

OUR VIEWS

A little love could make a difference

The Beatles sang "love is all you need," and we all know that's not entirely true. However, on this Valentine's Day Eve, we believe a little love could help resolve a couple of local issues:

■ At the top of our list is the shared time controversy at Our Lady of Sorrows parish. We understand the frustration of parents who don't want public school teachers in their private school classrooms. These people are paying more than \$3,000 a year to give their children an education that's infused with religious principles.

What we don't understand is why those parents have chosen to attack Monsignor Walter Hurley and why Hurley seems equally hard on those parents. This isn't just about shared time; it's a serious rift between church leadership and parishioners, one that deserves more of everyone's attention than shared time is getting.

Before the next round begins, perhaps everyone should take a moment to ask themselves what their own behavior is teaching children about Christian love and respect.

■ The relationship between Farmington Hills city officials and Mark Gordanier could best be described as "strained," and it exploded again at a Monday night study session.

We won't go into the wisdom of holding study sessions to address laundry lists of citizen complaints, which sets an interesting precedent.

We won't hammer Mayor Nancy Bates for losing her temper or Gordanier for yelling and storming out of the meeting, leaving behind the opportunity for the kind of dialogue he claims won't ever happen.

Gordanier maintains city officials are arrogant and refuse to face the truth. However, accusing, arguing and stomping out of a meeting won't help achieve his goals either.

In this case, we suggest both sides consider the kind of love that saves marriages and heals broken family ties, a love that includes forgiveness, acceptance of differences and understanding, a love that sets aside past wrongs and works toward a better future.

Love can't make the past disappear. It won't eliminate tensions at Our Lady of Sorrows or magically transform the relationship between Gordanier and city officials.

But where's the harm in trying?

Granholtm offers a bipartisan challenge

Gov. Jennifer Granholtm made no attempt to sugar coat a bad situation.

She has inherited a budget disaster. This year's state budget will fall \$285 million short, including a constitutionally mandated cut of \$127 million in school aid. She has asked the legislature to pass an executive order to cut \$158 million from the general fund.

But things will only get worse. The projected budget deficit for the 2004 budget which begins in October is \$1.7 billion.

In her State of the State address, the governor told state lawmakers and citizens that as required by law she would present a balanced budget proposal March 1.

"Though I did not cause this problem, I will see that we fix it," she said.

The Democratic governor has to work her budget through a Republican-dominated legislature.

Last week, she paid the legislators a compliment that was also a challenge: "Together, we will have to work hard. We have to innovate, and we will have to act as one community - especially here in this building. I applaud the Republican leadership of Sen. (Ken) Sikkenma and Speaker (Rick) Johnson for their willingness to work with this Democrat and Michigan's Democrats, to move beyond partisanship, faction, friction and ego to achieve common ground. We were elected as Democrats and Republicans, but we serve as Michiganders and Americans."

The governor has already adopted a Republican "no new taxes" position and has even opposed delaying tax cuts scheduled for this year. She proposes instead, as Republicans have often done, to do more with less, to draw on the private sector for help, to encourage volunteer programs and squeeze every bit of waste from government operations.

While laying it on the line about the budget, Granholtm asked us to dream of all the good things the state can accomplish with the money it has. Her emphasis on developing core industries, early childhood education and a serious study of land use are commendable first steps toward meaningful government programs.

Her plans to blend private initiative with streamlined government programs should stimulate true bipartisan programs.



State Rep. Aldo Vagnozzi (D-Farmington) hasn't wasted any time pushing forward the agenda he promoted in last fall's election. A few weeks ago, he participated in a press conference about Canadian trash; this week, he touted a plan to purchase prescription drugs in bulk, reducing costs for seniors.

LETTERS

Problem resolved

I thought it only fair to let you know that as of Feb. 8, the problem referenced in my previous letter (help receiving unemployment benefits) is resolved. Resolution was reached, in part, due to the efforts of Aldo Vagnozzi's office.

Connie Rice
Farmington Hills

Let Bush act

World War II was a "good war" because it ended with "unconditional Surrender." In Korea, we settled for an armistice 50 years ago. North Korean citizens remained slaves under communist tyrants and grandchildren of our fallen soldiers will probably need to finish that war.

In Vietnam, our warriors were forbidden to invade North Vietnam and win. The Viet Cong picked their targets, assassinating potential leaders and their families. In the United States, protests replaced patriotism. Casualties mounted, America withdrew and that area of the world achieved neither peace nor prosperity.

The Twin Tower attack united the Free World for a few months when protesters crawled out once again.

Throughout history, mass demonstrations produced poor results. The French Revolution overthrew royalty and got Napoleon. Russians traded Czars for Lenin and Stalin. The Nazis resurrected Germany's pride and prosperity for a while. The Boston Tea Party turned out well, but not without casualties. Most city riots began as protests but communities like Detroit never fully recovered.

Television and newspaper coverage emboldens crowds seeking their moment in the spotlight. President Bush is not an idiot as these mobs say, but the leader of the Free World.

America: "Stand beside her and guide her" or step aside and permit him to do what he promised after September 11. There will be more peace in the world if Jane Fonda and her ilk remain quiet.

Hank Borgman
Farmington Hills

Diversify U-M's faculty

Phil Power in his column of Jan. 23 defends the University of Michigan's law school admission policy and claims that President Bush is disingenuous in his charge that it is quotas.

There is merit in a diverse body but it is how you get there that is the issue. U of M awards points for minorities in its admission process to assure a certain minimum number of minorities. If this process did not achieve the minimum they desire they would change the points. That sounds like a quota to me.

Speaking of disingenuous, the university did not come up with the diverse student body idea until affirmative action was disallowed.

I would submit that a diverse faculty is even more important than a diverse student body. Yet U of M like most prestigious schools has a definite liberal if not left wing faculty.

Talk about a disadvantaged minority, it is conservative faculty members. However, I don't see a big campaign to recruit more of that minority.

Jim Collins
Farmington Hills

A dog's story

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the people who assisted me this past week in bringing my dog Angie home.

On the night of Tuesday, Jan. 28 my Shetland sheepdog Angie disappeared into the night. The temperatures were in the single digits and I could only hope that my little dog had found a warm place to be.

My first thank you goes to the officers of the Farmington Hills Police Department who tried to catch Angie on Pilsbury street around 4 a.m. I talked with the police at 5 a.m. and they relayed the news of the sighting to me.

On Wednesday and Thursday, I put up fliers around the area; finally on Friday, I received my first call. A special thanks to the wonderful couple on Power Road who told me that Angie was still alive and heading towards the subdivisions near 11 Mile/Farmington Road.

My thanks to all the people who live on Pilsbury Street; the lady in the red minivan who looked for Angie... (and) the lady with the cheese who kept a close watch at her end of the street.

Thank you to my best friend Tina, who not only searched through the streets in her van, but I do believe that all of her prayers had a lot to do with Angie's fate. I also need to say thank you to the people on Biddestone.

Thank you to the man on Hunter's Row in Quaker Valley who spotted Angie (on Saturday morning) deep in the ravine. He guided my daughter and myself right to Angie but my little dog was in such a state of shock that she did not even recognize us and she bolted from our grasp.

My husband dropped me off on Farmington Road across from Biddestone so that I could watch the road. Once again my phone rang...Angie was seen crossing I-696 and heading westbound along the fence. As I was on the phone with the caller somehow he and my husband crossed paths and the man on the phone turned into a very concerned couple in a green SUV who escorted my husband and daughters to Angie. I, however, was still running down Farmington Road towards 12 Mile dreading the worst.

When it seemed that all hope was lost, out of nowhere a car pulled over on Farmington Road and offered me a ride.

A very special thank you to my guardian angel in the plum colored car. You did not hesitate to drive from parking lot to parking lot in search of my Angie. Thank you so very much.

After a very exhausting four days of searching, I am very happy to be able to say that Angie is safe at home. Overall she is in good condition and is recovering nicely.

There were many other concerned neighbors out there who took the time to call me with a sighting of my dog. Without all of your help I would not have such a happy ending to this story.

Nancy Gumpster
Farmington Hills

Shared time questions

Regarding OLS school and the shared time programs with Farmington Public Schools, I'm not sure why so many of your letter writers feel the need to attack Monsignor Hurley and the Catholic Church.

Shouldn't the discussion center on what's best for children? Both of our children attended all eight years at OLS school, and they received an excellent academic education. They did not, however, benefit from the art, gym, technology, and music programs at the school. Some years those programs didn't exist, and other years the programs were weak at best.

I have taught in the Farmington Public School district for over 10 years. There is no doubt that FPS has some of the finest art, music, physical education, and music programs of any school district in Michigan. Why not encourage OLS school to take advantage of these programs to benefit its students?

I'm not sure how keeping public school teachers and programs out of a parochial school strengthens the school or its curricula. I certainly don't buy the illogical argument that it would weaken the Christian atmosphere of the school.

Parochial school parents often complain that they aren't receiving anything for their public school tax dollars. This, of course, is not true. Any member of this community benefits from the quality of our public school system.

Here is a chance for parochial school families to take advantage of the outstanding programs in our community's public school system, yet it seems many would rather take this opportunity to attack Monsignor's character and the philosophies of the Catholic Church.

The focus should be placed on the ways in which the shared time program benefits OLS students.

Mary Leyman
Farmington

Free speech

The Constitution says that Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech.

The Cummins Corollary says that no city council should infringe on the size, type or number of political signs people put in their front yards during election season.

Christopher M. Cummins
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.

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QUOTABLE

"I'm not going to sit here and listen to this."

— Mark Gordanier, during Monday night's City Council study session

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