

OUR VIEWS

Library friends celebrate success

On June 6, the Farmington Friends of the Library celebrated the best of this past year — and they had plenty to cheer.

Thousands of dollars in contributions brought even more art and culture to the newly expanded 12 Mile facility and the downtown Farmington branch. The Friends assisted with a remarkable children's program, which includes quite possibly the finest learning space for kids this side of Ann Arbor.

But the gala represented something even more: a real commitment on behalf of many hard-working volunteers to make Farmington and Farmington Hills better places to live.

Yes, the Friends have opened their wallets. But they've also invested time and energy. Instead of resting on hard-won laurels, they're still out recruiting new members and will soon undertake a strategic planning process to keep pace with their communities.

This is a dynamic relationship — giving and taking, being responsible and compassionate, making an effort through all seasons, not only in good times but when times are hard.

Certainly, hard times lie ahead. While arrangements have been made to pay for construction cost over runs at the newly expanded 12 Mile facility, there's still the day to day cost of operating a larger and more well-equipped library. Circulation and use show no sign of slowing.

Other community libraries around us already feel the pinch. Commerce Township residents failed to pass a millage that supported neighboring libraries, forcing them to enact cuts. In Livonia, a city hiring freeze has its library cutting hours.

Auxiliary organizations can help, but they can't be expected to generate operating funds in perpetuity. Farmington and Farmington Hills officials and residents must maintain their commitment to what has become a state of the art resource not only for local residents, but those in surrounding communities.

Farmington Community Library needs its friends, now more than ever.

Michigan's summer well worth the wait

Summer officially begins Saturday, but Gov. Jennifer Granholm has already taken a whirlwind trip through Michigan's summer attractions to encourage state residents to enjoy the season at home and to tempt others to come here.

Michigan is a great summer state. On the west side, we have miles and miles of golden sand along the majestic Lake Michigan. On the east, we have a ruggedly handsome shoreline to rival Maine's along Lake Huron. And to the north, we have a wilderness of awe-inspiring beauty along Lake Superior.

But our state is also blessed with hundreds of inland lakes just waiting for anglers, swimmers, boaters, water skiers and deck sitters to enjoy. We also have fish-rich rivers and streams that also offer a challenge, or a leisurely float, for canoeists and kayakers.

We are blessed with state and national forests, teeming with wildlife, floral and fauna, along miles of diverse trails. And carved through the woods are some spectacular new golf courses.

While woods, water and lighthouses might be the top attractions for many, southeast Michigan has its own special appeal.

This year the big news is the major overhaul of Greenfield Village. The village is where history comes alive with the real buildings, furnishings and tools of America's past. Now the village has been restored and reorganized to tell its story more effectively. If you haven't been in a while, or if you have visitors from out of state, this is the perfect time to get in touch with America's great innovators and our creative past.

This is also musical festival time at a number of venues from downtown Detroit to Clarkston.

And every year, each of our communities celebrate the good life here at home with a festival. Farmington's Founder's Fest, Canton's Liberty Fest and Livonia's Spree provide chances to rub shoulders with friends and neighbors, help raise money for some good causes, take an amusement park ride, eat cotton candy and enjoy yourself.

Enjoy!



BILL WESLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The staff and students at William Tyndale College in Farmington Hills have a reason to smile these days, now that Pat Robertson's Regent University has pledged \$1 million in support. We wish them the best of luck in their efforts to raise \$1 million to match it by the end of the year.

LETTERS

Appreciates Ford

Instead of a letter filled with grievances, I would like to send a letter of appreciation for Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. Starting with the valet drivers (five young men and women came to our rescue to help cajole my father out of the car and safely escort him into a wheelchair) and ending with the 24-hour staffers, all of the Henry Ford Hospital staff were more than accommodating.

The nurses (even the ones who were not assigned to my dad) would come to check on him, answer questions, and help with his care. The doctors were compassionate. They would explain matters in lay terms and allowed us to actively be involved in my dad's treatment. The nurses' aides (or personal care staff) were respectful and treated my father with dignity. And the social worker strove hard to place my dad at an appropriate aftercare facility, which suited all of his needs. Even the 24-hour sitters were concerned and compassionate. The staff worked well together as a team. Everyone's objective seemed to be to make my dad comfortable (as well as us) and to ensure his safety.

The hospital was clean and bright and had state-of-the-art technology. The admission and discharge processes were quick and efficient.

My dad has Alzheimer's and can be a difficult patient at times. Seeing him deteriorate so fast is devastating, so when strangers come to your aid and strive so hard to make you feel comfortable and supported, it really makes you stop and take notice. And notice we did. My mother and I wish to thank the staff at Henry Ford Hospital (Detroit) Neurology 5th floor for making my dad's stay so peaceful, offering a weary traveler a haven.

Andrea Wolfson Hawthes
Farmington Hills

Saddened by death

With shock and sadness I read the article of Renee Skoglund's passing.

Last year my husband and I met her when she wrote a front page article about his Coming to America. She was a delightful person.

Our sympathies to her family and co-workers. May you find peace in knowing those she touched, even for a moment, loved her.

Joyce Weigel
Farmington Hills

Stop the noise

Why is it necessary for some local department stores to play that God-awful "music" to entertain us while we shop?

When you couple that music with screaming children, it's an ear-shattering experience that most of us senior citizens can do without.

I have been in only two stores (so far) that do not play the music — Target and Kohl's. Except for the marketing, those are the places where I will shop.

Pat Michael
Farmington Hills

Keep helmet law

As a survivor of both cancer and seizure disorders, I strongly oppose the idea of dropping Michigan's requirement that motorcyclists wear helmets. I wouldn't want anyone else to have to deal with either of these major medical problems.

We cherish the idea of a free society in which informed adults can make most of their personal decisions, but we also establish limits for the benefit of society as a whole. My cancer experiences have made me much more concerned about the harm done by other people's tobacco pollution (even though I never smoked).

Likewise, having made adjustments in my lifestyle because of seizures (including not driving for eight months), I became interested in the educational program and legislative goals of Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan.

Although most people dealing with epilepsy have not done anything to cause the condition, many others have experienced it because of a traumatic event — especially closed head injuries. Along with many other health groups, EFM is strongly against dropping our motorcycle helmet requirements. Epilepsy cost over \$12.5 billion in this country in 1995 — and probably much more now.

Medical insurance and public funds for medical care continue to escalate. Especially in this economic downturn, why should the public as a whole have to pay more taxes and more insurance premiums for situations that often can be avoided?

The emotional toll on victims and their families can be even more immense. Perhaps if the anti-helmeters get better acquainted with people with epilepsy and other long-term medical conditions caused by closed head injuries, they may get a different perspective.

H. Bruce Carr
Farmington Hills

Eliminate dividend tax

In the past, an investor of \$10,000 hoped to receive dividends of \$1,000 for 20 years. Most CEOs knew the technology of their business and stock appreciated as products were developed, manufactured and marketed. Excess funds were declared profit and returned to shareholders, encouraging more investment.

Owning stock was quite safe and not very speculative.

Today investors look for stocks that soar. Conservative managers don't attract funding and fall by the wayside, sometimes with their companies. Opportunistic CEOs use tricks to keep the stock curving upward. Highly taxed shareholder dividends are seldom paid.

Long-term research and development are chopped, being a drag on profit. Smaller companies are purchased and records are juggled. Divisions are sold off. Realizing that time is running out, directors grab outrageous benefits for themselves. Gamblers play the stock like a game of poker, placing big bets to increase the price and selling when it is irrationally high. Less skilled players are left holding the bag.

Eliminate the dividend tax to encourage long-term investment. This will not benefit just the rich.

Hank Bergman
Farmington

Consulate directions

I feel that Mr. Thomas Hunter is quite mistaken in his letter printed in the June

5, 2003 edition of the Observer.

I am quite certain that they are not outposts. They are guard towers set up to patrol the border between Farmington Hills and West Bloomfield.

Since I live in Farmington Hills and work in West Bloomfield, I am now in the process of trying to get a work visa and travel visa. Can anyone direct me to the nearest consulate?

Thomas DeWitt
Farmington Hills

Ready for the Times

Great job, Farmington Observer! Voter turnout is usually very low for school board elections and you compound the problem by not getting voting locations correct in your publication.

My wife could not vote because she showed up at the wrong location just before the polls 8 p.m. closing deadline. I suppose it is truly her fault because she should have memorized all the different locations based on the election type (we vote in any of three locations depending on the election) as opposed to relying on the front page of the Observer. Guess you're well on the way to applying for a job at the New York Times.

Kath and Lois Costello
Farmington Hills

Big let down

I am disappointed to see that the Farmington City Council and Planning Commission have approved yet another discount store — Big Lots — to move into this area.

The escalating number of discount stores in the downtown Farmington area is counterproductive to the vision of establishing Farmington as a shopping and social destination, along the idea of the Main Street grant.

Furthermore, it detracts from the historic ambience of the city and fosters an image that Farmington is "less than" quality destination cities like Northville, Plymouth, Birmingham, and downtown Rochester.

There is a serious problem with the way that Farmington's long-term planning is being handled. Our city's commercial viability — to say nothing of our property values — will ultimately suffer.

Caryn Das
Farmington

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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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.

QUOTABLE

"It was important to us to let it continue to be a positive influence in the greater Detroit area."

— Regent University's Dr. Pat Robertson on Tyndale College