

A bad no-call

Horn's attitude is wanting

OK, Rande Horn, rookie principal at Harrison High School, let's do it by the numbers one more time — it's nine (9), one (1), one (1).
Remember, Rande, 9-1-1 is the telephone number to call if there's ever a fire or other emergency to report in that big school you're supposed to be managing out on 12 Mile Road in Farmington Hills.
Call that number, Rande, and the fire department'll come roaring out in those big red (or lime green) fire engines and put out the fire. Perhaps they can even figure out how the fire started and other important stuff like that.
Rande, it really is an important number — 9-1-1 — so maybe you could have your mom pin a note with the number on it to your sleeve. Or maybe you should have it tattooed on the back of your hand.

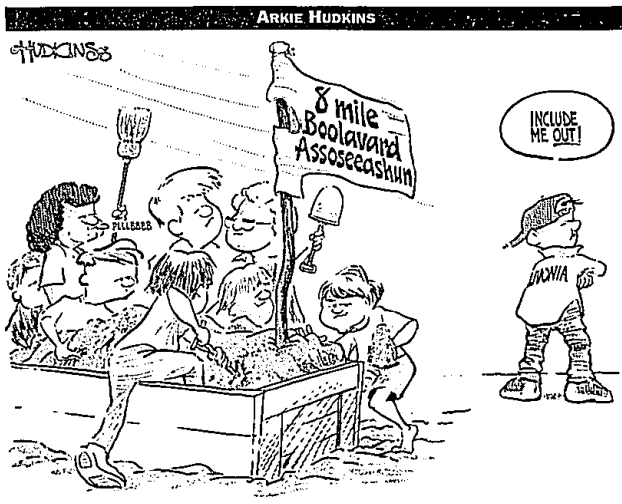
If I seem to be talking down to Rande Horn... well, we are. Right now, the beleaguered Mr. Horn reminds us of Principal Skinner, that dummkopf of an educator on "The Simpsons" TV show.
Harrison's new principal spit a little fire of his own recently when he was asked about the two recent arson fires at his school — or why he didn't call the fire department right away.
Now, we wouldn't normally come down this hard on Horn for not calling the fire department. No one is perfect. We at the Observer understand that better than most people. We've all made mistakes and bad decisions.
But it's Horn's "so-shoot-me" (his very words) attitude in the wake of this mistake that concerns us greatly. We think it should concern

school officials and parents of Harrison students, as well.
"I can't believe I'm being bothered about this crap," said the truculent Horn to Observer reporter Bill Coutant, who wrote the story about the incidents for the front page of our Nov. 15 issue. Earlier, the principal responded to Hills Fire Chief Richard Marinucci in about the same hostile way.
Horn, remember, is the man responsible for the safety of the 1,000 or so souls who inhabit his building every school day.
And these were not little fires. The one outside blaze, which destroyed a ticket booth, was so intense that it melted a part of a chain-link fence near it. The other fire, started in a girls bathroom, was enough to set off the sprinkler system and cause the school to be evacuated.
The reasons for calling the fire department when there's a fire have already been stated. Apparently they need reiteration.
As any firefighter will tell you, a fire that appears to be out sometimes really isn't. It can spread into walls or roofs, or smolder and re-ignite. When it comes to arson, fire officials know what to look for and should be on the scene before the cleanup starts.
Fire Chief Marinucci has another point to make about Horn's no-call. "It also sends a message to kids who were there not to bother with the fire department," he said.
Wrong message. And who's the man who's supposed to be sending the right message: to the students of Harrison High School? Why, it's Principal Rande Horn, of course. Remember, Rande, call 9-1-1 in case of fire.

Eight Mile plan demands unity

One community's reluctance to help fund the Eight Mile Boulevard Association only serves to mock the group's purpose of "Joining Together to Make a Difference."
The association is a collection of 12 communities working with the Michigan Department of Transportation and Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties to improve the Eight Mile business district.
Southfield, Farmington, Farmington Hills and Redford Township are among the Oakland and Wayne County participating members of the association who have paid their dues.
Livonia, Michigan's eighth-largest city, has not.
Although Mayor Robert Bennett said this week the city could still reconsider, Livonia is at this point the only community to refuse to pay its dues — about \$7,000.
The dues are reasonable — especially for a city the size of Livonia — and have not been levied arbitrarily. They are based on the city's miles of frontage on Eight Mile.
The money goes to clean up litter, help workers get to their jobs at Eight Mile businesses, improve traffic flow, help businesses attract customers and improve landscaping and streetscaping to this critical boundary shared by Detroit and its suburbs.
Livonia's reluctance stems from recent tight budgets and the feeling the city won't benefit directly from the effort.
Other nearby communities are experiencing the same fiscal pressures — some even greater than Livonia — and still have managed to fund the Eight Mile project.

The refusal to pay the relatively small fee is troubling but more worrisome is the attitude that Livonia is an island and need not cooperate with its neighbors.
That city seems to have no problem spending that kind of money on strictly local cleanup or beautification projects — planting flowers around its Five Mile-Farmington civic center or on the boulevards in the Six Mile-Newburgh commercial district, for example.
Although Livonia officials have pledged to cooperate in spirit and support the overall intent of the group, that's not enough. A promise to support and cooperate can't do the job. A well-designed plan with concrete goals and objectives can succeed — only if it's properly funded.
The coordinator for Business Group for a Competitive Livonia, an economic development partnership between the city and the Livonia Chamber of Commerce, recently completed a study assessing the future of economic development in Livonia.
According to the report, Livonia benefited and continues to benefit from decisions made 30 years ago.
"However, Livonia is no longer the fresh new kid on the block," the report states. "It has entered middle age. The existing industrial corridor is nearly at capacity and there is little land remaining for major residential development."
All communities have fiscal pressures. We urge Livonia's leaders to look at this project in its larger scope.
Benefits to the metro area from a healthy, attractive Eight Mile Road transcend one city's limits.



LETTERS

And who are you?
I recently received a brochure from A Partnership for the Future regarding school finance reform. While I support your expressed position and have written to State Rep. Jan Dolan, I am concerned by the anonymous nature of the brochure.
Attacks without attribution are often viewed by the public with skepticism and distrust. Your position is correct and supportable. Why not stand behind it in an open fashion?
I would appreciate it if you would advise me of your identity and of the source of your findings.
David L. Haron, Farmington Hills

and Dale Garden Club, who devote time and money each month.
Hill and Dale won an Exxon Grant and the club has donated hundreds of dollars to buy bulbs and perennials for these two gardens. Gale Weisman designed these gardens.
Betty Frankel designed the shade garden at the side of the house which is maintained by the Farmington Garden Club.
Another interesting garden of wildflowers is maintained by the National Farm and Garden Club.
We garden club people do not compete with each other but work together, as in our combined Flower Show, held this summer in "Eli's Home."

Job well done!
Recently (Oct. 25) you ran an article on the Sisters of Mercy of Farmington Hills.
The writer was Bill Coutant and the photographer was Sharon LeMieux. Both did an admirable piece of work.
Coutant was an able and effective interviewer, and his write-up reflects truthfully what he heard and interpreted.

I enjoyed the few minutes I spent with both of your representatives. Thank you for your interest in our mission of mercy.
Sister Mary Justine, Farmington Hills

For the bike path
The proposed bicycle path will bring a safe avenue for bicyclists of all ages.
Since most people are limited in the times available for them to enjoy this healthy, harmless hobby, it would mean that families and individuals could ride an hour or so without packing up and traveling to another city.
Tended bike paths are located on public property. We have lived in Farmington for 20 years and would welcome the path as soon as possible. And the nearer the east side of the city the better.
Elaine Roy, Farmington Hills



I would particularly like to thank Eleanor Guizlinger, Sandy Donlon, Barbara McCana, Shirley Perkins, Katie Wemyes, Beth Callow and Jeanine Gundle for their continuous help in maintaining these gardens.
Gale Weisman, garden chairman
Heritage Park Visitors Center,
Hill and Dale Garden Club

Oh, wrong club
Community service by The Federated Garden Clubs of Farmington is a real asset to our community.
It is wonderful when our local newspaper gives us coverage. But give the right club credit. Plaques label each garden in Heritage Park.
The beautiful picture in the Nov. 4 issue is not of Ellie's Garden. The garden pictured was planted by Hill and Dale Garden Club.
The two front entry gardens are planted, labeled, and maintained by volunteers from Hill

Let's work together
As a result of the support the voters gave on Nov. 2, I was able to take the oath of office Monday night for a new four-year term as a Farmington Hills council member.
I am grateful that voters were satisfied enough with my accomplishments in office to place me high among those candidates who were elected.
In a period when public office holders, as a group, are not held in high esteem, it was encouraging that some 70 percent of the voters gave me a favorable rating. That type of support is both exhilarating and humbling.
I appreciated the many kindnesses that were shown to me during the campaign, both by the public and other candidates. I will continue to carry on my council duties as I have in the past.
If I don't live up to your expectations, let me know by calling 474-3655.
Working together, we can maintain Farmington Hills as the premiere community that it is. Thank you.
Aldo Vagnozzi, Farmington Hills City Council

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION: You have a short vacation coming up. Where would you go?

			
"Farmington, Mich. . . . to visit my three grandchildren." Tom Preston Dallas, Texas	"To Hawaii. Winter's coming in Michigan." Branda Foster Farmington Hills	"If money were no object, I'd go to London. I've been there and I love it." Bill McAskrie Northville	"Lillehammer, Norway, where the 1994 Olympics are going to be held." Dennis Mahle Farmington

We asked this question at the Farmington Community Library, Farmington branch.

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