

## Busy month of May

### A time for the civic-minded

**S**chool elections usually have June dates (ours is Monday, June 14, and there are nine candidates for two seats in the Farmington District, in case anyone's forgotten), but May is the month that has the most election activity.

May is make-or-break time for the folks who'd like to sit on a board that sets policy for a school district with a budget in excess of \$100 million.

We've noticed that May, especially in the Farmington area, is an important month with lots of activities for the civic-minded, in addition to candidate watching. (What could be more civic-minded than paying attention to wanna-be office holders so that an intelligent choice may be made on June 14?)

For example, it just so happens that Farmington-area residents can march into and out of May — it begins and ends with parades.

On Saturday, May 1, adults and youngsters involved in South Farmington Baseball will march from the Farmington City Hall to the City Park for their season opener.

On Memorial Day, May 31 this year, the American Legion parade will toot its way along Grand River. It's been a community fixture for decades.

Want another good calf-stretching activity to do in May? The eighth-annual Farmington, Farmington Hills, West Bloomfield Crop Walk will take place Sunday, May 2. The 10-kilometer hike starts and ends at First United Methodist Church in downtown Farmington.

There's ever so much more going on with civic overtones during the busy month of May. A sampling:

#### Farmington-area residents can march into and out of May — it begins and ends with parades.

A Mother's Day dinner, sponsored by Right to Life, at Vladimir's May 4, featuring Molly Kelly, author and expert on chastity . . . a performance of "Up With People," the inspirational group, at North Farmington High School May 4 . . . the annual spring concert by the Farmington Community Chorus at Harrison High School May 7-8 . . . a town hall-type meeting with U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg, our new congressman, May 8 at the Hills City Hall . . . Ernie Harwell Day at the Uptown Shopping Center in Farmington May 8 to honor the longtime Tiger broadcaster and Farmington Hills resident . . . a bottle and can drive to benefit the Farmington High music program May 15 . . . a "Walk Away Hunger" benefit walk sponsored by Farmington Hills-based Weight Watchers May 15.

The above list, by no means inclusive, takes us just through the middle of the month. Watch the paper, especially the Calendar Page, for more information.

A lot of breakfasts, luncheons and dinners of a semi-official nature are scheduled throughout the month. And of course school's still in session with spring sports and proms and other activities of all sorts.

Yes, May is an important month, a hectic month, for people who care about their community and want to get to know it better.

## Helping can make difference

**A**lthough poverty certainly isn't unheard of in western Wayne and Oakland County suburbs, it doesn't predominate. But the mission of any news organization is to inform on issues that have an impact in the community.

In recent years it has become increasingly easy for those of us who live and work here to pretty much ignore Detroit's social ills. Main Street — in Rochester and Plymouth — is economically a long, long way from Malice Green's last stand at Warren and 24th.

Luckily, not everyone carries that attitude. That was made clear Monday when dozens of civic leaders and power brokers — urban and suburban — gathered in downtown Detroit to kick off a two-year program designed to tackle those problems.

The Volunteer Leadership Coalition of Greater Detroit was launched as part of National Volunteer Week. Coalition leaders hope to stimulate and coordinate a new level of regional volunteerism, using already-established agencies and programs to recruit volunteers. Immediate help and long-term education are the goals.

That's good because like it or not, inner-city problems do have an impact on the region as a whole. Doubtless need only glance at recent studies that show personal incomes in our suburbs lagging behind those in metropolitan areas with healthier core cities.

The guiding hand behind the project belongs to former Gov. George Romney, a longtime advo-

cate of volunteerism. United Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit is the administering agency.

Co-chairs are Ford CEO Harold "Red" Poling, federal Judge Anna Diggs-Taylor and former UAW president Douglas Fraser.

Suburban involvement comes from a cross-section of politicians, corporate heavyweights and community leaders that runs the gamut from Wayne County Executive Edward McNamara to Kmart CEO Joseph Antonini to Lisa Tille, president of the Birmingham Junior League.

All deserve some praise for at least getting involved and choosing not to turn their backs completely.

Let's be honest though. Adding big names to the project letterhead or even cutting a check for the cause isn't going to make a difference if there isn't enough support at the grass roots level. People and time, not money, are the keys to successful volunteerism.

That means middle-class suburban residents like Patricia Pennywitt will be the ones who ultimately pick up the slack.

Pennywitt, of Livonia, has worked at local hospices and spends a few hours each month doing gratis baby-sitting for families dealing with Alzheimer's patients. That way, parents of young children can spend more time caring for their own ill parents.

It takes many blades of grass to make a lawn. Get involved. Call United Community Services at 228-9888.



## LETTERS

### Taking the pledge

**I** am a member of The Seniors Coalition and I oppose the Clinton tax on Social Security.

I have written my U.S. Senators and my Congressman urging them to sign The Seniors Coalition "Congressional Pledge" that says: "I pledge to Oppose Any New Taxes or Cuts in Social Security."

I would like you to write a story informing your readers what our representatives have signed this important pledge to seniors.

Social Security is not adding to the federal deficit. It's running a surplus. It's unfair to balance the budget on the backs of seniors.

For more information, please call The Seniors Coalition's Washington office at 703-273-5449.

Louie T. Kordus, Farmington

### You missed It!

**M**y daughter is a sophomore at Farmington High school and also an officer on the student council.

On Friday, April 2, the student council organized a senior prom entitled "April in Paris" for the Grand River Village Retirement Home.

I, along with many others, were very disappointed that the Observer did not take the time to cover their story. The Farmington High school student council initiated the idea, and worked on this project for several weeks.

They were pleased and proud that the dance was a great success. Apparently the Observer was contacted before the event occurred, but decided not to cover the story because Harrison High School did a similar project last year.

While it is wonderful that Harrison students also participate in the community, I think that positive stories about high school students being involved and helping in the community should be covered whenever they occur.

According to Amy Masucci and Paula Rohn, teachers and sponsors of the Farmington High School Student Council, the students were upset that their story was not recognized.

In addition to the student council's involvement, the Farmington High school choir also participated in the prom at the retirement home.

I hope the Observer will provide more coverage of positive events such as these in the future. Thank you for your attention.  
Pam Lowry, Farmington

strength, hope, support and most of all the true meaning of loving a friend like Paul Umlah.

Many of these kids that were supportive were from the so-called "from the hood" of Farmington Hills, which basically shows you how in times of need they were there for one another. It didn't matter where they were from, but where they were when one of their friends was in need.

These kids were at the hospital day and night, holding candle light vigils, collecting money, giving support and strength to each other. Even the kids that didn't know each other gave a lending shoulder, because they all had one person in common.

The family would also like to thank the parents that were there for support, patience, hard work, understanding, prayers and love that they have for the children.

We would also like to thank all the party stores and businesses that accepted donation cans on behalf of Paul. Not one party store or business refused to accept a donation can.

We would also like to extend our appreciation to the Knights of Columbus on Middlebelt Road for donating the hall to us, and allowing us to display a remembrance where the accident occurred. This shows that a neighborhood can come together in times of need.

We can't think of anything more to say except that the children were Paul Umlah's family and we love each and every one of you.

The children of Farmington Hills are immeasurable to any other kids on earth.

A special thank you to the Farmington Observer for running the articles on the traffic problems and this letter.

Cindy McKenzie Birdsall, Farmington Hills

### Opposed to tax

**R**egarding the governor's proposed tax reform plan, I would like to state for the record that I am absolutely opposed to shift from property tax to sales tax.

This is a classic case of putting into one pocket and taking out of the other.

I am going to pay either way. But the simple fact is that property tax payments are still Schedule A deductible, while sales taxes are not.

Given the alternatives, I would unhesitatingly choose to pay my share to support my schools through my property taxes, not through an increase in the sales tax.

Robertia P. Slade, Livonia

### Thanks extended

**T**his letter goes out to all the friends of Paul Umlah.

The children of Farmington Hills are the most unbelievable kids on earth, the greatest. Our family can't even put it all into words.

Throughout the week of March 16, the children of Farmington Hills gave each other

Opinions are to be shared: We welcome your ideas, as do your neighbors. That's why we offer this space on a weekly basis for opinions in your own words. We will help by editing for clarity. To assure authenticity, we ask that you sign your letter and provide a contact telephone number. Letters should be mailed to: Editor, The Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336.

## COMMUNITY VOICE

### QUESTION:

What would you miss the most if there were no public library?

We asked this question at the Farmington Branch Public Library.



'Probably the calm atmosphere for working.'  
Erika Kuester  
Farmington Hills



'The books . . . reading.'  
Eugene Daneshvar  
Northville



'Access to the books and information.'  
Stephanie Dans  
Farmington



'Financial information . . . stuff about automobiles.'  
Howard Skovtun  
Farmington

## The Farmington Observer

TOM BAER, EDITOR, 477-5450

STEVE BARNHAY, MANAGING EDITOR

JUDITH DONNER, ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR

FRED WENDT, DIRECTOR OF CIRCULATION

Suburban Communications Corporation

Philip Power, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

DECK ISHAM, GENERAL MANAGER

MARK LEWIS, DIRECTOR OF ADVERTISING

Richard Agtarian, PRESIDENT