April 21 issue and all of the previous issues were in favor of the shared-time.

I am a former student of OLS. In my art class, we would paint pictures of religious icons and hang them up in the school. Shared time would therefore negate any religious projects in art class, and would defeat the purpose of sending our children to a Catholic school.

Religion also played a part in my music class, where we would sing church songs and songs about Christian holidays such as Christmas. At Christmas, we would sing Christmas songs about the birth of Jesus rather than the coming of Santa Claus. This was one my most favorite times at school, and to take this away from the children would be a crime.

The children will not get a Catholic education in almost half of their classes. Why spend \$3,000 a year per child when one can send them to a public school for the same education for free? Also, leaving OLS is not an option for most parents. For example, St. Fabian is full and has only a few spots open for incoming students. To me, shared time is just a way of saving a few extra pennies, and at the cost of saving money, we are cutting our children short of a Catholic education.

A final point area that needs to be addressed is the letter that Monsignor Hurley sent out to the parishioners. I was utterly and absolutely appalled by the letter. He said, "Some of the negative opinions expressed and the actions taken created a climate of suspicion and ill will rather than the Christian attitude and values we all hold dear." When he follows through with a decision of shared-time without consulting the parents of the children involved, people are going to take a firm and passionate stance.

He also said, "I have finalized a decision to move forward with a shared-time program for Our Lady of Sorrows School with an implementation date for the fall of 2003." In other words, regardless of the majority of the people against it, he is going to make his own decision.

Tuition is more than sufficient to cover the cost, Msgr. Hurley has made it clear that shared-time has worked in other schools, but he has failed to also make it clear that it has not worked in other schools, such as Guardian Angels in Clawson.

To people who are in support of shared-time, this may be a "win-win" situation financially, but to the parents and students, those who are affected, it is not.

**Kate Weiss
OLS parishioner and former
OLS student**

Shared time questions

As a taxpayer in Farmington Hills and an observer of the shared time crisis that is going on at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish, the Farmington Public School Board needs to ask them-

selves a few questions.

First: with the current climate in the Catholic church regarding sex abuse cases what liability would the FPS have if an incident were to happen over there? If I understand the issue, state funds will be used in OLS for classes supplied by the public school.

In the litigious society that we live in today, if the school board cannot say without a doubt that there would not be any liability, then you should not proceed. From newspaper reports, Monsignor Hurley was involved with some of these cases when he worked at the Archdiocese and it could be argued that he looked the other way.

Is this someone you want to do business with?

Second, half of these parents do not trust Hurley because of how he handled (and continues to handle) the issue. Do you think he will be honest in his dealings with the Farmington Public School? If he can't be honest with the very people who keep him in his lavish lifestyle, how do you expect that he will be honest with you?

Whether for or against shared-time, all parents should be outraged that he would proceed with changes to the curriculum without consulting them first. At \$3,000 per pupil, it is the very least he should be doing. I would like to see how many of the concerned parents get on a committee to "focus" on the issue. According to the parents who spoke at the two board meetings, if you don't agree with Hurley you won't get the time of day from him.

Third, how can the Farmington Public Schools go after state funds for children who are so obviously privileged when there are schools, both public and parochial that really need these dollars?

From what I can see, the OLS parents have provided beautifully for these children at the sacrifice of their tax dollars. The FPS will not, according to the board meetings, be providing these students with anything they don't already have.

How is this a win for OLS? The parents will not be getting a refund for the portion of their tuition that would cover the classes that FPS would provide.

How exactly are they going their tax dollars? The tuition is going up ten percent. The Farmington Public School and the Administration at OLS are not fooling anyone. These are not stupid parents.

The public school goes after it's much needed dollars that should go to needy school districts and OLS gets to save money for what...bailing out priests who have done unspeakable things to children? This is bad business. Look before you leap!

**Elizabeth O'Brien
Farmington Hills**

Walk facts missing

I've been reading articles about the Avon Breast Cancer 3-Day walk in the newspapers lately. There are some very important facts missing from these articles, which everyone thinking of donating to this event should know.

1. This walk event is run by a FOR-profit company, called Pallotta TeamWorks. You can download a full financial disclosure at their OTHER Web site, pallottateamworks.com (which is not linked from their bethepeople.com website, that advertises their events). 2. "MyNoodle.org" is a non-profit

resource for charity organizations that thoroughly researched Pallotta TeamWorks in January, 2002. They reported several misleading practices by Pallotta TeamWorks, including not telling donors what percentage of their donation is actually going to charity, versus to Pallotta.

3. As a for-profit company, Pallotta has forwarded only 60% of the revenues raised since 1994 to charities (for AIDS, breast cancer and child abuse charities, through various special events). Pallotta charges charities a flat fee to run events, plus receives a certain percentage of funds raised. This means Pallotta will never take a loss for a less-than-successful event, but the charities are not guaranteed any income at all.

4. If a registered participant does not raise the minimum required donations (30 percent of the participants fail to meet this minimum), they are not allowed to participate, and all donations are non-refundable.

With the issues surrounding how charities used money raised post-September 11th, the public has made it known that it is concerned about how charitable donations are being spent. Events like the Avon 3-Day do great things to raise public awareness, and raise funds to help support the cause, but it is irresponsible not to be forthcoming about who receives each dollar donated.

There are other breast cancer related charities in this area that are worth supporting (with higher percentages of dollars raised going toward the overall mission). I encourage everyone to make educated decisions about where you invest your donations.

**Jennifer Talerics
Redford**

Editor's note: In a flyer made available to the Observer by an Avon Breast Cancer walk participant, Pallotta TeamWorks discloses that on average, 60 percent of all donor dollars remain with the cause. The flyer also directs participants to the www.pallottateamworks.com Web site for a full financial disclosure.

Share your opinions

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

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