

Opinion

21898 Farmington Road/Farmington, MI 48024 Robert Sklar editor/477-5450

6A(F)

O&F Monday, January 29, 1990

After the fight

North students show maturity

TIME HAS a special way of healing even the deepest rifts.

The wounds from a post-game fight at North Farmington High, when the Raiders played Farmington High in a basketball game Friday, Jan. 12, healed significantly last week when North students wrote a letter of apology to their crosstown counterparts.

In a letter that grew out of a district-arranged meeting of students and administrators from both schools Jan. 22, North students showed maturity in taking full responsibility for the fight.

Two Farmington High students told Farmington Hills police they were attacked by a group of North students moments after the Jan. 12 game. Both required treatment for cuts and bruises at Providence Hospital in Novi, with one receiving stitches after he was kicked in the face.

The attack apparently stemmed from the use of an air horn by a Farmington High student during the game. Neither of the students attacked had used the horn, according to witnesses.

IN THEIR letter, North students admitted embarrassment. "This letter won't do anything for the young men suffering injuries, but hopefully it will be a start. We hope you can accept our apology so we can go on with the relationship our two city high schools should have."

Well put, indeed. Ironically, North won the game, 64-61. "The game that night is what high school athletics is all about," the North students wrote. "An exciting game down to the wire with two very boisterous crowds cheering for their respective teams. Our aggression should never have carried on after the game."

For its part, district officials reacted quickly in arranging the Jan. 15 meeting so students from both schools could talk openly about the fight in particular and inter-district school relationships in general.

Let there be no mistake: Violence is a rarity at

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local athletic events. But that's no reason to be lax in supervision. The district must never let down its guard.

WE URGE Farmington Public Schools to follow through on its pledge to beef up supervision at both home and away athletic events through assignment of recognized administrators. Discretion should dictate how much police presence there should be, but officers would seem most needed at weekend events.

A hospitality area for students at this Friday's North Farmington-Farmington rematch at Farmington High sounds like a terrific way to help head off confrontations and draw students together. So does involving the student councils and the Student Round Table.

But no matter what the district does, the students themselves hold the key. North students underscored their commitment to resuming a spirited but friendly rivalry with Farmington High when they wrote:

"We understand the anger you feel towards our school but that is not what North Farmington High School is all about. We have more class than that and just wished we would have shown it then."

How deeply rooted that remorse is will come clear this Friday night at Farmington High.

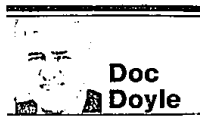
Drop-out rate speaks poorly of our priorities

Q: I recently read of a study in a Detroit newspaper that said white students use more drugs and alcohol than black students. Without sounding racist, this is hard for me to believe. If all the horror stories of drug use in the inner city environment are true, does the study make sense to you?

A: You are making an inference and a conclusion that the study said white children or adolescents use more drugs and alcohol than black children or adolescents.

What the Atlanta-based study by PRIDE surveyed were students enrolled and attending school from grades six through 12. It did not survey all black and white children in grades six through 12. You need to realize that major urban school districts have a student drop-out rate of up to 50 percent by the 12th grade, a sad testimony of our national priorities.

The suburban drop-out rate in most communities for white students is at the high end, about 6 percent.



Doc Doyle

Therefore the survey sampled in the inner cities never reached up to 50 percent of that black student population who had dropped out of school.

The study concluded that 65 percent of the white students said they had used hard liquor once during the previous school year versus 37 percent of the black students. It also stated that 29 percent of the white students used marijuana versus 17 percent of the blacks and 7 percent of the white students used cocaine versus 4 percent of the blacks.

Assuming the study is accurate, inner city and suburban black parents have been doing a fine job monitoring their children's leisure time,

better than their white counterparts. Could it be that black parents are more alert and sensitive to the disaster of drugs because of the historical impact drugs have had on their own ethnic group?

The bottom line of the study is that we must design educational programs that keep students in school, especially the inner city black population. There needs to be a major shift in preparing that 40-50 percent drop-out group of inner city children into educational programs that lead to a job.

Black children, according to this study, are as able or more able to deal with the drug scene if in a quality educational experience.

Dr. James Doyle is the former assistant superintendent in the Troy School District. Questions for this column should be sent to Doc Doyle c/o the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

from our readers

'No support' disappointing

To the editor:

As a five-year board member of the Community Center (1983-88), the Farmington Hills City Council's stand of "no support" on the amphitheater is very disappointing.

To allow the planning commission to accept plans and go the full nine yards in the building process, knowing it was to benefit our cities as a cultural center, is beyond me.

After Mulwood Square, and now this, maybe some changes need to be made on the planning commission.

It seems they answer to no one, including the city council. There's no appeal process that works to the citizens' best interest.

To take a hard-working, positive, underpaid director to court for a couple of families' minor inconvenience blows away reality. There are 70,000 other residents that could, or will, benefit from center programs.

The center worked hard to be viable and not overlap with the YMCA, the libraries, the schools and the parks and recreation department. This is the thanks it gets for working together — and the taxpayers lose.

Why are you swayed by four signatures in this community?

The concerts aren't even late in the evening. When this was given to

the community, the structure was made available for use by concerts, weddings and plays.

Over 20 years have passed, and now after a \$60,000 renovation approved by the planning commission, the minority is in charge instead of the majority.

How sad the arts and a historic landmark are beaten down.

Many of the city council members have been on the center board or had some association over the years.

Suddenly, I don't hear voices from the council chambers for the majority of the citizenry.

Speak up!

Tina Jensen,
Farmington Hills

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