



Chatroom

Dr. Paul Melrose

## Saying goodbye to a neighbor

Two weeks ago someone I did consider my neighbor died.

Mr. Rogers came into our home when our children were 1 and 3. He remained an infrequent but always comforting visitor until he died. In some ways, as a pastor and a pastoral psychotherapist I can see that friend was for me a spiritual and clinical mentor. The ideas that he shared with children are ideas that people come to a therapist and pastor seeking some help with.

First off, Mr. Rogers always told kids they were special. Each one of you, he would say, not because of what you are on the outside, but who you are on the inside. The circumstances in which you grow up have nothing to do with who you are inside. So, when a viewer reflected on being with Mr. Rogers, he said that when he was physically and sexually abused he retreated to a closet.

There, in that closet, was a TV. In that closet he told of how much it meant to see Mr. Rogers on TV telling him that you are special, because it is who you are on the inside that counts.

Mr. Rogers told kids that they should love themselves and love their neighbors. As a Presbyterian minister, he could take both Hebrew Scripture and Christian Scripture and put it out there for all kids. Love yourself because you are special and give the gift of that love to your neighbor.

Is that just make-believe or can it happen? The trips on the trolley from his living room to the Land of Make-Believe makes me think that Mr. Rogers thought that that kind of love was possible.

He helped parents to get a handle on how they could help kids with feeling good about themselves. Kids mimic their parents, he always said. So, take responsibility to give your kids the kind of life that you want for them.

That is hard work. That means we may have to think a little more about what we do or what we say. But that is how Mr. Rogers started his TV ministry, as it really was.

He once, as a young man, saw a show in which kids were throwing pies at one another and doing a lot of slapstick. He was offended that kids could be treated with such disrespect, though it might seem pretty mild by today's standards.

So, he set about his "Call" to show kids and kids of all ages a place where respect was the way people treated one another. For respect not only helps one to feel loved, but also helps one to feel special and valued for just who they are.

Mr. Rogers gave me some simple words and explanations for life and the way people grow and change, which I find myself sharing with the people I see professionally. I hope that you may find these ideas a support to you in your own specialness as you treat yourself with love and respect and give those gifts to those whom you love.

But Mr. Rogers went one step further. To him the neighborhood had no geographic limit, no limit of any kind.

So through your prayers and your public actions and behaviors, he would like you to share those gifts of respect and love for all of your neighbors, regardless of their condition of life and regardless of whether they are near or far.

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Jacqueline Vier, Kaitlyn Hahn and Rachel Hartman are the Pedalites, backup singers for the Mydols, who are lead singer Kara Rasmussen, Judy Danilets on guitar, drummer Pat McGough and on bass, Paige Gilbert.

## Page's, Novi woman win Chili Cook-off; successful benefit for Hills PD's K-9 unit

BY PAUL R. PAGE  
STAFF WRITER

Pat Miller started out with 12 different chili recipes. After careful consideration, he singled out his top five and went back for seconds on just those choices.

"It was tough," he said of picking a favorite.

He and other judges, including U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg, had the difficult job of picking the best chili at the eighth annual Farmington/Farmington Hills Chili Cook-off at Page's restaurant Sunday. Proceeds benefited the Farmington Hills Police Department's K-9 Unit.

The 19th contest spot (No. 6 failed to show) turned out to be a lucky number for Skip Tuck of Novi who won the judge's award with her flavorful chicken and white bean chili.

Tuck and her friends heard about the contest, and she thought she'd give it a try on Sunday. She said she only had the recipe for two weeks. It came from her daughter-in-law in Traverse City.

"She's going to love that it won," Tuck said.

Page's chef Richie Serna won the People's Choice award.

"It's Richie's Good as Gold Chili," Serna said of his new recipe. "I tried different techniques and new ingredients and I had the owner taste it before it went out."

Both winners received plaques for their best recipes.



Patrick Watts watches the judging. Judge Pat Miller looks like he's examining a chili sample, but he's really looking for the number used for judging purposes.

Miss Farmington Kelly Zander was master of ceremonies for the event and throughout the day announced raffle ticket winners.

The all-mom band the Mydols provided music, while a capacity crowd enjoyed the assortment of different chilis.

"This is the highest grossing fund-raiser we've ever had in all eight years," Zander said.

With the help of Dennis Page's donation of \$300, the total money raised for the Farmington Hills Police Department's K-9 unit was \$877.50.

Farmington Hills police were at the event handing gifts to children. K-9 Kasper and his handler, Jim Kase, were also on hand to greet the people who came out to donate to the cause.

The funds will go towards Kasper's care and training, police said.

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Chili Judge Dr. Jeff Pierce and daughter Sydney choose a few more chilis to sample.

## Controversial buildings sit on former N. Farmington site

Two controversial buildings looming over the intersection of Farmington Road and 14 Mile are currently under construction. They are on the location of what once was the center of a little village.

In the Farmington area's early days, small villages grew instead of shopping centers. This little village was called North Farmington and was on early maps of the area.

The unincorporated village existed from about 1850 until the last building at that location fell in 1970. North Farmington was in both Farmington and West Bloomfield Townships.

The main street of the village extended from 13 Mile to 14 Mile and was on the Orchard Lake Trail. A tree grew right in the middle of the intersection of 13 Mile and Farmington Road.

Early trails were never straight lines. Trails followed the contour of the land. The Orchard Lake Trail went all the way from Westland to Orchard Lake then on to Pontiac, the county seat. The Orchard Lake Trail

crossed today's Grand River at the current Farmington Road. It took a turn at Shawwassee, eventually reaching North Farmington when it was a straight road for a mile and then again went at an angle up what is today Orchard Lake Road.

Thus when the Orchard Lake Trail reached 13 Mile, it became part of Farmington Road and the main street of the little village of North Farmington.

North Farmington had its own post office. An early settler, Chauncey Wolcott, had a store at 13 Mile and Farmington Road. In the store, Wolcott had the first North Farmington Post Office.

The last North Farmington Post Office was in West Bloomfield. After numerous moves, it landed at the home of Theodore Armstrong in West Bloomfield. Next, it was located in a store on the north side of 14 Mile on the east side of Farmington Road.

When rural mail delivery came in 1896, small post offices all over the United States closed. North Farmington lost its post office Sept. 15, 1902, but the village continued to exist.

### N. FARMINGTON CEMETERY

As early as 1837, the North Farmington Cemetery was incorporated. This is the last remaining feature of the North Farmington village on the main village street. The



cemetery is a Farmington Hills historic site.

There were various stores at different times in the village and various services.

After the Civil War, Farmington Township farmers went into dairy farming. At first, the milk was turned into cheese. In 1872, the Spring Brook Cheese Factory on Drake Road manufactured cheese from April to November. It was one of the cheese factories in which Fred Warner had an interest.

The Warner family were Farmington pioneers, active in business and civic affairs. Fred Warner served as Michigan Governor 1905 to 1911.

for distribution as milk rather than converted to cheese.

There was a school in the village, the Nichols School. It was a one room school where children attended from grades one to eight.

Before 1944, the school was run by a local school board that hired its own teacher. Many North Farmington social events took place in the school.

The Christmas pageant was a popular event. Mothers brought refreshments and the whole community came.

In summer the North Farmington Cemetery Association held a fund-raising picnic. The local ladies made picnic lunches and the men bid on the lunches. The proceeds supported the cemetery and the men would eat lunch with the lady who made it.

### SHOPPING AROUND

By the turn of the century there were two stores on the corner of Farmington Road and 14 Mile. One on the east side and one on the west. Over the store on the west side of the road, run by Shorty Wolcott, was a pool hall. There only men could play. No women or children were allowed.

In North Farmington were two blacksmiths. One was Carry Coe on the east side of Farmington Road. In later years, a little cement block factory took the blacksmith

shop's place.

On the west side, the blacksmith was Tom Tracy. He had a threshing machine used at harvest time. He also owned a saw mill near the present Orchard Lake Road and 14 Mile.

This mill was probably run by an engine rather than water power, although an underground river still runs through that location.

A larger grocery store, with living quarters for the family on the second floor, was on the west side of Orchard Lake road where Northwestern Highway ends. It was owned by the Pioneer Sprague family. That building has recently been demolished after serving many uses including as an antique shop and flower shop until the last decade of the 20th century.

An even larger supermarket-type store was in the building where a sporting goods store is today on the West Bloomfield side of 14 Mile.

The village is gone, now replaced by office buildings on the Farmington Hills side and a strip shopping center on the West Bloomfield side.

The Nichols school burned on Christmas night in 1979.

More changes are certain to come to the location of the little village of North Farmington. Ruth Moehman is a resident of Farmington Hills and president of the Farmington Hills Historical Commission.