

OUR VIEWS

Hard work by police eases area's fears

We all recognize the hard work and determination displayed by Livonia police department employees in bringing some healing to a deep wound in the community caused by the mass killing of a family.

The vacations and leave time of detectives, officers and office staff were canceled after the discovery of five members of the Marco Pesce family Saturday, Dec. 21. Police officers planning to spend time with their families on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day suddenly found themselves in patrol cars on surveillance, or tracking down telephone tips that came flooding into the police station.

Officers worked around the clock and quickly arrested two people early in the week, bringing a quick end to the agony Livonia and other western suburban residents felt after hearing news of the slayings.

It was a nightmare: A father, a well-known businessman, his three small children and his mother visiting from Italy for the holidays, slain in their home four days before Christmas, that holy Christian holiday that celebrates peace, love, forgiving and generosity.

But those thoughts weren't in the minds of the persons who broke into the house, walked past the Christmas tree and presents waiting for the three Pesce children and killed the family. Greed was in their minds. They were thinking about loot, not the spirit of giving.

All were shot with handguns, and put up no resistance, even the children. And it was the thoughts of those children that helped Livonia police officers work past the bounds of physical exhaustion.

Pictures of the children were everywhere in the Livonia police station, Chief Peter Kunst told the media this past week. "They were on desks and in patrol cars," he said. The faces of the three children helped motivate officers to keep going. Officers would sometimes sleep briefly in their cars, stare at the photos and get back to work, he said.

Monetary contributions from the public to a reward fund should also be recognized. The reward was a factor in the arrests, police said. The money came from many sources, much of it from just plain folks who wanted to stay anonymous.

When there's such a crime as this just before the holidays, it makes us wonder if the spirit of Christmas is still alive. But when we look at the actions of the Livonia police and the people who donated to the reward fund, we know it's still alive.

New governor should keep an open mind

As we begin a new year, the prospects are looking a little bleak. As former President Bill Clinton constantly reminded himself, it's the economy, stupid.

Unemployment is staying stubbornly over 5 percent. The stock market continues to be shaky. Business trends aren't completely dismal but they aren't robust, either. Some area corporations are struggling to survive, notably Kmart, which seems to be stuck in another retailing era.

Local, state and federal budgets are at the breaking point.

It is hard to imagine why anyone would want to be the governor of a state, because so many of them are facing desperate budget problems because of reduced tax revenue.

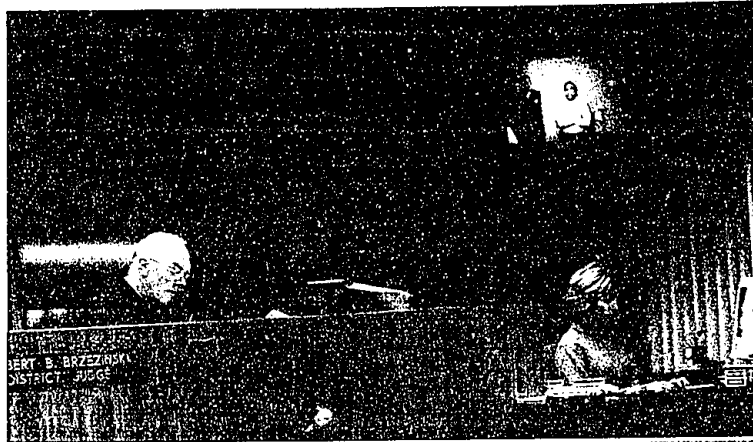
For Jennifer Granholm, the prospect for the 2004 budget year, which begins in October, is a \$1.8 billion deficit. During her campaign and in recent remarks, the new governor has said she doesn't favor slowing scheduled tax cuts or implementing any tax increases.

The alternative is cuts in programs. Where would those cuts be made - in health care (Medicaid is already in dire financial straits); in education where K-12 programs and higher education are already feeling the pinch and colleges are passing the cost along in tuition increases that penalize the middle class; in welfare where the poor have already been cut to the bone by Gov. John Engler; in community revenue sharing grants when communities are already stressed to provide for police, fire and other services?

We don't have any easy answers for area businesses or for the new governor. But we believe that no reasonable alternative, including tax increases, should be ruled out. There is a lot of waste in government, but most people benefit from government programs and they should not be penalized to avoid taxing those who can afford to pay.

The issue isn't about not increasing taxes. It's about how to implement a reasonable tax policy that provides for needed programs while not stalling an economic recovery.

We encourage the new governor and legislature to have courage and work on a solution.



Murder suspects John Wolfenbarger and Dennis Lincoln are arraigned via video before 16th District Court Judge Robert Brzezinski.

LETTERS

Mayfair clarifies

Mayfair Co-op Preschool parents and teachers were thrilled to see coverage of our Enrichment program's snowman workshop in the Dec. 15 issue of the Farmington Observer.

As a proud member of the Farmington Hills community, we applaud the Observer's ongoing efforts to inform the residents about all the city has to offer.

With that in mind, I'd like to clarify a couple of points from the story. First, Mayfair's total enrollment is 75 children, 12 of whom are in Enrichment program that was featured. The remaining 63 are spread across three other programs: Threes, Fours and Mom & Tot.

Second, Mayfair has four certified teachers on staff, with two leading each class. Because we are a co-operative preschool, parents enjoy working side by side with teachers to guide our children through their first year of school.

Thank you for the opportunity to make these details clear.

Kathy Marvin
Mayfair Co-op Preschool
Farmington Hills

adventure trip, and having to constantly be thinking about the always-changing situation, not only for you, but others in the group, is something that cannot be taught in a traditional classroom setting.

Having hands on experience and taking part in the activity will help the students who take the class, in ways that they, or their parents, will not fully understand until later in life.

Having an awareness of the outdoors is crucial in our world today, with pollution and over use of certain areas in our delicate eco-system, these students will be provided quality learning experiences, empowering them to be more mindful and respectful of our earthly home and life itself.

I challenge FHS, and the other schools in the district, to continue the Adventure Outdoor Leadership class, especially for the juniors and seniors who should have met most of the traditional education requirements completed by that level, and to provide the students with as many opportunities possible to strengthen these leadership, outdoor and life skills.

Katie Maus
FHS Class of 1999 and
Assistant Adventure Trip Leader
Miami University, Ohio

Lott not racist

Trent Lott is not racist; he is a politician that tries to please audiences and avoid controversy.

He was Senate Majority Leader earlier and voluntarily "stepped" down with liberal Democrats to "get along". Lott is criticized for trying to butter up a centurion who was a Dilectat 54 years ago.

Bob Dole never adjusted to using power as Majority Leader either; he compromised legislation rather than fight.

Newt Gingrich passed "Contract with America" bills in the House of Representatives that stalled in Dole's Senate. The media assaulted Gingrich around the clock, even as his programs brought prosperity to the nation.

Clinton claimed many as his own, Dole ran for president and Gingrich is generally perceived as "dishonest."

Bill Frist is one of many elected because of Gingrich's success in '94. Hopefully, a "leader" will now have the title and "followers" will do what their personalities permit.

How long before the media assaults begin?

Hank Borman
Farmington

Supports outdoor class

I am writing to express my enthusiasm, excitement and support for the Adventure Outdoor Leadership class at FHS.

Being a graduate of FHS (class of '99), I had minimal interaction with the outdoor adventure area. That is, until I began my studies at Miami University and was trained, educated and now lead adventure trips for their Outdoor Pursuit Center.

Gaining leadership skills in connection with outdoor activities, gives the students something in which to have a sense of accomplishment. In addition, the skills learned support life lessons and encourage creative thinking.

Being in the backcountry, or on a kayak

as the one we sported, and fighting the same enemy, for the same Country, as we were.

Some time later I thought about the "teaching" I might have accomplished. Not so strange, I came home from battle and taught in high schools and colleges for 46 years after the War. There wasn't really any cause and effect, but my teaching was a happy circumstance after the War. It was of importance to me that my thoughts during the War entertained the idea that our society would experience considerable integration after the war's end, that the Armed Services would be integrated.

Such was one circumstance and an important story I remember, and it seems today that the changes made at home after the War could have been predicted and expected. The character of the man is most important, even more meaningful than Martin King managed to express and believe.

Neil Goodbred
Livonia

Media blackout?

In the recent November election, I chose to become an independent write-in candidate for Oakland County Commissioner.

I sent 18 press releases to the area newspapers, radio and TV stations. Not one of these releases produced a response. I was not called or questioned by any of them. Nothing appeared in the media.

I was an editor of my home school newspaper having taken journalism classes in high school. We were taught that the media has a responsibility to report the news. The responsibility extends to reporting the news objectively and that includes the important issue of presenting all candidates in an election.

I do not see this done in our county any longer and I am once more reminded at the ease with which we lose our freedom of information and therefore freedom of choice.

Elaine Cooper
Farmington Hills

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.

Mail:
Letters to the editor
Farmington Observer
3341 Grand River
Farmington, MI 48335

Fax:
(248) 477-9722

E-mail:
jhutted30e@homecomm.net

QUOTABLE

"It has been a fantastic year. We're sitting here in December excited about coming back in January."

— Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber President Carleigh Flaherty

FARMINGTON Observer

Part of HomeTown Communications Network™

Jon Hubred
Community Editor

Todd Williams
Director of Advertising

Hugh Gallagher
Managing Editor

Peter Neill
General Manager

Susan Rosiek
Executive Editor

Dick Aglinin
President

Jeanne Towar
V.P. Editorial

Phil Power
Chairman of the Board

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.