

Doda's complaint Home is key in language issue

Doda Lucy deserves credit. He impresses us as a stand-up guy who isn't afraid to speak out when he sees something he believes is wrong with the public schools in his community.

But, while we give Doda Lucy high marks in courage and convictions, we flunk him in content when he complains about supposed discrimination against about 200 Albanian-speaking students because of language.

During an open meeting recently, Lucy confronted the Farmington Board of Education - as well as the unblinking eye of the cable TV camera - with the startling accusation that Albanian students are being denied equal education because they possess limited English.

"Our kids are being raised in an environment where they feel inferior," he said, reading from a prepared statement.

The solution, Lucy suggested, is to have certified teachers, not the less-expensive para-professionals the district now employs, teach their kids English.

Azani, we praise Lucy, who's shown real concern for this student group, which includes his son. He feels their chances for success, both in school and after graduation, are limited without English.

He's right to worry. Chances are mighty slim for anyone who lacks good communications skills. And in the United States of America, communications are in the English language.

For more than a century, the public schools

have been the catalyst that turned foreigners into Americans.

The system worked in the 1890s with the "huddled masses" coming off Ellis Island to learn English in the public schools of New York. It still works today in districts like Farmington.

People who demand massive special treatment from the public schools need to remember that the individual is absorbed by the system. It doesn't work in reverse.

School officials would spend themselves poor in a very short time if they provided certified teachers for every student group with a spokesman brassy enough to demand them.

As it is, the Farmington district works with about 600 bilingual students and provides special instruction in 17 languages. Farmington, we believe, is a district that bends over backward to assist students with special language needs.

Lucy should remember that the "environment" he complained about includes more than the schoolroom. It takes in the home, too, and that's where a lot of these problems could be solved.

Parents should see it that their youngsters are prepared for the public schools, and that preparation might include out-of-school instruction in English if needed.

Maybe the Albanian community of metropolitan Detroit could provide tutors for youngsters who need to trade in their Albanian for English.

There are many ways to handle Doda's complaint. Not all of them involve public spending.

Memorial Day's real message

Memorial Day is coming. A nation at peace can - and should - think about war.

Memorial Day, Monday, May 30, means time away from work and school for many. It's the start of one of our three-day weekends that we've come to cherish.

Over the Memorial Day weekend, those lucky enough to have the time off will picnic, play softball, head for the beach, wash the car, take in a parade, watch the Indianapolis 500, grill some steaks, dig in the garden, relax in the sun or in the air-conditioned bliss of a suburban home.

At this time, we are encouraged to remember the "real meaning" of Memorial Day. After all, memorial means remembrance, and this is a day to remember and salute America's war heroes who died in battle.

And there are scores of people in our communities who won't let us forget. They're from the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and other patriotic organizations, and they're the ones who organize and participate in those parades and services held in the parks and along the main streets of our towns.

The marching and wreath-laying are an expression of our tribute to our war dead, to their devotion to duty, to their courage and patriotism. Indeed, our war dead have made us their debtors - for the flag of our nation still flies over a free land.

However, before we get to waxing too patriotic about this day for patriots, let us remember that there are other reasons for thinking about war and its consequences.

In past years, many would recoil in disgust and anger at what they considered to be a celebration of war on Memorial Day. There were tanks and artillery paraded down our streets, and there were military personnel in uniform



Meaning: Remember the "real meaning" of Memorial Day. After all, memorial means remembrance, and this is a day to remember and salute America's war heroes who died in battle.

with rifles on their shoulders.

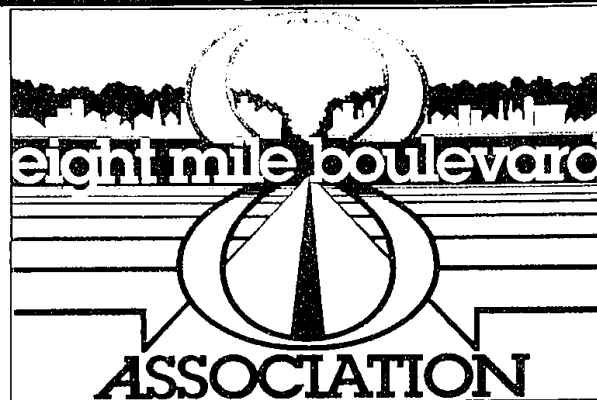
They were correct: There was nothing to celebrate. But, even though we've gotten away from glorifying war on Memorial Day, it would be a serious mistake to forget about it.

War can be stupid and senseless. Even the most fervent patriot or the most fanatic ideologue will admit the truth of that statement. Perverse acts are part of some wars.

Yes, there is a whole lot to recall about war. If we think about past wars, perhaps we won't have to repeat them. We think that's what the men and women in their uniforms with the rifles on their shoulders are really trying to tell us.

We should listen . . . and remember for the sake of generations to come.

Sign of the times



Coming together: The Eight Mile Boulevard Association's just-released logo was unveiled to applause at its inaugural annual meeting last week. Twelve of 13 communities spanning Eight Mile belong to the group, which is dedicated to the road's improvement. The city of Livonia is the lone holdout.

LETTERS

Thanks offered

Members of Farmington's Beautification Commission wish to thank you for the excellent coverage in the Observer in the May 12 issue. Your treatment of pictures and copy reminding readers of our beautification campaign is creative and timely.

Jackie Saito, Farmington

Time those doors

At a neighborhood drugstore recently, my mother, who has to walk slowly because she uses a cane, was almost hit by the automatic door when it closed before she had a chance to go through it. All automatic doors should be timed so that anyone who is not able to walk fast would be able to walk through them before they close.

Nancy Newell, Farmington

About North Korea

I am writing this letter concerning the nuclear bombs in North Korea. I think that we should get involved and go into North Korea, because of the fear of them dropping the bomb or bombs on us.

Some other reasons are that they could try to take over Eastern Europe or South Korea, and the United Nations stated that there were to be no nuclear arms.

Another reason is that North Korea signed the Non-Proliferation treaty that states that the IAEA can inspect nuclear sites, and North Korea only let them inspect during the night using only flashlights.

So that's my opinion about the North Korea situation.

Aaron Wilkin, Farmington Hills

Control is gone

In an opinion column that appeared in The Observer May 9, Rep. Jan Dolan said, "I believe it (HB 5128) gives school boards the policy-making authority they are entitled to as elected officials who represent the community."

The fact of the matter is that school boards now have even less control over policy-making and fund distribution than they have ever had before.

This loss of control is not due to HB 5128. It is a direct result of what our elected representatives, of whom Dolan is one, have decided to shove down our throats. I am referring to the "lesser of two evils," Proposal A, which passed in March.

Before Proposal A passed, property taxes from local residents went to local districts. We elected people to serve on school boards who would use those school taxes to reflect the educational needs and desires of the community.

After Proposal A, the control of funds was taken out of the hands of our locally elected representatives. It now lies in the hands of state bureaucrats who will "tell" the school boards how to spend the money "given" to them by the state, regardless of the needs or desires of the individual community, funds will be withheld.

Does the term "the state" sound at all communistic to anyone out there? Have we forgotten the principles for which the revolutionary patriots fought so zealously to win freedom from England? Doesn't anyone understand that this is taxation without representation? Isn't it time the adult voters take the time to analyze what is happening?

HB 5128 has nothing at all to do with the quality of education in a local community. Proposal A, "the lesser of two evils," takes control out of the hands of our locally elected officials and places it in the hands of the state.

Let's not ignore the fact that our elected representatives recently decided to increase their personal public relations budgets by \$9,600 while at the same time they have taken away our control of funds to be spent on our children.

Patriella A. Faletti, Farmington Hills

About Albanians

I read your story in the May 19 Farmington Observer regarding Albanian parents, and I just feel I need to express a concern I have for all the special-interest groups in our country complaining about injustices and discrimination.

In this case of the Albanians, the United States is an English-speaking country. If each ethnic group were to be satisfied in schools and government, etc., the cost would be astronomical.

If the Albanian families want to hire Albanian-speaking people to help their children at their expense, they could. However, if our schools provide these special services, then what about the Chinese, Japanese, Middle Eastern and European people?

If I go to the non-English-speaking countries, I am expected to adapt to their language and customs; I am not expected or encouraged to change their process.

Why do people come to America and then want to change our process to meet their special needs?

Our appointed and elected officials had better wake up, because giving in to all these groups ultimately will fragment our country.

Derrick Reynolds, Farmington Hills

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION: What's on your mind?



"I'm researching dogs for our family."
Maryann Elsworth
Farmington Hills



"Mutual funds . . . I'm tracking my investments."
Ken Dorocak
Farmington Hills



"Just reading this magazine . . . and house-keeping."
Irene Theisen
Farmington



"A quotation from Mark Twain comes to mind: 'We no longer have statesmen so we must do with politicians.'"
Scott Lanheiser
Farmington Hills

We asked this question at the Farmington Branch of the Community Library.

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