

from our readers

Readers upset

To the editor:

At a time when emotions are already aroused at North Farmington High School, and all parties are trying to be calm and rational, your article on Monday, Nov. 21, on Principal Clayton Graham, can only be described as inflammatory. To allow a front-page splash on the personal religious views of a public servant is tasteless and offensive. The whole issue at NFHS is not whether Campus Life, a group whose philosophy is based on "Scriptures as The Only Reliable Guide to Life," is a wholesome organization, but whether the principal is using the power of his office to exert pressure, however subtle, on the student community. This article shows at least three clear instances in Mr. Graham's own words, that he is indeed.

1. Mr. Graham states in the article, that "as a Christian," he is bound to obey his superiors by keeping his religious views out of school life. (Would a non-Christian think he did not have to obey?) He then openly admits a few paragraphs later, that if parents ask him, as principal of North Farmington, what he thinks of Campus Life, he will recommend it. We wonder if there is any mention of the religious motives of Campus Life at this time, or does that come later?

2. Mr. Graham compares the natural enthusiasm of Campus Life for their organization to other students presumably outside of Campus Life, who get enthused over such things as the alcohol they will drink on non-school sanctioned senior trips to Florida, heavy-handed implication being if you're not into Campus Life, you must be into self-destruction.

3. Mr. Graham mentions one poster on Israel put up two years ago that he wouldn't dare put up now, while completely ignoring the cause of the present furor: the veritable bilboard of posters, banners, buttons, school newspaper ads, chalkboard announcements, and mailed announcements from Campus Life, an organization whose sometimes hidden raison d'être is "to build relationships with kids in order to expose them to the Gospel."

We feel that the publication of this misleading, one-sided, extremely slanted article, is an act of irresponsible journalism, and will promote a split in the community which we are diligently trying to avoid.

Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Plakman's Dr. and Mrs. Ronald Miller
Mr. and Mrs. Mandel Foner
Farmington Hills

Jo (Virginia) Kirk remembers librarians as little old ladies sitting behind their desks and saying "abash" to everyone who walked by.

Kirk, librarian at Maple Elementary in West Bloomfield for nearly 12 years, is the farthest thing from her own stereotype.

"My objective is to try to make the children feel comfortable in the library and to feel comfortable with books," the 48-year-old mother of five said.

Students and faculty at Maple recently honored Kirk with a special assembly. Each grade offered a presentation to Kirk, expressing its thanks for making reading fun and interesting.

Kirk's methods for generating library enthusiasm include special handicraft projects, skills and costume readings illustrating various stories. Her depiction of "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" by Victor Hugo, written by Laura Ballin, has become a school favorite. Kirk followed Ballin's description of the witch, and created a large head with a long nose, crooked teeth and stringy red hair.

The witch wears red and white striped socks, pointed black shoes and an old apron, while she mixes a brew of sour milk, rain water, prune pits and sundry other vile ingredients.

ONE YEAR, Kirk recalled, she even included a live cat in the skit, though a stuffed one now is the standard prop. As Kirk reads the story in which the character comes alive for youngsters, she said.

"The children's reaction is the most rewarding thing. Getting them involved, seeing them delight in having the book read, that's what it's all about," she said.

Kirk involves school principals in her storytelling, as well. At Loon Lake Elementary School, where she worked for several years before transferring to Maple, Kirk dressed as Cinderella, while Principal Spencer Rust was outfitted as Prince Charming. The pair visited classrooms, sharing the story of Cinderella, and encouraging students to read it for themselves.

"I want them to look at a book and see more than just words," Kirk said.

FOR HER costumes and props, Kirk said she just uses whatever she can find. "I don't buy things — I want children to see they can do things, too," she said.

Kirk also involves students in decorating the library/media center. They recently designed and put together needlepoint mobiles with characters from their favorite books.

In addition, Kirk teaches 10 classes of after-school enrichment computer at Maple and four other Walled Lake elementary schools.



STEVE FECHT/Walled Lake/Hill News

MAPLE LIBRARIAN JO KIRK: "The children's reaction is the most rewarding thing. Getting them involved, seeing them delight in having the book read, that's what it's all about."

Mayor praises coverage

To the editor:

I wish to take this opportunity to commend the Farmington Observer for the excellent coverage provided the candidates in the recent city election. In the past criticism has been directed toward the newspaper's regard to the publicity given to the candidates and the election. This year the Observer could not have done a better job.

Each Candidates Night (afternoon) was covered. You devoted space to the backgrounds and objectives of each candidate. You made the residents

aware of the election, the issues, and the candidates.

Unfortunately the turnout, a mere 16.5 percent was disappointingly small. I would offer that the city and those involved must now address this problem in an effort to stimulate and increase voter participation. The Observer did all it could, and did it well. As Mayor of Farmington Hills, I commend you, and as a candidate in the recent election, I thank you.

Frederick W. Hughes, Mayor
City of Farmington Hills

Parents thank custodian

To the editor:

We would like to commend our custodian, Shirley McIntosh, for the outstanding job she does for our school, Fairview Early Childhood Center in Farmington Hills. Shirley is dedicated, considerate, sensitive and an invaluable asset.

Our school's enrollment consists of handicapped and non-handicapped preschool children. For many parents this is their first dealing in selecting a school for their children. One only has

to walk into Fairview to see how clean and well maintained the school is and the decision to send our children there becomes easier.

Shirley puts in countless hours to keep Fairview looking its best and her energy is endless. She is a perfectionist and it shows in the pride she takes in her job.

We parents want to say thank you for a job well done and one that sometimes goes unnoticed. We appreciate you.
Fairview Parents
Farmington Hills

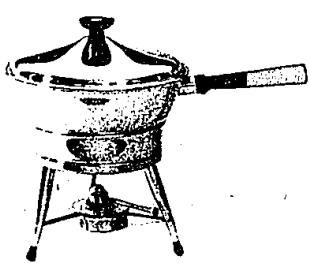
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Jacobson's invites you and your children to our annual Christmas Party. Please join us from 7 to 9 p.m. for delicious holiday sweets and other festive surprises. Your children will enjoy a special presentation of the enchanting Anderson fairy tale, *The Ugly Duckling*, by Dick Waskin and his delightful puppets. Other guest appearances will include some of your children's favorite storybook characters. Allow them to safely enjoy the performance, while you take some quiet time to finish your Christmas shopping. Shows will be held at 7:15 and 8:15.

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