

editorial opinion

Festival—an obvious success

No one who attended the Farmington Founders' Festival needs to be told it was a success. Its myriad events entertained and delighted all who witnessed them.

The Founders' Festival, including this year's edition, is something the Farmington community can be proud of. It spurs community spirit by making residents think about what Farmington and Farmington Hills has to offer.

And thousands who live in neighboring communities get a chance to see what the Farmington area has to offer. Residents often invite friends and relatives to the Festival.

The 1975 Festival committee can be pleased about what it has done to coordinate the crowd-pleasing events. This year's Festival fell between the big events of last year's Sesquicentennial of Farmington and next year's Bicentennial. It was sometimes difficult to convince people that donations to the 1975 Festival were a good idea.

The theme of "Look What We're Up to Now" provided a perfect balance to the historical slant of the Sesquicentennial and the upcoming Bicentennial.

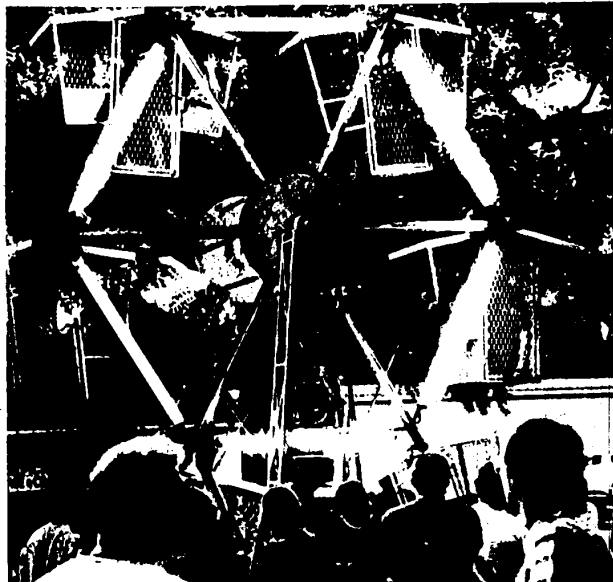
The Farmington area, though alive with the promise of the future and glow-

ing with the charm of the past, has much that can be proud of in its present.

Each year, the Festival becomes more and more of a focal point for the community. Each year, it provides thousands of hours of happiness for thousands of people. The Festival is well worth the support and enthusiasm it earns from residents.



Peter Prokop, Farmington Founders' Festival chairman, samples a piece of pizza sold by the Farmington Rotary Club.



Watching their children take a whirl on a small Ferris wheel was an experience shared by many parents during the Farmington Founders' Festival. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Farmington Observer & Eccentric

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Eccentricities



by HANK HOGAN

Whose ox is gored?

A campaign "reform" bill passed the State House of Representatives on July 22 of this year. Reform is always an interesting word because it must be measured in light of whose ox is gored, and one must understand who the reformers are and who they are trying to reform. The bill is 71 pages long, contains 189 sections, and it has been amended nearly 500 times. Consequently, it really is not in very good shape at this time to be called good legislation. The purpose of the bill is good.

THE PRIME movers behind it are Common Cause, the so-called peoples' lobby. The bill sets up an ethics committee, limits campaign contributions, sets up a reporting system for contributions and expenditures, regulates lobbyists and provides that tax money can be used for certain state campaign funds. It applies not just to state-elected officials, but to all candidates running for public office in the State of Michigan.

Its main problem is that it takes potential state revenues out of the general fund and puts them into campaign funds at a time when the state can ill afford the cost.

IN TRYING to make the elected officials pure, it requires voluminous paperwork that could very well discourage good people from seeking public office.

It requires financial reporting that includes not only the candidate, but his spouse, parent, brother, sister, son or daughter.

It limits the contribution to \$1,700 by a single individual for any candidate for a state elective office. However, it allows union organizations to contribute 10 times that amount.

IT IS QUITE explicit that all contributions over \$15 must be reported and for what purposes the money can be spent, but it does not include "voluntary personal service provided without compensation," which means the unions can still put on massive get-out-the-vote campaigns for a particular candidate which don't have to be reported. It makes it illegal for a lobbyist to provide certain niceties to elected officials, but it doesn't make it illegal for the elected officials to accept them.

IT IS IMPORTANT that Michigan codifies the law concerning the political activities contained in this bill.

But it is also very important that it be a practical document, not necessarily drawn up by a group that itself lobbies for legislation.

It would be wonderful if each person wrote his legislator and asked for a copy of the proposed act, H.B. 5250, and took some time to read it, if it is truly to be a bill representing the feelings of the people.

It is also very important that the State Senate not act impulsively on this legislation because the many amendments put in by the House of Representatives in the closing hours before passage make the bill much more complex than when it was originally written.

It stresses this again because it refers to more than state elected officials, and people who are involved in local or county politics should make sure the bill isn't written with only the state legislator in mind.

It truly would be a mistake to make this proposed bill, as presently written, a law, because it creates more problems than it solves.

Observation Point



by PHILIP H. POWEN

Survival course

Round and round the teacher strike bill goes: where she'll stop, nobody knows.

Latest word from Lansing is that the version which passed the Senate (allowing teachers to strike for up to four weeks with two week's pay) will be shuttled back to the House for agreement before being sent to Gov. Milliken. As the House version would have allowed five-week strikes for three week's pay, the Senate's bill is an improvement.

But not enough, particularly for suburban school districts which have suffered through what seems like endless trouble with strikes and labor trouble.

As it stands now, the Senate bill should be vetoed by the governor. It will almost certainly encourage two-week strikes which incur no loss in pay. It will almost certainly disrupt parents trying to plan their family schedules around school opening and closing. And it may provoke school boards simply to set back the opening of the school year by two weeks in order to meet the end of school deadline without a strike.

WHILE everybody's sitting around waiting to see what's going to happen in Lansing, it might be a good time to do some thinking about what's going to be taught in the schools—when and as they do open.

It's long occurred to me that living in our present day world is both complicated and tough. Just to survive our environment requires a wide variety of skills, many of which are not taught in school. For example, virtually everybody takes driver training because getting a license and driving a car are virtually necessary in today's world.

But not everybody can change an electrical plug or balance a checkbook, even though these skills are nearly as needed for everyday living as driving. A recent survey pointed out that more than 50 per cent of shoppers questioned did not know enough simple math to understand how to convert unit prices to get the best buy.

Hence, it seems to me that our schools ought to consider providing a set of required courses to teach all students at least the rudiments needed to cope in our present world.

IT COULD be called "Survival," and it could include:

- How to fill in your tax returns; how to shop, including unit pricing, seasonal price fluctuations, and simple math for comparison pricing; how to do simple cooking, such as frying an egg or making a hamburger; how to balance a checkbook; together with what financial records ought to be kept; how to use credit cards, and what "annual interest rate" and "minimum payment" mean.

How to figure out your property tax bill; how to use the telephone, how much which kind of calls cost, and how to read the bill, what Social Security and Unemployment Compensation are and how much is taken out of the paycheck for them; what homeowners and automobile insurance policies are and how to read them.

How to do simple home repairs, such as changing a plug, unstopping a sink, fixing a leaky washer, stopping a toilet when its running, hanging a picture without getting the plaster cracked, lighting the pilot light on the stove. How to do simple things with a car, such as changing a tire, knowing when to change the oil, jumping a battery when it is low, and asking the mechanic reasonable questions about the bill.

Elementary first aid, including mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Laundry, including why you don't do the red socks together with the white underwear. Baby sitting, including bottle feeding and burping.

And so forth.

MANY OF these skills are taught today in schools, particularly in home economics classes or shop. But some schools do not happen to have home ec or shop, and in most they are not required courses. In addition, girls generally do not take shop and boys generally do not take home ec.

Of all the schools in the area, those in Plymouth appear to have gone the farthest with this approach. As a result of a program of curriculum broadening started four years ago, the system is offering a large variety of courses in survival. Home management, effective buying, auto service, personal finance, and other survival skills are all taught in the regular and adult education classes.

Plymouth Salem High School even has a unit of English entitled "Survival," which sets a situation requiring students to call on their survival skills. Salem also has an elective course in "Bachelor Living," which is sort of a home ec class for boys, covering cooking, shopping, unit pricing and so on. The phys ed program covers lifetime sports such as archery and hiking, and each new student is provided an advisor to teach the student how to survive in a big educational system.

Other schools in the area have similar programs, although few have gone as far as Plymouth.

As parents, students, administrators and teachers spend the next few weeks figuring out how to survive the uncertainty of strikes, it might be worthwhile for them all to think over just how to bring the schools into the mainstream of teaching our citizens how to cope with the problem of survival in our present day environment.

From our readers

P.S. protest

Editor:
Re: a portion of the "P.S." column which appeared July 24-I must protest.
The recent survey among students and educators in West Bloomfield asked that 18 elements important to be installed in students be placed in order of their priority. With full realization of the importance of all 18, the top priority goals were to "develop skills to enter a specific field or work" closely followed by learning "how to be a good manager by learning property, and resources." The author attacked these as "trifling" priorities.
At a time when the economy is in a crisis situation, when high school and college graduates are unable to find a job, or insufficiently skilled to hold one, "appreciation of culture and beauty in the world" scarcely seems a fit priority in general schooling as

the author suggests.
While overlooking lack of funds and equipment and the equalization of learning materials and resources within the district are still major problems, excuse us, we must be pragmatic.
But at the expense of culture and beauty? Not here. We have a new symphony orchestra, a fine library, a lending program of great paintings and works of art, excellent music and art classes, advanced media centers in our schools just to start the list.
When the students listed the above mentioned goals, they never meant that these priorities should be realized at the exclusion of all else. Neither do they desire these skills solely to make money.
All these students want is to find what they have an aptitude for and enjoy doing, to learn practical applications for their skills and to make the most of their assets regardless of what they may be.

Not to "make a lot of money in the used car or steel business" as the author sarcastically claims. Does he assume that musicians and artists have no need or desire to develop their skills and manage their money and resources?
As a graduate of West Bloomfield School, a resident and a taxpayer, I refuse to accept bold slander from the uninformed. Far from being an "affluent suburb which doesn't care about the arts," we are an informed suburb, willing to listen to those who know best about our schools, the students and the educators.
It is much easier to enjoy the author's priorities of appreciating beauty and culture and learning to use leisure time when you are able to maintain a decent standard of living.
Praise to the parents and teachers of those students who set such realistic long-term goals.
NANCY NOWAK
West Bloomfield

Thanks for support

Editor:
Once again your public service department has done a marvelous job in publicizing Common Ground's "Great Birmingham Bicycle Chase" and the success of this year's event can be directly related to your support.
We wish to convey our deepest appreciation and thanks to you.
MARTI BRUNO
Publicity Coordinator
"Great Birmingham Bicycle Chase"

The economic policies of the man his colleagues have labeled "Simple Simon," once energy czar, now Secretary of the Treasury, are disastrous and strike heavily at the pocketbook of the fellow who has to drive his car to work, to the doctor or to church.
There are other ways to control the excessive use of energy than by socking the little fellow. Rationing, a hated work, is one way, and allotment to areas is another. A third method, and one which should be certainly be tried, is the elimination of useless lighting.
I went to a baseball games years before stadium lighting was heard of. My school and college both played football, but neither had stadium lights, which burn up more electricity in three hours than a good-sized city would use in the same length of time. Store windows remain lighted all night, using more lights than just sec-

urity would suggest, and there are advertising lights that burn long after traffic has started to slow down to a trickle.
Facing up the price of things may bring admirable results on a chart, but it crucifies the small man and woman. The large users don't really mind, because they simply pass on additional costs to the consumer.
But let us hope that the oil industry, which has been suspect of all kinds of villainy since long before Teapot Dome does not get its way, and that controls on oil prices continue. The only alternative would be for the government to nationalize oil production and refinement, and this, though not out of the question, would bring its own set of headaches.
CARL G. WONNERBERGER
Birmingham