

POINTS OF VIEW

Some coaches, dads make poor examples for sons

What do the following have in common? FBI officials who stormed the Branch-Davidian cult's compound. Homophobes and other chest-thumping bigots. Andrew Dice Clay. Bartles who boast that they once ran 100 yards in 10 seconds flat. The Navy officers involved in the Tailhook harassments. A 1980s high school football coach I wouldn't play for. Los Angeles gangs who initiate female members by purposely exposing them to HIV. The "Spur Posse" of California's Lakeview High, and their fathers and maybe some of their coaches. Machismo is their common trait.

And too much testosterone, real or feigned. And a showy self-satisfaction masking a deep self-doubt about their masculinity. And a sexism so ingrained that I question whether they could ever be cured of it.

Clearly no father ever taught the Los Angeles gang to protect girls. And to explain the criminally sexist behavior of the Spur Posse, one need look no farther than their fathers and, perhaps, their coaches. They've disgraced their varsity uniforms, yet soon they'll be selling their movie rights to the highest bidder when really they belong in jail.



JOHN TELFORD
The fathers and coaches are indeed to blame, as is a society which sanctions a sexual double standard.

There are exceptions, God be thanked, like Duke basketball coach Mike Kryzewski, who focuses on excellence instead of winning and thus wins anyway. I myself was raised by a fighter father who would have put me in the hospital if I had ever been anything less than protective and discreet about any activity I had with a young lady.

As an athlete, I was thankfully blessed with other coaches, particularly one, Dave Holmes, who counseled like my father and Coach Kryzewski. That's how I later coached and counseled my own athletes. This may sound

old-fashioned, but we've got to teach men to treat women like they expect their sisters and mothers and daughters to be treated. Until we can do this, many men will continue to behave with brutally pseudo-masculine machismo — and many more women will be irretrievably harmed.

John Telford, a Rochester Hills resident, most recently was an assistant superintendent in the Rochester School District. He previously was executive director for secondary education in the Plymouth-Canton district.

LETTERS

Balance is needed

I find it very difficult to believe that a paper as responsible as the Farmington Observer would have as its lead article on May 17 "New Right is grass-roots threat."

Based on the way the article is written I must assume that your staff writer, Bill Coutant, is a member of the American Civil Liberties Union or is rather inept.

If he was neither of these, I am sure he would not have written the article without requiring substantiation for some of the comments made.

To compare the people who believe in maintaining family values and do not support alternative lifestyles with the Ku Klux Klan is ridiculous.

The statement that "the lunatic fringe" of the right wing usually doesn't bring its issues out in the open, because — they know the public wouldn't support them is another outlandish statement. When people make such statements, they should be required to support their statements and I know of no such facts that would support Berman's assertion.

I also would like to know how Howard Simon, of the American Civil Liberties Union, can justify his statement that "Pat Buchanan and Pat Robertson are representative of the militantly intolerant, anti-Jewish element in American politics."

I know that Pat Buchanan has been accused of being anti-Jewish but, as far as I know, this is just an accusation with no facts to support it. As far as Pat Robertson is concerned, I have never heard of him being accused of being anti-Jewish nor is he "militantly intolerant."

The end of Coutant's article is amazing. Just because Howell said that homosexuality has been a focal point for, what I call conservatives, only because it is useful not because it (homosexuality) is that distasteful is not supported by facts.

I believe that any poll taken today would indicate that a majority of people in the United States do not support a homosexual lifestyle and do, in fact, consider it "distasteful."

Your newspaper has a right to print reports on meetings, discussions, events, etc., but you should provide some balance by presenting other viewpoints. Also, I believe this particular article included statements that are inflammatory and very distasteful to many of your readers.

I really believe that whomever allowed this article to be the lead in your newspaper made a serious mistake in judgment.

As I indicated earlier, you have the right to publish the report of this meeting but you should also indicate that this is only one viewpoint and you should present the other side so readers can, objectively, judge for themselves.

Mr. and Mrs. M.F. George, Farmington Hills

Big thank you

Last November, the Farmington Observer printed an article about Gill Elementary PTA sponsoring a book drive to help elementary and middle schools in Florida that lost their media centers due to Hurricane Andrew.

We invited other school parent organizations in the area to participate and, with the help of your article, the response was terrific.

We collected 5,534 books, thanks to the efforts of children, parents, teachers and administrators at Alameda,

Beechview, Duncel, Fairview, Flanders, Gill, Hillside, Power, Woodcreek and Wooddale. In addition, Scholastic Books Inc. donated books to our effort.

When it came time to transport the books (44 boxes weighing more than 1,400 pounds), Northwest Airlines came forward and shipped them free of charge.

I want to thank all of you who sent in books or were involved in this project in any way. It's great to participate in a project that has children reaching out to other children and adults networking to accomplish a common goal.

I know that every time a child at those Florida schools picks up a book, there is joy and happiness in their heart because of you. Thanks for joining the drive and making it a success.

Diane Chambers, Gill PTA

I wish the girl's name who was driving the car. In my estimation, this will only add to her pain and distress over the loss of her dear friend.

These kids did something that all of us did as teens . . . used poor judgment. Unfortunately, in this case, it ended in disaster.

My daughter is friends with this group of kids. Believe me, the girl involved is suffering enough already without her name being plastered on the front page.

I hope that in the future you will use better judgment where such sensitive issues are concerned.

Lynne Welsing, Farmington Hills

Voting minority decides school's policy matters

School board elections are less than two weeks away. At least one new board member will be elected in the Farmington District.

My 11-year-old son, Nathan, is in fifth grade this year. I can't think of an election that bears more directly on me and my family than my local school board election. I've heard countless other parents express the same feelings.

Yet if history is any guide, voter turnout will range from 5 percent to 15 percent. This means that a tiny minority of voters will decide who runs the local school board and therefore what policies the schools will be following for the next year or two.

One reason voter turnout is so low is most folks have difficulty learning much about individual candidates and about the main issues involved. That's one of the jobs we're happy to do in this community newspaper. You won't find much about your district's candidates and their views by reading the big metropolitan daily newspaper, but you'll find it all right here.

In addition, there is a fierce and complicated debate now raging about the proper policy for Michigan public schools. Below is a guide to the main points of view:

- Reformers. Sick and tired of old-fashioned schools that depended on rote memorization at the expense of learning how to think, school reformers passed in 1990 Public Act 25, which set a model for schools called "outcomes education."
- Instead of learning, for example, the names of U.S. presidents in order, students in outcomes-based schools compare various presidents' achievements and political styles. And their mastery of the subject would be shown in a variety of ways, including but not limited to written exams.
- In some versions, outcomes education has eliminated the valedictorian and salutatorian honors, adopted grading systems that recognize only As, Bs and incompletes and used a curriculum that emphasizes cooperative learning and development of self-esteem.
- Back to basics. Not surprisingly, there are many who feel this movement has gone too far. They advocate a back-to-basics approach, emphasizing old-fashioned teaching of the Three Rs and rigorous testing. They are dismayed at educators who seem to pay more attention to students feeling good about themselves and others than to actually learning something in class.
- Radicals. Some people are extreme critics of



PHILIP POWER

recent education reforms.

Beginning with deeply felt concern about the elimination of prayer and references to Christianity from public schools, they move on to advocate radical changes. They urge teaching creationism instead of evolution and advocate returning to McGuffey's Readers for the Three Rs. Some would like to eliminate the constitutional distinction between public and private schools and adopt a state-wide voucher system.

The rhetoric gets complicated and often heated. Pro-reform forces have been known to lump all opponents of outcomes education with the religious right wing or the KKK. Radicals have talked about "subversives" running education. Both positions are silly because they depend on guilt by association.

More complicated — and dangerous — are "stealth candidates," those who run campaigns designed to obscure their backgrounds and views on the issues, hoping a mobilized minority can win in a low turnout election.

My own view: What is vital in education is to focus on the results. The MEAP test, for example, measures educational outcomes in various subjects for various grades. This newspaper publishes the MEAP test results for each school building because we believe that the properly focused way to look at education is to measure outcomes.

To that degree, therefore, I like the reformers' emphasis on outcomes, while I sympathize with the back-to-basics crowd in its concern about real learning about real subjects.

More important: Vote! If you don't, you'll get the kind of schools neither you nor your children nor your neighbors' children deserve.

Philip Power is chairman of the company that owns this newspaper. His voice mail touchtone number is (313) 963-2047, ext. 1881.

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