

Farmington Observer

Successor to the Farmington Enterprise

23352 Farmington Road
Farmington, MI 48024
(313) 477-5450

Steve Barnaby editor
Nick Sharkey managing editor

John Reddy general manager
George Hagan advertising director
Fred Wright circulation director

a division of
Suburban Communications Corp.

Philip Power chairman of the board
Richard Agninin president

opinion

(F98)

Yet, the Supreme Court in all our history,
has been a place in public life where a jurist,
like Miss America, if you will, can grow.

Crowning our sweethearts

Americans are eyeballing two new sweethearts this week and both will get searching scrutiny.

First is the lissome beauty with talent, grace and poise who was tapped by a cadre of judges to become the new Miss America.

She was part of the annual ritual which was televised Saturday, stepping out in a modest one-piece bathing suit, demonstrating her talent with a song, dance, oral interpretation or whatever. Naturally she revealed herself in conversation to be natural, wholesome and bright.

If the statistics held true, she's a blond. Not because they have more fun necessarily, but because those with golden locks outnumber others in most pageants.

She probably dreamed of being a Miss America since her childhood, or impulsively launched herself into the pageant fray lately, hoping to win scholarship funds for further education.

Nowadays, one needs a scorecard to just keep track of all the beauty contests. They've become big business and have proliferated.

BUT THE Miss America contest is the shining star of all the pageants. It's Miss America that little golden haired girls practice to be.

A long time ago, a former Miss America, Marilyn Venderbur came to Southfield to talk about what it was like being that uncrowned American princess.

The Denver homemaker and mother said she'd do it again, mostly because she was truly asked to grow.

She met people from all walks of life, many of them celebrities and found that "outstanding people share one quality, they know where they are going and have a goal and a plan."

Which brings me to the other sweetheart we find ourselves looking over. She's Sandra Day O'Connor, the president's nominee for the Supreme Court.



Shirlee Iden

An Arizona judge with a distinguished record, Judge O'Connor isn't quite everyone's sweetheart. The so-called moral majority is noticeably nervous about her stand on abortion.

ACTUALLY, THE far righters are aiming toward legislation, even Constitutional changes, which would limit options for presidents nominating judges to the federal judiciary.

Conservatives want some sort of guarantee before a judge dons the federal robes that he or she has precise values and opinions.

Yet, the Supreme Court, in all our history, has been a place in public life where a jurist, like Miss America, if you will, can grow.

The appointment is for life and barring severe misconduct or misfeasance, a judge on the high bench can really be his or her best self.

It's significant that the Congress is looking over a female nominee for the Supreme Court, simply because it is a first and she is part of a real majority — women — who must have representation in every part of government.

What's more important is — as that former Miss America said of other outstanding people — that Judge O'Connor knows where she's going, has a goal and plan and continues to grow.



BILL BRESLER/staff photographer

New look

More and more people are interested in utilizing their clothing, cars and possessions to make statements about themselves and their lifestyles.

This example found by photographer Bill Bresler combines the western look with an obviously strong flair for individuality.

Bottom line: The kids win

I usually put "the bottom line" in the same pedantic, modern-day glibberish category as "viable alternative," "impact on the quality of life," "conceptualize" and "within the parameters of..."

"The bottom line" generally means the cold cash total at the end of a long list of revenues and expenses on a boring financial statement. It used to be called "the end result."

In any event, I've decided "the bottom line" has a particular meaning in some instances and really says it best, trite though it may be.

What started me thinking about it was the Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy Telethon on Labor Day. Lewis appeared to be defensive about knocking himself out 21½ hours for "his kids."

Lewis's motives have long been under attack by skeptics. And this year, some MD victims complained that the funny man exploits them as helpless tragedies instead of human beings with hope.

HERE'S WHERE "The bottom line" comes in. The telethon raised \$31.5 million for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. That's the warm, caring cash total.

Lewis's annual marathon supports research programs, finances more than 750 individual research projects worldwide and supports more than 230 MD outpatient clinics.

The money buys braces and wheelchairs and medication and trips to camp for Jerry's kids and adults. "The bottom line" gives MD patients hope for more productive, active lives.

Lewis admitted his motives are "selfish." Giving makes him feel good. It makes him feel needed. These are very human emotions. But even if he works his head off for his own ego trip, again it's "the bottom line" that counts.



Jackie Klein

It doesn't matter how or why you get there. It's getting there that's important. This applies to Lewis and others who are accused of being do-gooders with an ulterior motive.

IF A MEMBER of a philanthropic group does his thing for recognition, prestige, glory or even political or financial advancement, he may be called a sinner instead of a saint. But saints are sinners who keep trying.

His motives may not be the purest. But if a guy adds his bit to "the bottom line," and doesn't step on anyone along the way, what's important is that he's helped someone. Even self-servers can serve others.

Lewis has been producing telethons for 16 years. This is a tough year because of the shaky economy. But viewers dug deeper into their pockets and helped set a record for the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

For the first time, Lewis didn't cry when he closed the marathon singing "You'll Never Walk Alone." Maybe he was reacting to criticism by doubters.

But in spite of it, he and his kids made "the bottom line." And in a way, so did all of us — even the non-believers.

All the news that's fit

What's news? I'll tell you

The longer I am around, the more I realize that most folks don't understand what news is.

I sympathize and empathize because it is difficult to determine what is news and what isn't. Many persons who are paid to determine why one news item is news every day, and they hold daily and weekly meetings to try to reach a consensus.

The other day, Aunt Mary, who is 78, asked me to drive her to the bank. She was afraid her checking account was overdrawn (it wasn't). "I was worried my name would be in the paper for writing bad checks to the church building fund and to some stores," she said.

"Where did you get that idea?" I asked. "Well, you never know, what with all things they put in the paper about that fellow from the car family," she said. I explained to her that newspapers aren't interested in stories about little old ladies who overdraw their bank accounts. That isn't news.

"Well, what is news? Half the things I see aren't news," she said.

There is the problem. Deciding what makes news. A feeble attempt at explanation:

NEWS IS any information which is current, informative, important, and/or contributory to the sense of reality, purpose, destiny or fulfillment. News is something which impacts to the person receiving it some modicum of information which will make life and its challenges and onslaughts at least a degree more precise, definable, understandable, enjoyable or endurable.

Any questions? I see that there are.

Q. What about Tom Estes? Is it news that he owed his cleaners of 10 years ago \$49?

A. No, that's not news. This is an item among many others we could have done without, but the Estes case is news because what it shows us all about our most respected financial institutions. The news was not that a person of his lineage and social stratum had a history of personal misfortune, bad judgement or overbearing aspirations and spending habits, although these factors contributed to the story.

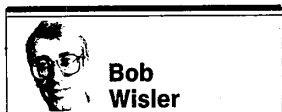
What made the story particularly newsworthy were the amounts and techniques involved in separating the banks from their cash, the apparent duping of big-time investors and financial experts, the fact that a person of the upper stratum can arrange unsecured loans with an ease that is alien to those of lesser strata.

From this comes improvements in the practices of banking and financial institutions; better understanding of the perils of life for rich and poor alike and perhaps less anxiety on the part of the persons of lower strata for being excluded from the upper stratum.

Q. WHY DO newspapers print so many negative things — crime, crooked government doings, people cheating and hurting each other? Why not print more good news?

A. Newspapers are loaded with stories about good news — business, government and personal success stories; tales of man's humanity to man, charity fund drives, people helping each other over obstacles, illnesses, handicaps and tragedies; job promotions, degree awardings, honors attained, efficiency, economy and new ideas in government and industry.

The only thing is that these stories also share



Bob Wisler

space with stories about business, government and personal failings: crime, victimizations, conflagration, tensions, aggression, malice and all the other frailties that humans are susceptible to.

Why print this kind of news? To give the reader guidelines to better understand the terrain and the world about him. In effect, to warn him/her of the full range of problems that can confront one in the daily quest for life, liberty and happiness.

Q. IS CRIME news that important?

A. Crime news has become less important, but like crime itself, it won't go away. At one time some newspaper specialists in lurid crime stories love nest killings, recountings of bizarre criminal behavior, glorification of felons. Times, readers and newspapers have improved so that crime news definitely is sparser and less given to hyperbole.

Crime news is necessary, however, to advise readers as to the nature of the species we have to deal with. Once again, we have to be aware of the full range of behaviors that could affect our lives and our neighborhoods.

Q. Is political news all that important, especially all the charges and counter charges involving politicians?

A. Yes, for similar reasons that we publish crime news.

Unfortunately the limits of time do not permit a fuller answer here. Future questions will be dealt with as they arise.

overheard over coffee

● In 1970 when Livonia Mayor Edward McNamara was a Democratic candidate for Lt. Governor (on a ticket with gubernatorial candidate Sandy Levin), the Democratic party gave him an aide for the campaign — a young fellow named Jim Blanchard. Blanchard worked from morning to night, in vain, as the Levin-McNamara ticket went down by 46,000 votes. Blanchard, now a U.S. Representative, D-Pleasant Ridge, looks more and more like he will be the Democratic candidate for governor. Question is, will he ask McNamara to return the favor?

● Richard Headlee, is giving signs that he might try for the Republican nomination for governor. We think Dick's hesitation might stem in part from his own recognition that he often doesn't talk as a candidate should. Appearing before the West Bloomfield Republican Club recently, he had this to say about aid for senior citizens: "Give our senior citizens help if they need it. But if they can crochet a doily, why give them money for sitting around? Does that sound like a politician?" It sure doesn't.

Health — who needs it?

A couple of friends of ours stopped by over the holiday weekend and brought with them one of my newly-minted nightmares for the '80s.

I'm talking about health.

The wife-half of this couple is so pregnant she carries a stopwatch in her purse, just in case.

Anyways, we had this very chi-chi assortment of appetizers on the coffee table. You know the stuff — raw cauliflower, carrot strips, celery stalks carved in the shape of the Eiffel Tower. The pregnant lady dug in with gusto. So did the rest of us, and for a couple minutes after our friends arrived, the crunching sounded like a room improvement project.

Then my wife told me to go in the kitchen and un-cork the wine. I twisted off the cap and brought back four glasses of it, thoughtfully leaving the bottle — and the label — in the kitchen. Our pregnant friend declined the wine. She turned down other refreshments, as well, and then looked at me — or more precisely, failed to look at me — in a chilling way after I lit up a smoke.

THE WOMAN is concerned, naturally enough, about the health of her impending child. She told us she's not about to take the same gamble this time that she took in her first pregnancy, a nine-month period during which she not only drank two glasses of wine once, but later had a bottle of beer to wash them down.

That's all well and good, although I must say a more thoughtful guest would have considered the trouble I'd run into trying to pour that glass of wine back in the bottle.

But I sense a dangerous trend in all this.

Lately I've noticed that if I eat lunch in the company cafeteria, I see a lot of younger people eating what look to be tunafish salad sandwiches that have been lying on top of the refrigerator since Bastille Day.

But no, I'm told, all that furry stuff sticking out between oddly brown bread is actually an alfalfa sprout and organic white cheese sandwich.

One such tasty episode takes the edge off my desire to eat lunch in the cafeteria. The next day, I drive to a bar with two fellow employees who tell me when we



Mike Scanlon

get there that they can't drink because they're in training.

For what, sharpening pencils? I ask.

They're running — more accurately, jogging — it turns out.

I SPENT the greater part of the holiday weekend lying flat on my back, so wiped out by some invasion of small bugs anytime. There's less guilt — nobody ever thinks he brought it on himself when he catches the flu — and you don't get off work for letting your muscles tighten up after half a marathon. And, of course, I'd still rather watch "Days of Our Lives" than run 13 miles.

I figure if God had meant man to jog, He wouldn't have invented Henry Ford. And if He didn't want us to eat meat, then cattle would be made of textured, soy protein.

The Rev. Falwell may have a point — you just shouldn't argue with the natural order of things.