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## Here's to all the regular guys

A friend of mine died last week. He was 44 years old, which is too young. I say that in part because I'm 44 years old and in part because his wife is even younger, and his daughter should have had her daddy around more years than this. We all said it, everyone I've talked to in the handful of days since his death. Said it and meant it, as never before.

It's not fair. We don't take care of ourselves. Some of us smoke, some drink too much, others will admit to being overweight. We work too hard and don't exercise nearly enough.

Why him and not us? Why not me? My children are 21 and 23. They still need me, but not the way they did 15 years ago. They needed my arms around them, my stern voice and the kind of unconditional love only a parent can impart with nothing more than a smile or a few words of praise.

My friend died, and it's just not fair. He would have been the first to say his life wasn't anything special, even though it had special moments. Last December, his sister gave him a kidney; not only did he sail through the operation, he bought a shiny, red Mustang convertible to celebrate. Too often, it sat in the parking lot at his office on a Saturday afternoon while he worked at his desk — probably thinking he'd have plenty of time to take long rides with the top down, plenty of time to tuck his daughter into the back seat, properly belted, and drive to the Dairy Queen.

His cancer was diagnosed in November. He had less than 10 weeks to live before he knew he was dying. We all believe we have plenty of time.

A woman he mentored will say goodbye with few regrets, because she remembered to tell him how he changed her life. She made me wish I'd told him just once how much I admired him, and all the Regular Guys of this world.

Regular Guys do a full day's work, whether or not they believe they're getting a full day's pay.

Regular Guys take their children out to play, and not just in the back yard.

Regular Guys consider family obligations the most important, and govern themselves accordingly. They are faithful and kind to their life-mates, because that's how you behave with someone you love.

Regular Guys believe in a Higher Power, and they're not afraid to talk about what they believe. They're humble, because they know they aren't the center of the universe.

Regular Guys take on leadership roles, because they know somebody has to and it might as well be them.

Regular Guys know a partnership means contributing more than you think you're going to get back, because you almost always underestimate the return on investments.

Regular Guys can be counted on to be where they say they're going to be, usually on time.

Regular Guys have big hearts, but don't always like people to know just how big. They're never too macho to

# 9-1-1

## St. Fabian kids learn dialing for help isn't the same on cell



Students at St. Fabian learned recently how to make emergency calls on a cell phone.

First-graders at St. Fabian School in Farmington Hills know what to do in case of an emergency. And now, they'll be as likely to grab a cell phone as a land line.

Verizon Wireless recently gave its first demonstration for Oakland County children to classes taught by Vicky Donovan and Ann Eroyan. "This is an important issue," Donovan said.

Many children are not familiar with some of the differences between dialing 9-1-1 on the two types of phones, said Tom Huber, a public relations representative with the Marx Layne public relations firm.

Verizon Wireless is filling that gap with the help of area police departments. "Verizon Wireless is working with local police departments to educate children on the proper use of wireless phones in emergency situations and point out such intricacies like turning a wireless phone on before it

will work, not hearing a dial tone and pressing send to dial the number," Huber said.

### NECESSARY SKILLS

Each day nearly 156,000 calls are placed to 9-1-1 from wireless phones, saving lives, stopping crime and giving heroic support in emergency situations, he said.

"Children need to know these skills in order to help," Huber said. Officer Sandie Rochford of the Farmington Hills Police Department and Michelle Gilbert, Verizon public relations manager, spoke to the children.

They also provided a letter to parents about their demonstration.

"If you pass the wrong button and nothing happens, all you have to do is start over," Gilbert explained.

She gave each student a non-working wireless phone and an instruction card for parents to assist

in practicing the proper way to contact 9-1-1 in emergencies.

"If you have a wireless phone, we suggest you demonstrate the same steps on it as well, in order to familiarize your child with the phone they might have to use in an emergency," she said.

"The instructional card is tailored for you to personalize the directions for your specific phone." Gilbert and Rochford stressed that the phone has to be turned on, and there is never a dial tone when the phone is on.

After dialing the number, a specific button must be pressed for the call to begin and instead of hanging up when finished talking, a specific button must be pressed to turn the phone off.

"It was awesome, all the codes and what they showed," student Connor Byrne said.

BY SUE DUCK ■ STAFF WRITER

### CELL, REGULAR

#### PRONE DIFFERENCES

Remind your children of these differences between cell and regular phones:

- The phone has to be turned on.
- There is no dial tone on a cell phone.
- If you make a mistake while dialing the number, you can start all over again.
- After dialing the number, a "Send" button must be pressed in order for the call to go through.
- When the call is finished, another button is pressed to end the call.

## Farmington area tied to Ford's hopes for aviation

In 2003, the world of aviation celebrates its centennial year, and locally, aviation is part of Farmington history.

On Orchard Lake Road, south of the current 13 Mile Road, Farmington Township had an airport called Kris Port.

Today, the terminal is a garage, Auto Solutions. The hangars are businesses, and the runways are Westbrook subdivisions.

Kris Port, built by Chris Kristiansen, was established in the 1930s, probably 1936 or 1937, some 30 years after the first flight of a machine from a flat surface was accomplished Dec. 17, 1903.

While gliders and balloons had flown before then, Orville and Wilbur Wright's historic flight at Kitty Hawk, N.C. made aviation a reality.

### THE WRIGHT WAY

The Wright brothers, who ran a bicycle shop, were self-



Ruth  
Moehman

taught engineers who established an industry. Defining how the new technology was to be used led to some interesting experiments.

As the planes developed, various adventures offered airplane rides.

Others performed almost circus-like stunts in mid-air.

Before he became famous, Charles Lindbergh and his wife and other aviation pioneers participated in airplane stunts. Lindbergh, who grew up in Detroit, was the first to cross the Atlantic Ocean in a solo flight.

The small planes could land in almost any cow pasture and



the Kris Port area was not the only local field used as an airport offering rides and entertainment. One private air field was reputed to have been near Northwestern Highway. Another near the Botsford Inn on Grand River.

### FLIWER HOPES

Henry Ford I experimented with aircraft and worked on a flier that would be equivalent to the Model T car transporta-

tion on the ground. People could have a plane in the garage similar to a car in the garage.

When Ford's test pilot Harry Brooks crashed in the Atlantic Ocean, this experiment was halted. The crash was caused by a blocked fuel line.

(Brooks also had a local connection; he grew up in Southfield.)

Ford is said to have smashed one remaining flier and kept the other for his Greenfield Village museum.

Henry Ford was not out of the airplane business forever. He felt fliers for home use were too dangerous to be used like the automobile.

He later built Ford airplanes and also constructed an airfield in Dearborn with a hotel for travelers.

The idea of a plane for every household, however, didn't work out.

It was planned to have households around the airport with airplane hangars and industries

along Orchard Lake Road. The businesses would also have their own airplanes.

Many people who owned their own planes did use the airport. For example, Pat Majidi of West Bloomfield recalled that her grandfather, Dr. Arthur Erickson, who practiced medicine in Redford and lived in Farmington, often met friends at Kris Port.

They flew to Toledo for lunch.

By 1939 the helicopter was invented, which was another flying prospect for individual use.

The use of aircraft in wars is another story. However, as all things in history, there is a local connection.

A glass lookout was built on the Kris Port terminal during World War II for civil defense. There volunteers kept watch for enemy planes that fortunately never came.

Ruth Moehman is a Farmington Hills resident and local historian.