

Future festivals

Bring heritage up to date

We haven't actually seen the bumper stickers yet, but we're sure it's just a matter of time:

I SURVIVED THE FARMINGTON FOUNDERS FESTIVAL!

Some sharp business person really should have that message printed up on stickers and sell them at this year's Founders Festival.

We're sure they'd be showing up on the bumpers of hundreds of area cars and pickup trucks that carried folks to and from the big event of the Farmington summer — the Founders Festival.

The 1993 edition of the Founders Festival — that old standby of small-town merry-making — begins Sunday, July 11, with a Family Day (complete with pancake breakfast) in Farmington Hills' Heritage Park.

And then, for one frantic week, July 12-18, the festival will rage through the streets and parking lots of downtown Farmington and environs.

From parades to pageants, from craft shows to coney dogs, the Farmington Founders Festival has just about everything a small-town shindig should have — except perhaps an excess of parking spaces.

Now, let us emphasize that we don't mean to be facetious about our festival.

The event was a great idea when it was inaugurated in 1964. It's still a good idea in 1993. It was (and is) an attempt to graft an economic event onto a strong sense of community.

And we're happy to note that Farmington Hills — the eggwhite that surrounds the yolk that is Farmington — is more involved in the festival this year.

We mentioned that the event opens with the

Family Day in the Hills' Heritage Park. In fact, the 1993 Founders Festival honors Farmington Hills, which became a city 20 years old.

We'd like to see even more Hills involvement in future festivals. Remember the good old days when the festival rodeo was held in a field at Farmington Road and 12 Mile? And how about those fireworks at OCC-Orchard Ridge?

Well, maybe a rodeo is no longer practical, but what ever happened to the fireworks? The festival poobahs should look into reinstating the pyrotechnics. Please don't give us any lines about liability. Newspapers are full of locations where fireworks are set off around the Fourth of July. Why not here?

Finally, let us not forget the founders in the festival. After all, the original intent was to honor the community's past as Michigan's first Quaker settlement. But, with encroaching commercialism, it's easy for the historical flavor to fade.

What could be done is to have people working the festival dress in the costume of 163 years ago — the time of Arthur Power, Farmington's first founder. That would lend some authenticity to the event.

Farmington officials dressed in period costume to celebrate the community's 125th anniversary last year — and according to most accounts had a great time doing it.

And don't forget the museum — officially the Gov. Warner Mansion — on Grand River a bit northwest of downtown. It will be open Friday and Saturday, July 16-17.

We think it would be fitting if our area's proud heritage would play a more central role in the Farmington Founders Festivals of the future.

Keep assisted suicide illegal

Following the events related to assisted suicide is much like watching a table-tennis match. Once quasi-legal, the latest call — made by the Michigan Court of Appeals — puts doctor-assisted suicide into the "illegal" column, a category in which it should stay.

Until the appeals court ruling a week ago, the matter was in limbo, caught between state legislation overturned in Wayne County Circuit Court and the start of a long process to resolve its constitutionality in the federal court system.

The appeals ruling should speed up the federal court route and also prevent the interpretation of legalized assisted suicide.

We agree with Wayne County Circuit Judge Cynthia Stephens that every person has the right to self-determination, though we don't agree that the final choice always will be made objectively.

How can we know if a person is freely giving up the right to stay alive? What if the popular trend is to encourage those with serious diseases or conditions to die quietly because it's cheaper than paying health costs? What if elderly patients opt for assisted suicide solely to make sure they aren't burdens on their children?

Those who are in a weak condition or who are depressed may not do what they want but instead succumb — literally and figuratively — to external influences.

The U.S. Supreme Court has never ruled on the issue of the right to die, so great uncertainty lies there.

Until that happens, Dr. Jack Kevoorkian and other physicians who believe as he does will have to wait to continue their "practice."

DNR must fund parks system

Bowing to political reality, if not good policy, Gov. Engler's administration has backed away from its plan to give away the Pontiac State Recreation Area.

"We must intensify our efforts to secure a sufficient and stable funding source for our parks system," Department of Natural Resources director Roland Harmes said last week-end in Novi as he announced the state's decision to a gleeful Michigan United Conservation Clubs convention.

Harmes was correct. Restoring DNR funding is the answer. Engler's solution to budget woes has been to get rid of state recreational lands, like the Rochester-Utica Recreation Area; neglect small state-forest campgrounds to a weed-

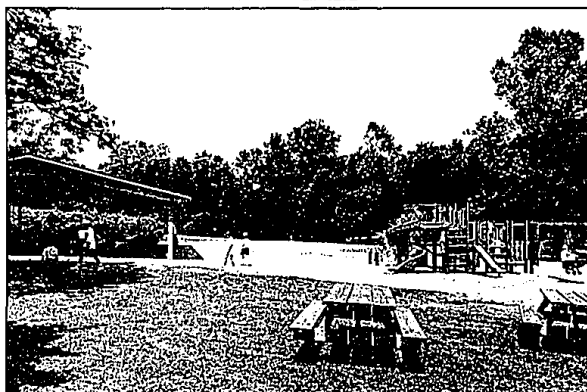
choked death; and let the rain erode a boat launch, like Moore Lake near Milford.

With urban sprawl eating up woods and meadows to serve a stagnant population, southeastern Michigan can ill afford to see recreation land put on the block.

The proposed receiver, Huron Clinton Metropolitan Authority, is an excellent operation, but its bag is day use — not camping or hunting. The 3,700-acre Pontiac Lake area has 176 campsites and a shooting range as well as the usual beach, trails and boat launch.

Michigan is lucky to have a state recreation area like Pontiac Lake, just seven miles from the Silverdome. We should hang onto it and all the others.

Natural state



Safe haven: State parks could become endangered species themselves unless the Department of Natural Resources agrees to properly fund their existence. Support for the Pontiac State Recreation Area indicates that's the tack the DNR is now taking.

LETTERS

Making a point

I am writing in regard to an article that appeared in the June 3 edition of your publication.

The story referenced our installation at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Farmington Hills where a Ferris wheel malfunctioned. While we appreciate your accurate reporting of the fact that no one was injured, your staff writer did omit one very important detail.

The reporter has assured me that the ownership of the Ferris wheel was made clear in the story. Needless to say, I was very disappointed after reading the published article.

The Ferris wheel involved in this incident is not owned by Pugh Shows. It was subcontracted from Schmidt Amusements of Standish, Mich.

In the interest of factual journalism and in respect to the cities we service, as well as our clients and customers, I hereby request that clarification be made public as soon as possible.

James K. Wegerly, vice president, Pugh Shows, Inc.

York: What machine?

Your June 24 editorial was the second time that my wife's, and many other's hard work has been belittled and discarded by someone's imagined "machine."

When I became a candidate, Judy automatically began to do whatever was necessary. She devoted hundreds of hours and miles making phone calls, delivering signs and endorsement cards, and collecting, preparing, and mailing endorsement cards and campaign literature.

Parents Mark and Peggy Price, my campaign managers, organized and ran my fund-raiser on their own, and were indispensable to Judy and myself, spending many hours and traveling many miles helping with the logistics of contacting the dozens of people who either volunteered themselves or agreed to support my candidacy in many different ways.

And then there are the individual volunteers themselves, who each in their own way, made important contributions that made my candidacy successful.

I am solely responsible for the preparation and content of my campaign literature, questionnaires, and remarks at the candidate nights. I ran on my service to the school system for the last six years.

Mine has been a voice for change, not for the status quo. Mine has been a community voice, not a voice of self or special interest.

I identified and will pursue my understanding of the total community perspective and my recommendations on how to respond to that perspective.

And if nothing else, my work on district committees has illustrated that I listen to others. I give due consideration to their views, and as the merits of the argument determine, I modify my position or agree to disagree and abide by the ultimate outcome of the process.

To package and label me differently prior to my taking office is baseless and only serves to reinforce disgruntled and/or misin-

formed perceptions. Likewise, from my experience with the board and the administration, both in times of agreement and disagreement, your label is unfounded and does not serve a constructive purpose. Positive change comes through constructive criticism, not from the generation of doubt and mistrust through misinformation and disinformation.

The position of Editor of the local paper confers community leadership and responsibility upon you. Our community deserves constructive service, not destructive manipulation.

Dave York, Farmington Hills

School concerns

The curriculum director of Farmington Schools just presented the student outcome objectives at the June 15 board of education meeting.

At no time during that presentation were reading, math, handwriting, or spelling proficiency levels addressed.

It was suggested that parents who worried about the above academics were in the minority and that the new objectives were what the majority wanted.

Children who have not been able to master the basics under the present system or who require a more structured, quiet atmosphere in order to learn are left out.

The required levels of ability in reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic for Farmington's public school children are nowhere near what was necessary for their parents to master in order to be promoted.

These new student outcomes should be secondary to the basics in the primary grades. Critical thinking skills are superfluous if a child is unable to read the actual words that are on a page and instead guesses what the word is from pictures.

Cooperative learning is nice as long as all of the work isn't done by the only student who can write or spell correctly.

Lifelong learning is a goal to be recognized only when a child has a foundation to build upon.

If you had the choice would you want your child to have his own desk and do his own work, or sit at a round table and get the answers from someone else's paper?

Are you doing all of the math drills or is that taken care of in class? Are spelling and punctuation mistakes corrected (and explained when they are incorrect), or does that impede the creative flow of ideas?

Are you surprised when substantial work is not returned to be redone, but instead highly praised?

Until the board hears of dissatisfaction from more people, it will continue on its course — away from actual academics and towards the general goal of nebulous outcomes.

If your child is able to function and learn under the present system, lucky you. But if your child isn't mastering even the things you learned in a particular grade and the academic standards aren't what you believe they should be, write to the board of education.

Patricia A. Alspach, Farmington Hills

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:

What do you think about the recent U.S. missile attack on Iraq nerve center?

We asked this question at the Farm Hills Donut shop in Farmington Hills.



"If that's what it takes . . . we should do whatever's necessary."
Kattie Nunson
Livonia



"I think it's right. It's a way to get those people . . . (Saddam) Hussein."
Fran Wright
Farmington Hills



"I think it's right. These people have suffered enough (under Hussein)."
Olga Cooper
Farmington Hills



"It's good. The plot was to kill the former president, and that's a very serious thing."
Jack Paterson
Livonia

The Farmington Observer

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