

### Turn the page

### Stop nastiness over fight

**C**ritics, get out your fancy pens and switch on those letter-quality printers. We're taking a stand on the infamous Farmington High assault case . . . the one that has two area families feuding while their lawyers snap open their brief cases.

Our opinion: It's time that the two boys involved in this incident — and their families and friends, as well — stop posturing and write an end to this sad chapter of their lives.

In other words, turn the page everybody. We know that there are those who will tell us to shut up, butt out, leave it alone, go away, mind our own business and find something important about which to editorialize.

Well, but the Farmington Observer has covered this particular piece of high school nastiness since Gregory Lance Lugo smacked fellow student Kenneth LaFleur in a Farmington High hallway back on Dec. 7, 1992.

And besides, what could be more important than the futures of these two bright young men who've become immersed in this medical, legal and emotional quagmire?

Anyway, there's been a resolution of sorts to this case. Last month, the 16-year-old Lugo entered a plea of no contest to a charge of aggravated assault during a juvenile hearing at Oakland County Probate Court.

Lugo, who had been suspended from school, will be forbidden to participate in activities or sports. He's serving a "home detention" in the words of court referee Martin Alvin.

LaFleur, also 16, who suffered two cracked

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bones in his face apparently at the hands of Lugo, is reportedly on the mend.

Now, we're not asking either side to forget the incident. We do think that they should learn from it — and then put it behind them.

For example, Joanne LaFleur, the victim's mother, should stop hinting that she's going to sue people and institutions. And her comment that Lugo should spend some time in juvenile detention "just to see what it's like" didn't seem like an especially bright thing to say.

Likewise, Yvonne and Jeff Romp, Lugo's mother and step-father, should stop crabbing about the real deal they think they're getting from everybody . . . the courts, the cops, the schools, this newspaper.

And Mrs. Romp, please call off your dog from Channel 2. Producer Kim McBride's April 29 letter — on Channel 2 stationery — was a bit much. Written on your behalf, McBride's missive was a rather pathetic attempt to threaten and intimidate the Observer.

As we said, Lugo and LaFleur are two fine young men with a lot of good years ahead of them. Indeed, you'll find both their names on the current FHS honor roll under "L."

No, you can't un-throw a right cross and you can't un-say a nasty word. But you can move on. And you can turn the page.

### Court must consider our right

**T**wo wealthy children of the powerful Ford family made a bad investment in 1894, and now they want the public courts to fix it up at public expense.

William Clay Ford Jr. and Sheila Ford Hamp, children of the Detroit Lions owner, bought a 2,000-acre tract on the Sturgeon River in Otsego County between Gaylord and Wolverine. They spent their money unwisely because, in addition to trout fishing, they also wanted security and privacy.

Under Michigan law, a river is public if it ever floated a commercial log. The public is entitled to fish and canoe but cannot trespass the land except to portage around obstructions.

The public has access to the Sturgeon by way of a county road. The Fords want the court to let them close off access to the river and make the heretofore public river their domain. They contend there are litter and security problems.

Old Henry Ford perceived he had such security problems in the 1920s. He bought himself Haven Hill Lake in Oakland County's Highland Township and fenced it off. No navigable river ran through it. The younger Fords should have emulated old Henry.

How valuable is this river?  
 "The Sturgeon River between Gaylord and Indian River offers trout enthusiasts some of the most challenging brown trout battles they will ever encounter. . . . The Sturgeon is not fished as heavily as many of Michigan's other rivers. Access points are limited in number. . . . one of the few rivers to support runs of anadromous browns. . . . The browns are large enough to bring the water to a boil — five to 10 pounds — and are taken on flies, worms, spawns, spinners and other lures."  
 "Trout Steams of Michigan" Vol. II by Janet D. Mehl.

But even if the river were sterile, there's a

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bigger principle at work: Monkey see, monkey do.

If the Fords can get away with closing a public river, others will be encouraged to try it on their rivers and lakes. They'll seek to block use of abandoned railroad rights of way for hiking trails. They'll continue to resist public boat launches on "their" lakes.

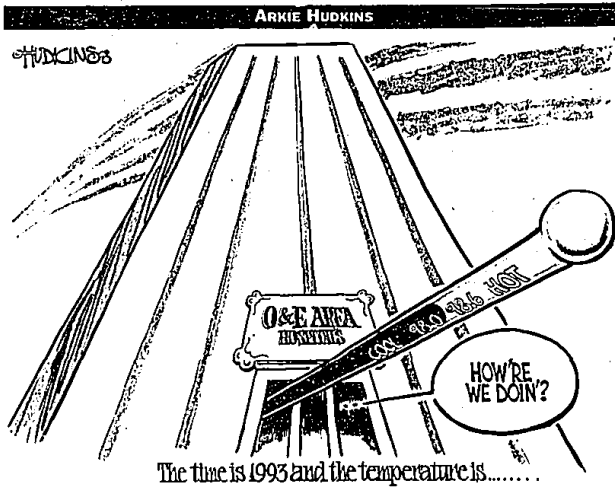
They have a poisoned mind set that says, "I've got mine, you get out." This poison leads otherwise civilized people to conclude that, in order to use a natural resource two hours a day a few days a year, they need to lock it up 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and are entitled to order officers of the law to enforce their paranoid selfishness.

It used to be called the *nouveau riche* — newly rich — mentality, but clearly it's still at work in the fourth generation of Ford wealth.

The attorney general and Michigan United Conservation Clubs are fighting the Fords in circuit court. Judge R.C. Livo has given everyone another couple of weeks to file more briefs.

Then the judge will decide: Should he break a Michigan tradition? Should he let the I've-got-mine types padlock our natural resources? Should he use judicial authority to bail out the younger Fords' bad investment?

If the Fords prevail, all of Michigan has a lot to lose, and not just a portion of the Sturgeon River.



The time is 1993 and the temperature is . . .

### LETTERS

#### Drugs are not benign

**I** am writing in response to the article published in the April 22 Observer entitled "U-M drug survey gets mixed reaction in schools."

I shuddered when I read the sentence referring to ". . . eighth graders who say they've used recreational drugs."

Recreation is the "refreshment of one's body and mind." It is a wholesome, beneficial, healthy activity.

In no way can the use of illegal or street drugs or the misuse/abuse of legitimate products for their mind altering chemical properties be considered "recreational."

The use of the word "recreational" somehow implies that the activity is benign. It is important that our society not give our youth (or anyone else) mixed messages in regard to this very destructive and dangerous behavior.

Each of us when we see or hear the word "recreational" used in conjunction with substance abuse activity has a duty to remind others that there is nothing "recreational" associated with this damaging behavior.

Gay J. Heidt, Farmington

#### Walking with purpose

**T**oo often, the Detroit area gets a bad rap. It is because of this that I am compelled to write this letter.

On Sunday, April 25, metropolitan Detroit woke up to rain. It was a gloomy, wet morning. Yet, that didn't stop 15,000 people from lacing up their walking shoes for the March of Dimes WalkAmerica for Healthier Babies.

As the chapter chairman for the Southeast Michigan Chapter for the March of Dimes, I would like to applaud the 1993 WalkAmerica participants.

Not only did they brave the less than ideal walking weather, together these people raised over \$1.2 million for the March of Dimes. It is this kind of commitment that makes our communities strong, and our future bright.

The money in WalkAmerica will be used to fund the March of Dimes Campaign for Healthier Babies. The goal is to provide every child with a healthy start in life. With the continued support from volunteers like these WalkAmerica participants, we will achieve our dream.

L. Brooks Patterson, county executive

#### Takes him to task

**I**n response to David L. York's letter of opinion, and let me emphasize opinion, of May 6 entitled "On Student Safety," I offer the following:

First, and foremost, Susan McKendrick did not at any time ask the Farmington Hills City Council to declare the public school transportation system or streets unsafe.

As chairperson of our committee, McKendrick only addressed the council on our concerns regarding the safety of all children required to stand on major roads while awaiting their respective buses.

The committee has been persistent and extremely willing to compromise on alternate

routes. We are not requesting to return to the original routes.

In addition, your comments at the last board of education meeting require clarification. You stated that the proposed routes by the committee were deemed unsafe by the city traffic department, when in fact the routes deemed unsafe are those currently being used.

Sgt. Cranston only reviewed what was proposed and not any alternatives, which are numerous, at minimal cost to the school budget.

As I so vividly recall, you delivered a speech last September to the board of education proposing an additional surtax levied upon parents to cover the costs of transportation.

Is that still your contention? More taxes. I'm not sure you would win much support on that issue.

On numerous occasions, David York, we have listened to you state that as parents, we need to "control" our children as well as educate them on safety procedures.

What parents in the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills do not fulfill their responsibility of continuously educating their children and supplementing the excellent programs offered by the schools and law enforcement?

Are you convinced that you are the only parent who teaches his children safety? Face reality, David York, kids will be kids. They are spontaneous, impulsive little people who are not yet mature enough to be cognizant of all their surroundings. That, sir, is our job as parents.

As an active member of the Citizens for Transportation Safety, I find it very interesting that you feel so confident to address our issues.

You have never attended a Citizens for Transportation Safety meeting, never contacted the committee, and have repeatedly misquoted any information you may have been given.

And the ultimate was, at the last board of education meeting, your verbal attack on our mayor and city council representatives who have given their support regarding our safety issues. The city has been extremely concerned and has dealt with this issue as a priority.

As a side note, you deemed it appropriate to address our transportation issue during the session regarding budget comments at the last board of education meeting. This was not the time nor the place for your grandstanding.

It is obvious that you lack any formal platform and therefore must attack another candidate's issues.

As chairperson, Susan McKendrick has devoted months of her time attending meetings, contacting state and local officials, and analyzing their data, and she will continue to be persistent in accomplishing our goals.

As Mayor Bates states, "One child injured is one too many."

Sandra M. Sutorkin,  
 Citizens for Transportation Safety

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's the secret to living a long life?

We asked this question at the American House Retirement Residence in Farmington Hills.



"Take life easy. Take life as it comes. Don't keep grudges."  
 Lucille Lazevnick  
 age 79



"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."  
 Blanche Pringle  
 age 91



"Being around young people has kept me going."  
 Lorine Baldwin  
 age 89



"Taking life easy, working hard, keeping good hours."  
 Albert O'Connor  
 age 98

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