

Opinion

EDITORIALS ■ LETTERS ■ COLUMNS

OUR VIEWS

Have an opinion? Share it with us

In times of peace and harmony, our letters files are never empty.

The Farmington Observer is fortunate to have many involved and passionate readers who feel comfortable sharing their opinions with our readers. We're also blessed to have contributions from a group who call themselves "The Grumpies," folks who regularly share their views on a variety of local, state and national issues.

Over the past few weeks, as issues like the Mercy High auction and Our Lady of Sorrows shared time have heated up, letters to the editor have more than doubled in volume. On the Mercy issue, we've gotten mail from as far away as Ann Arbor and White Lake Township. And shared time — even though Farmington school board has put that issue to rest, we doubt we've heard the last from parishioners about the decision to place public school teachers in private school classrooms.

On these pages, everyone has the opportunity to share an opinion, even people with views some readers may consider extreme or hateful. We do exercise common sense and reason — threats of violence, libel, racial slurs and foul language won't survive the editor's pen. But these pages are for everyone, not just those whose opinions are palatable or easy to understand.

There are some rules we feel are important to reiterate. First and foremost, every submission is subject to editing. That gives our editor something to do on Mondays and helps ensure more space for everyone, because no one writer is monopolizing the entire "Letters" column.

We suggest a length of no more than 400 words for letters; 800-900 words for longer Op/Ed columns. If you submit a longer item, please contact us first about the subject matter and to arrange for a photo that must accompany your submission. Op/Ed space is limited; your best bet is to write a shorter letter.

You must include your name, address and phone number for our records. We don't publish anonymous letters. We don't even look at anonymous letters.

As our nation prepares for war and a state faces a budget crisis looms, as local officials tighten their belts, let us know what you're thinking.

Criticize what we write. Tell your elected officials how they're doing. Suggest ideas for improvement and change. We're listening.

Bottle bill must be expanded, defended

Michigan's bottle bill should be expanded, not overturned. That's the message to our local legislators as they consider revising the 25-year-old bill.

We're aware of the criticisms surrounding plans to expand deposits to plastic water bottles and glass juice bottles, both currently exempt from the state's bottle bill.

Those criticisms, proffered by wholesalers and retailers and taken up by some legislators, go like this:

Expanding the bottle bill will prove costly, both to consumers and merchants; adding water and juice bottles to the bill will prove a nightmare for retailers, given the number of manufacturers involved; expansion is not needed due to recycling efforts currently under way.

By all accounts, though, the bottle bill is Michigan's single most effective recycling program and by far its most popular.

If there's any barrier to recycling, it's in consumer confusion over just which items should be returned, which recycled and which thrown out as trash.

Even though a good number of our communities have had recycling programs in place for many years, most residents will tell you they're still not sure just which items fit in which category.

Yet, everyone knows what to do with empty pop bottles and beer cans.

By reducing a major source of litter, the bottle bill has also helped make Michigan roadways and trails even more scenic — a major selling point of the original bill and a big issue in state whose economy is so heavily dependent on tourism.

It's true that Michigan residents do pay more, at least initially, for a 12-pack of beverages. Yet it's a price consumers have paid, without complaint, for a quarter century.

Twenty-five years ago, Michigan took a major step forward in passing its bottle bill.

Of course, it was voters who led the way. Expanding the bottle bill is the next logical step, if our legislators lack the will to do so, they should at least let the voters again have their say and lead the way.



Durckel Middle School students honored Henry Wadsworth Longfellow with a rendition of "Happy Birthday" during a weeklong celebration of the poet's work last month. Hats off to teachers Jerry Morrissey, Ninette Soares and Steven Koponen — just three of many outstanding Farmington Schools teachers who work tirelessly to make education both entertaining and effective.

LETTERS

Tired of Gordanier

Do we really need another article about Mr. Gordanier? It's bad enough that our fine community must endure his never-ending disrespect toward our elected officials and civil servants. Must we really be informed of his every move?

With all due respect, I believe that Mr. Gordanier simply likes to hear himself speak and gain publicity. And your regular articles about him just feed his ego.

This man is a disgrace to our community. He is negative, arrogant, rude, and continually makes a fool of himself in public. He presents no positive or constructive ideas. He has been whining for years, with no apparent sympathy or support. Perhaps it is time that he realizes that Farmington Hills may not be the right place for him to reside. I for one, am sick of him. And sick of reading about him.

B. Wood
Farmington Hills

School dates wrong

Your usual lack of attention to detail never ceases to amaze me. Today's case in point refers to Paul Pace's article regarding the roads in Colony Park West leading to Wooddale Elementary School in Farmington Hills (2-16-03).

When we purchased our home in Kendallwood 1 Subdivision in 1977, the people from whom we purchased were moving to their new home in Colony Park West. This pre-dates the year 1992, as mentioned in your article by 15 years. At that point, Wooddale School had been a well-established entity in our community.

I think it would be commendable for you to mention that the homeowners in the Wooddale School District should feel fortunate to have their home values raised by far more than the \$2,533 road assessment due to their proximity to an award-winning elementary school such as Wooddale Elementary.

Mike Harrison
Farmington

Harrison is a Farmington City Council member.

Why acquiesce?

It is difficult to understand why the City of Farmington Hills acquiesced in allowing the construction of two office buildings on the south corners of Farmington Road and 14 Mile.

A Feb. 16 Observer article ("Consent Judgement Angers Neighbors") states that the city did not purchase the land as a right-of-way as the cost was too high. I am puzzled as to why the city opted not to condemn the land which would have allowed them to purchase it at fair market value.

Instead, we, the taxpayers, will end up paying at least 10 times that cost to condemn the same property (value of land and structures) and demolish both buildings when the intersection is converted into a round-about through a future county road project expansion program.

Daniel G. Dublin
Farmington Hills

Thanks, USPS!

Last Monday I inadvertently included my latest automobile registration in a group of letters that I placed in a mail drop box off of Orchard Street in downtown Farmington.

As it was Tuesday before I discovered my error, I more or less said goodbye to that document. Where it could be in the system by this time was anybody's guess.

Imagine my surprise and pleasure when in Thursday's mail I received an envelope from the postal department containing the registration. It was a bit the worse for wear, being undersize (it apparently jammed the sorting machinery). An attentive employee apparently recognized the document and took the time to return it to me.

For that I thank the unknown postal employee. I hope that the letter that I wrote to the Farmington Area Postmaster will work its way back to the employee that I wish to thank, or hopefully he or she reads the Observer and will receive my thanks. We are so prone to throw blame, here is a case when we should bestow our thanks. Probably just part of the job but a great service to me.

Again, my sincere thanks to the Postal Department for a small moment of kindness.

Dick Cervell
Farmington

Celebs aren't credible

With the preponderance of Hollywood "celebrities" suddenly becoming experts on what should be done in response to a tyrannical dictator, are these people credible?

Do they attend the top level briefings? Are they provided top secret information? Do they have expertise in matters of national security? No, to all the above.

Let's not forget that these people make a living pretending they are someone that they're not. Most are actors. Yet the press gives them the status and exposure of a government expert.

What are their motives? Is it to undermine our President and our national security in favor of their own liberal agenda? I am still waiting for the like of Alec Baldwin, Barbra Streisand and others to leave the country if George Bush was elected. They are still here, right? If they can't follow through on a simple promise like that, can we put any trust in anything else they say?

This is a time when all Americans need to stand united and not be the poster child for the Baghdad media.

Bill Smith
Farmington Hills

No solution

I know you don't necessarily agree with the project at 14 Mile Farmington, but to simply throw up your hands and say that it's zoning rules and not question any setback provisions on major roads offers no solution to this problem.

Regarding "Office space comes at premium in Farmington Hills", if you just look across the street from these two buildings, you'll see a not uncommon sight in Farmington Hills and elsewhere in front of commercial property over the

last couple of years — FOR LEASE. Do we really need this?

Mark Briolat
Farmington Hills

Shared time answer

We are parishioners who have used both the public schools and Our Lady of Sorrows School for our four children.

In all the (shared time) discussions lately, it appears that the crux of the issue has been forgotten. No one at Our Lady of Sorrows questions the quality of education from Farmington Public Schools. The issue is that we have chosen Catholic schools for our children because of the freedom of religious education and the total atmosphere of religious speech, activities and attitudes available in Catholic schools.

In music, art, and gym classes, we want our children to continue to have the freedom to express their religion; if the crucifix is not allowed, it is doubtful that our children would be allowed the freedom to bring their religion into art, music or gym either.

We think that the answer is a simple one which should please all parties concerned. Come into our classrooms, but continue to allow us the freedom to express our religion. Leave the crucifixes alone. Leave the expression of religion — on the part of our children alone.

Recent decisions in the courts have allowed Bible Study groups to use public classroom space. The mindset across the nation has become aware that to totally separate Church and State is to deny the freedom of religious expression which is guaranteed by the constitution. There is widening recognition that religion has its place and we have the right to express it.

Pat and Dan Hagemann
Farmington Hills

Seeking Ashcroft's

My father's brother, known as James W. Ashcroft, lived in Farmington and died there in 1971.

I understand that he had two sons, Gerry and Ronald, who would be my cousins. I would like to find and contact the sons or their families.

John Alcock
jalcock@bigpond.net.au
Canberra, Australia

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
3340 Grand River
Farmington, MI 48335

Fax:
(248) 477-9722

E-mail:
jhured@ne.hometownliffr.com

QUOTABLE

"Self-help transcends to helping your neighbors. You should get to know who they are and know them better."

— Donald Millington, Historic Haisted Homeowners Association

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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.