

Here he comes . . . Let's have pageant for guys

Here he comes . . . Missster Farmington . . . OK, so we're not Burt Parks. And we're sorry if we're singing off key. We know we're paid to write, not sing.

But we are very sincere when we sing the praises of a "Mr. Farmington" pageant for future Farmington Founders Festivals.

That's right, we're suggesting a Mr. Farmington "beauty and talent" competition with all the pomp and pageantry that accompany the annual Miss Farmington/Farmington Hills Scholarship, which has been an integral part of the past 20 Founders Festivals.

Longtime Observer readers may recall that we suggested a Mr. Farmington whoop-de-do in this space several years ago. One of our staff members suggested that we revisit the issue, and thus this mislive.

Now, please understand: We're certainly not suggesting that the Miss Farmington affair be eliminated or in any way diminished. It's a great show — and this year's was especially nice.

Festival queen Julie Dugan is both beautiful and talented. All 11 candidates are, really. As usual, Vladimir's banquet hall on Grand River was packed to bursting as the beautiful and talented strutted their stuff on stage.

But a Mr. Farmington should somehow be chosen, either on the same night or sometime during the festival with the same basic criteria for judging. Yes, that does include a swimsuit competition. What's a beauty pageant without a swimsuit competition?

Mr. and Miss Farmington could then reign

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supreme over the rest of the festival, including that big parade along Grand River. Can't you just see them smiling and waving from the back seat of some luxury convertible during the parade?

But why have a Mr. Farmington when the community seems to have gotten along just swimmingly with an all-female show? Why, it's simply a matter of equal opportunity.

Guys deserve a crack at some of the more than \$5 million worth of scholarships from pageants on the local, state and national levels.

Let's be honest about it: Young men are at a disadvantage when it comes to these things. If they're not great athletes or Rhodes Scholars, they often find themselves out of luck when the goodies are handed out.

One way to correct this would be to hold a separate-but-equal pageant for local young men.

Hey, this is the '90s. The Gender Police would not tolerate the local high school offering varsity basketball for boys, but not girls. The same logic, we feel, applies to "scholarship" pageants during these community festivals.

So let's have a Mr. Farmington pageant. It's the politically correct thing to do in the 1990s.

Rule out abortion intervention

There ought to be a law: Women — when deciding whether to abort a pregnancy or have a child — should be shown pictures of families living in abject poverty, of the deformities that can develop in a fetus subjected to nine months of drug or alcohol abuse.

The state should distribute pamphlets at county health clinics providing the latest statistics on how many children from poor, single-parent families wind up in juvenile detention centers, and eventually jail.

Ridiculous, right? An unacceptable intrusion of government into private life. The state, after all, has no business influencing what should be the most personal and moral of decisions in such a heavy-handed, one-sided way.

But that's exactly what will happen when Gov. John Engler signs the "informed consent" bill, which has already won approval from both houses of the Michigan Legislature.

The bill, passed by the state Senate last week after a year-long debate, puts into place a 24-hour waiting period for women seeking abortions. Among other things, it requires doctors to:

- Provide a list of physical and psychological complications that may result from abortion
- Inform patients of available prenatal and adoption services should they choose to carry the pregnancy to term
- Provide a pamphlet containing drawings of fetuses and showing fetal development.

The law is expected to cost as much as \$600,000 yearly to enforce, primarily for printing and distribution of material.

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While advocates of the law disguise it as public "education," the law, which would likely take effect next spring, is simply the next step in the pro-life march toward banning abortion in Michigan.

Yes, poor and uneducated women don't always make the best decisions or have the most complete information before seeking abortions, which, despite 20 years of legality, are still sometimes handled in an almost back-alley fashion. But showing a pamphlet in someone's face and asking them to "come back tomorrow" surely isn't going to solve that problem.

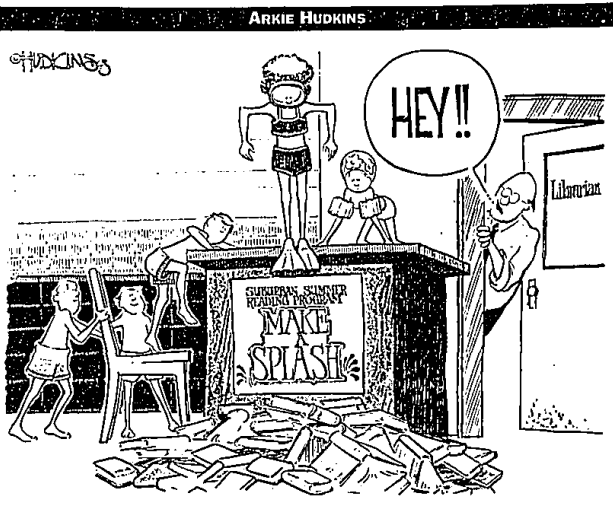
And a 24-hour waiting period — a requirement for no other medical procedure in Michigan — goes against accepted medical practice and impinges on the doctor-patient relationship.

While Medicaid-financed abortions have already been outlawed in Michigan, this law applies to people seeking a medical procedure from a private doctor or clinic.

Similar laws in other states have been struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court.

It is surprising that Engler, who consistently advocates reducing government's role — and its cost — in people's lives, would back this effort.

His signature should be met by a challenge both to its constitutionality and practicality.



LETTERS

Festival was great

While all the raffle tumbler and traffic cones and banners haven't yet been put away, by all accounts I think we can call the 29th Founders Festival a success.

We have received many positive comments about festival activities. The festival and the Chamber of Commerce depend upon a lot of people to make the Founders Festival work and they all deserve a round of applause for their volunteer time.

They are: Mike Paulson, Robin and Bill Ray, Paula Masterka, Jim Stark, Ron Baker, and Marketing Communications Counsel, Eric Johnston, The Liffey Ladies, Rusty Soronen, Kent Nickel, Denny Lis, Andy Rosenbaum, Wendy and Murray Sittsamer, Farmington Radio Club, Jon and Debbie Grant, Dee Grant, Farmington DPW and Public Safety, Farmington Hills Special Services, Police Dept. and Fire Dept., all the raffle ticket sales people (and buyers), Chrystyna Nykorak, Cele Austin, Judy Patton, Bob Christ, Russ Tuttle, Holiday Chevrolet.

My wonderful staff puts in long and sometimes stressful hours and have my undying gratitude: Dianna Lis and Cheryl Zajdel.

Our very special thanks goes to the powers that turned on the wonderful weather we enjoyed for the three festival days.

See you all next July 14-16 for another Founders Festival.

Jody Soronen, Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce

Proud of district

As a parent of students attending primary school in Farmington Public Schools, I am very pleased with the progressive curriculum and teaching methods.

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One area that has come under criticism is the use of inventive spelling in kindergarten through first grade. For parents' clarification, inventive spelling is writing words the way they sound to children.

It is a practical, sensible, and proven method to teach reading and writing. It is a natural process. Is it used in conjunction with book spelling? Yes, of course.

From the first day of kindergarten and first grade, book spelling is also used. Dozens of objects are labeled in the classroom and written on chalkboards by teachers using book spelling. Students continually read from books. My older daughter, now a fifth grader, consistently

maintains high scores on her vocabulary tests, having been initially educated with inventive spelling.

It is interesting to note that in the same Observer issue (July 5) that Highmeadow and Hillside MEAP scores are the highest in this district. It is no coincidence that they are among our most innovative schools.

Perhaps this philosophy should be expanded to all elementary schools.

The Farmington School District also continues to benefit from educators attending ongoing inservice training and seminars.

Because we baby boomers learned largely by rote memorization, does this mean that this next generation of children will be in a time warp? Not. Much of the criticism is unfortunately the result of ignorance.

I recommend each September from preschool through high school that all schools have curriculum nights, which goes beyond an open house.

Staff and support staff would inform parents of curriculum, methods, and expectations of student learning outcomes.

The citizens of the Farmington School District have reason to be proud of the innovative and creative education given to our children.

We need to resist all the efforts of the so-called "back to basics" advocates to turn back the clock at the cost of the future of our children.

Laraine Knoppow, Farmington Hills

A 'dressing down'

Iwould like to address this to the Farmington Hills Zoning Board of Appeals.

On June 29, you granted a 20-foot height variance to a 6-foot maximum fence code to a residence in the Pasadena Park subdivision.

This was based on a so-called "hardship." The property owner came in "dressed down," with no makeup and close to tears while pleading her case.

In the meantime, as a resident in Pasadena Park I've observed a double income, no children, extravagant lifestyle which have included hot-tub parties.

I would like to recommend that proof be a requirement in the future in cases such as this claiming a "hardship." There are many instances today in which proof is a requirement to obtain special consideration.

An example of this can be found within your own city office — the Property Tax Appeal Board. Why is this situation handled differently in your department?

I feel this decision was made upon her acting ability and was not a "true" case of need and that fools were made of those who bought into it.

Susan Keon, Farmington Hills

Opinions are to be shared: We welcome your ideas, as do your neighbors.

Letters should be mailed to: Editor, The Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336.

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:
 How are you doing in this heat?

We asked this question at the Downtown Farmington Center.



"I'm surviving, but the humidity has been a problem."
 Joyce Dropps
 Farmington



"If it gets too bad, I just stay inside with the air on."
 Rosemary McCarthy
 Farmington



"The heat doesn't bother you when you're retired. You don't have to go out and work in it."
 Robert Panney
 Detroit



"Yes, it bothers me. I stay in the house."
 Murray Gostlin
 Farmington Hills

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