

POINTS OF VIEW

Read all about it: foxy ladies and stud muffins

It was a dark and stormy night, and I was settled in with a cup of cocoa and the current number of the Blue & White, Farmington High School's student publication. I have to admit I got a real, ah, rise out of this edition, which carried a Valentine's Day motif. The February Blue & White (Tammy Allen, editor; Betty Martin, teacher advisor) certainly does have a lot of young love tenderly oozing and dripping from many of its 24 pages. And it comes with a plain blue-and-white cover. "All steamed up with 'Lovely dovey, lovey dovey, lovey dovey all the time.' See pp. 11-14," panted the teaser headline on that cover. Whew! So teased, I wiped my glasses clean, took a quick look around to see if anybody was watching and headed toward pp. 11-14. But on the way I was slowed (and eventually halted) by Freddie Falcon's

opinion column on page 8. Freddie's piece was headlined "Sexual harassment: when to draw the line," and it contained some rather graphic examples of man's insensitivity to woman that had occurred right there in the hallowed halls of Farmington High. Freddie began: "A girl dresses up for school. She's wearing a green miniskirt and a cream sweater and she's aware that she looks good. While walking down the hall to her next class, a boy stops in front of her and lets his eyes travel the length of her body, making it obvious that he's enjoying himself. The girl tries to ignore him along with her feelings of embarrassment and nervousness. Just as she walks past him, he spins around and calls out 'hey, nice parts.'" What! Do these things really happen here in our suburban high schools? My goodness, I said as I slipped a finger between my neck and shirt collar to let



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some of the heat out, but men can be pigs! But, oh, it got worse. Freddie continued: "The class was in the library and it was a hot day. The teacher had his shirt unbuttoned and everybody was making fun of him. I said 'Nice chest' (you know, I was just joking around), and he says 'yeah, same to you.'" I wanted more, more, and Freddie

obliged. Same student, same teacher, different day: "The second time, he was wearing this funny looking hat, and we were all teasing him again. I said 'gosh, I wish I had a hat like that,' and he told me, 'Gosh, I wish my wife had a chest like you.'" Freddie concluded: "The harasser should know that what he is doing is morally and ethically wrong." Gosh, Freddie, I said to myself, you sure have raised my consciousness on this vital issue of sexual harassment. Yes, I guess that's what I meant when I said back in the second paragraph that I got a real "rise" out of this issue. Properly chastised by Freddie Falcon, I continued to flip through the pages of the Blue & White, sipping my now-cold cocoa. And then I got to Page 16, headlined "Hot For Teacher." As a Valentine's Day feature, the paper had rated "FHS' sharpest staff." The top picks were shunted into two

categories: "Foxy Ladies" and "Stud Muffins." One of foxiest ladies (cue the fanfare) was none other than Betty Martin, teacher advisor to the Blue & White. She was photographed leaning against the rump of a car with football bleachers in the background. The head stud muffin was listed as a K. Kansman, who garnered 62 percent of the vote in a recent survey. He was photographed at the blackboard. Gosh, could he be the same Kevin Kansman who carried the ball for Farmington's football team back in the '70s? Who says you can't go home again? And who says you can't enjoy looking through a student newspaper these dark and stormy nights? I was preached to and entertained in the same issue. Tom Baer is the editor of The Farmington Observer. He may be reached by calling 477-6460.

LETTERS

On the 'fringes'

A recent fringe group that has come forward due to some unfortunate incidents has prompted me to give a different side to making positive changes. All children come to school with different moral, ethnic, and behavioral backgrounds. For many this is a mirror of their parents, guardians, and the homes from which they come. The schools do not raise the child that walks into the classroom each day. They try to educate the child and give each an equal opportunity to learn. I believe this is what public schools work for every day along with being second parents, baby sitters, coaches, advisors, paper shufflers, and having a personal life. Private schools may choose to exclude children the minute they cross over from right to wrong. Public schools do not have that luxury, they try to work with the child and change thinking and behavior. I might add, with fewer social workers and administrators. The pendulum in education swings back and forth, now is the time to be involved, more than ever, in your child's educational process. Working with the faculty and administration, not against them, is the positive way to solutions. Fringe groups only take away from Parent Advisory Groups that work with the system to make changes for the better. Success and long-term changes don't always come with revolutions, they

come with work, time, and patience. In my 13 years in this community, working with the system, has brought more changes than I could ever have imagined. The positive outcomes have been more to benefit future children than my own. The recent awarding student musical production at Farmington High, Pom Pon members represented in the inaugural parade, and Western Lakes cheerleading champs competing with so many fans supporting the squad to victory. These are perfect examples of working together with parents, faculty and students. Go to your established parent meetings, be a part of constructive changes, not your own solo agenda. Tina Jensen, Farmington Hills

Board: real pros

Who would have ever thought that honest efforts to improve children's safety as well as traffic and parking patterns at Wooddale Elementary School would turn into such a neighbor against neighbor and neighbor against school administration battle. It is unfortunate where children's safety is at stake that anyone has to feel as if they have lost. While I sympathize with those that will ultimately have to accept unwanted changes to traffic patterns in their immediate neighborhood, my sympathy is far greater for the group of high school students that attended the Feb. 23 school

board meeting to learn how the school board functions. Those students sat and watched a disgraceful exhibition of adults acting like immature children who were not getting their way. I truly hope that the attending students benefited from the experience by witnessing the cool, calm and collected display by Don Cowan and the entire school board amidst some very heavy fire. This incident serves as just another reminder of the truly professional school board and administration that our community is so fortunate to have. Steve Kaplan, Farmington Hills

Thank you, Jack

I publicly recognize and thank trustee Jack Cotton for his years of service to Farmington Public Schools and the Farmington community. I was not surprised that at the same meeting he announced that he would not seek re-election. Jack Cotton shared with the board information he had come across identifying how another Michigan school district was stepping up to the equal recognition and support of female athletics at the secondary school level. He not only shattered some generalizations of his "character" that I have heard from infrequent visitors to school board meetings, but he also demonstrated his genuine commitment and devotion to this district by contin-

uing to move forward to the resolution of an issue that clearly will not come before his term expires. Likewise, as the school year and Jack's term draws to a close, I found the last board meeting to be very demonstrative of his contributions to this District. There was an excellent presentation by three students from Power Middle School, followed by the presentation of the Farmington Teachers Of The Year and the Farmington Support Staff Member Of The Year. Two of the three teachers are also the WDIV Teacher Of The Year award winners. Jack, I am happy for you that, like Jim Abernethy last year, you can look across Farmington and Farmington Hills and take great satisfaction that it is a better community today because you embraced the responsibility of a good citizen and served us well. Our children are our future. That future is brighter and more promising thanks to you. I am glad you have been there, making the right decisions for my children. Dave York, Farmington Hills

Don't ignore us

Last November, 62 percent of the voters in Michigan voted to defeat Proposal D. By drafting House Bill 4156, have the legislators in Lansing chosen to ignore the message of their constituents?

HB 4156 proposes a 16-percent reduction in auto insurance rates by capping medical benefits at \$1 million dollars. Victims of serious auto accidents will not receive the care they need. When the cap has been reached, the burden of care will fall onto the taxpayers of this state, and tax increases will be inevitable. HB 4156 would also result in increased lawsuits so victims would be able to obtain the necessary medical services. While this bill is supposed to cut rates by 16 percent, increased lawsuits and attorney fees would drive those rates back up. Currently 17 percent of motorists in Michigan do not have auto insurance. Illinois, a state without no-fault coverage, has 24 percent uninsured motorists. The argument for capping benefits is that lowered rates will result in these uninsured motorists purchasing insurance. I seriously doubt that a 17-percent reduction in rates will result in these motorists purchasing insurance. In addition, the difference in rates between a \$1 million cap and a \$5 million cap is less than \$20 per car, per year. Lowering auto insurance rates is important. Lowering personal injury protection at the expense of the people who will need that protection is not the answer. Heidi E. Royst, Farmington Hills

Taking risks could alter Detroit mayoral campaign

There come times when we confront challenges to risk ourselves for another living soul, for a cause or for the general welfare. One came to me in 1966, when I drove by two fleeing black youths who had just crashed a stolen car. They were being chased through a white neighborhood and fired upon by a bare-foot resident — an off-duty cop whose suspenders swung at his knees, his bouncing belly protruding from beneath his undershirt as he tried to hold up his pants with one hand and aim his .38 with the other. Another came in 1971 when a politically motivated college president tried to pressure me to pronounce one of my oldest professorial staff instructionally incompetent. (A Rochester colleague of mine was once similarly pressured when he was a principal in another affluent Detroit suburb. Rather than lie, he resigned. It was my privity knowledge of his righteous stand from a source other than him which later influenced me to promote Dr. Bill Waun to an executive position in the Rochester central office.) Recently John Ruggero of Rochester Schools encountered an injured man lying unaided in a dark, icy street. He stopped and rescued him. In instances like these, we often have only minutes, and sometimes mere seconds, to make a decision. I recall the story of a group of Black Panthers being hunted for the murder of a Detroit policeman during the Gribbs administration. When the police caught up with them, they barricaded themselves in a house on 16th Street for the entire night. My old friend Del Russell, then deputy police commissioner, fetched three young local activist lawyers to the scene who



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volunteered to go in and try to talk the gunmen into surrendering. In the morning, this gallant trio emerged with the disarmed Panthers in tow. One of those three activists, Elliot Hall, is now vice president of Ford Motor Co. Another, Louis Simmons, is a Wayne County judge. The third is a man who has been derided as unable to "talk street talk" by those seeking to derail his Detroit mayoral campaign before it gathers steam. Maybe his detractors knew this story, they wouldn't be so quick to deride him, because that third man's name is Dennis Archer. He faces a fierce fight against Mayor Coleman Young's well-greased political machine. You can help him build vital urban-suburban alliances by risking your time and money, offering both to the Archer Election Committee at One Detroit Center, 600 Woodward Avenue, Suite 4000, Detroit 48226-3426. John Telford, a Rochester Hills resident, was an assistant superintendent in the Rochester School District. He previously was executive director for secondary education in the Plymouth Canton district.

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