

POINTS OF VIEW

Face of a girl long-dead is still saving lives

Thanks for the tip, Barry Franklin. Thanks for the coaching, Ms. 911 dispatcher. Between the three of us, we saved my friend Steve's life.

Dr. Barry Franklin, a physiologist, has written a Fitness column for years. One of his best was "A course that saves lives," about CPR or cardio-pulmonary resuscitation. You use CPR to save a person who is drowning, had a heart attack or is choking.

If you missed it, it's now Chapter 11 in his book "Making Healthy Tomorrow" (Globebook Guidebooks), a volume I had the honor to edit and thus read intensively. He learned "skills I hope I'll never need" and says everybody should learn CPR. He's right.

I had a dose of CPR three decades ago as a "weekend warrior." We watched a demonstration of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, then a new technique, with a mannequin called Resusci-Anna. We troops never got to use Resusci-Anna, but we still learned a lot.

It's spooky. Resusci-Anna's face is

the death mask of a pretty teenage girl whose body was fished from France's River Seine at the turn of the century. Asmund Laerdal, the Norwegian who invented the mannequin with the life-like lungs in 1960, could have used a blank department-store mannequin's face. Now I know why he used a real face.

My friend Steve, 81 and a widower, had lung congestion. I went to his Dearborn Heights home to drive him to a hospital and pick up his dog, Sammy, for babysitting.

While slipping up his bag, Steve keeled over and went rigid. His upper lip curled back, just like Resusci-Anna's. I phoned 911, described the situation and asked for an EMS unit. The dispatcher already had Steve's address on her screen.

Steve wasn't breathing, there was no pulse, and his face was turning blue. "Can you give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation?" asked the dispatcher. Yes, I have an aversion to touching a dead person, but I overcame it in about a



TIM RICHARD

quarter of a second. It took a couple of seconds to improve my technique to the point where air wasn't escaping out the side of his mouth.

"Do you know how to pump his chest?" No. She coached me. "Pump 15 times and count out loud. I want to hear you count," she said. No response from Steve. More mouth-to-mouth. No response. Fifteen more chest pumps, out loud.

Suddenly Steve snorted — a breath! Under my left hand, his heart fluttered.

The dead blue color disappeared. I don't remember distinctly, but the dispatcher and I probably congratulated each other, though she deserves the bulk of the praise.

"You should be hearing the EMS unit about now," said the dispatcher. No... yes, a truck was pulling up outside.

My guess is that Steve was out about four minutes. Any longer, according to Dr. Franklin, and there might have been brain damage.

I'll make a long story short. A crack cardiologist at Garden City Hospital diagnosed a blockage in a heart artery and sent Steve to University Hospital in Ann Arbor for an angioplasty. Barry Franklin wrote a good column about angioplasty. They insert a thin balloon in the artery and squash the debris clogging it. Steve will be on glycerine pills, to keep the arteries open, the rest of his life.

There was no brain damage. Ten days later, Steve and I were back in his house, watching a western

video, quaffing a few root beers and watching Sammy sniff his surroundings. Steve sailed with the Navy in three oceans during World War II and doesn't care for war flicks.

We toasted Barry Franklin for his advice that people should invest a couple of nights in a CPR course at the local hospital, Heart Association, Red Cross, high school or workplace. (According to SEMCOG's projections, the fastest-growing segments of our population are going to be 65-84 and over-85. Chances are, nearly everyone will have a chance to use it.)

There was a toast to the 911 dispatcher who had coached me. And there was a little prayer for the repose of the soul of the drowned teenage girl, never identified, whose face lives on as Laerdal's Resusci-Anna.

Tim Richard reports on the local implications of state and regional events. His Touch-Tone voice mail number is (313) 863-2047, Ext. 1881.

LETTERS

Shed blinders

Congratulations, Anna Pawlewicz, for a wonderful letter entitled, "Remarks Absurd" (Letters, Feb. 9).

My child was in the same class as Sandy Gruke's son, and I too "saw the handwriting on the wall." The "handwriting" led me to believe my child — as very lucky to have the same teacher at Hillside for his kindergarten experience.

My child learned everything I expected, using phonics and much more, and was given this instruction with love and acceptance to boot. What more could you ask for?

By the way, I, like Mrs. Gruke, have a teaching degree. I am certified in regular and special education and have a graduate certification in the teaching of reading. I was a very highly regarded teacher in Port Huron.

As a member of the school's Mission 2007 committee, I have learned to listen to those who feel differently than I

do. All of these volunteers have assembled to help create the best school district possible for our children.

We can rise to the occasion by taking off the narrow-minded blinders and using the many teaching tools we have to teach children the way they learn best. To that end, I would say anyone who doesn't use phonics to teach is missing the boat.

Anyone who doesn't use whole language, traditional spelling, inventive spelling, eight words, etc., is missing the boat. I find the whole debate of which way to go trite, simplistic and narrow-minded.

Different children need different approaches and we can and should often do them what they need — even if it means we have to work a little harder to do so. My experience has been that most teachers do employ a variety of strategies to assure learning.

I would like to clear up one final point, for those of you unfamiliar with "inventive" spelling. When the children study spelling, they must spell

the words on their list accurately. When they do creative writing, they use inventive spelling and do not correct spelling until they get into the editing process.

Can you imagine how frustrating it would be to a small child, to correct their every other word and still expect them to be creative.

Ironically, teachers will tell you the words children are made to memorize, are often forgotten in a few months while the words the kids misspell and then edit, look up and rewrite, are the ones they remember. In any case, both are necessary.

Finally, I would say the recriminations and finger pointing should stop and cooperation should begin. We all want our MEAP scores to be higher. As a member of the School Improvement Committee at Hillside, I can tell you, expository reading, the only low scores on the MEAP, had already been identified as a weak area and the committee had put strategies in place to correct it, before the MEAP scores even appeared.

By the way, there is a School Improvement Committee because, just like the auto industry, the schools have recognized the need for continuous quality improvement.

Arlene Johnson, Farmington Hills

Treat all fairly

I moved to Farmington almost 10 years ago. My experiences with the Farmington police have all been positive. Every officer that I have come in contact with — all three of them — treated me politely.

When I first moved here, however, I couldn't help noticing that all of the motorists that I saw the police stop were black people. It was so obvious that I began to keep count. Over the span of a few years the count was 16 black motorists, four white.

One of the black men I saw, who had been pulled over on Grand River, was opening his briefcase and trunk for the police. In the few seconds that I saw him the motorist did not seem suspi-

cious, but I only saw him briefly from across the street.

Had I not previously seen that black people pulled over for each white person, the thought that he was being harassed might not have crossed my mind.

My limited observations over the past 9 1/2 years have led me to believe that Farmington police stop a disproportionate number of black motorists. Mr. Lauder's statements reported in your paper (Observer, Feb. 20) — that no policy of harassing black motorists exists in Farmington — were reassuring, since what I have seen suggests otherwise.

The last motorist I saw pulled over was a white, middle-aged homemaker: the blue flashing lights were in my rearview mirror. I look forward to the day when all motorists in Farmington are given the same respect, humor and warning that I was given.

And I promise that I will never, ever make another illegal right turn on red.

Sharon Elster, Farmington

Right-wing meddlers are dangerous to education

Two items recently in the news demonstrate how dangerous it is to mix what our kids learn in school with the ambitious whimsy of right-wing politics.

Item One: Although scores on Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) exams show general improvement over last year, less than half of Michigan students who took the mandatory statewide test last fall did satisfactory work in math and reading.

"Overall, the scores are good, but not good enough," said state school Superintendent Robert Schiller. "I'm quite pleased that the schools are taking the test seriously. They're doing a lot of work aligning their curriculum with the test."

Here we have the MEAP test doing precisely what school reformers, both Republican and Democratic, have advocated for years: Providing a single statewide standard by which each school can judge how its students are doing and make adjustments if necessary for improvement.

Item Two: The Senate Education Committee recently approved a bill to allow two dozen school districts to opt out of statewide exams and write their own proficiency tests.

Why? The stated reason is it will strengthen schools because "it allows the locals to go beyond state standards," according to Sen. Leon Stille, R-Spring Lake, who joined two other GOP senators in approving the bill on a 3-2 party-line vote.

Hogwash! Here we have nothing less than a brazen attempt to rip up any objective measurement of educational achievement. If every district is to pick its own proficiency test, how will employers judge a graduate's skill level? How will parents — operating in the "school marketplace," so powerfully advocated by Gov. John Engler — pick one school over another?

This stuff is getting serious. This newspaper led the way in fighting to obtain and publish the MEAP scores in this district, building by building, school by school. No single thing this newspaper has done over the past decade has aroused as much parental interest and reader comment.

Making the MEAP test results public has helped — forced, some would say — schools to focus on what their students actually learn and how they stack up against others. Courses are getting changed and toughened; scores are going



PHILIP POWER

up. After reviewing last year's test results, state Department of Education consultants urged that teachers give more attention to adding more geometry to math courses, spending more time on informational reading and less on fiction, providing periods of sustained silent reading and learning fewer science concepts but in more depth.

Sound like mushy "edubabble"? Not at all. It's good, conservative, common sense applied to our schools.

So what's behind all the nonsense? Pandering, for one thing, to the folks who want to spend public tax money on private and parochial schools. This is not some abstraction. Just last week, three Republican senators quietly introduced a resolution to remove the Michigan Constitution's ban on parochial.

Ambitious planning, for another. That strange sound you hear in the distance is the office of Senate majority leader Dick Posthumus, R-Alto, cranking up for a run for the governorship when Gov. Engler exits, presumably stage right. Posthumus is the main sponsor of the bill to let local districts pick their own assessment tests which is on the Senate calendar for a vote this week.

I had thought that Posthumus, though hard right, was smart and sensible. I wonder now.

And where, pray tell, is the voice of the Michigan business community, which has been the main force behind tough statewide learning standards and comprehensive assessment tests to measure achievement?

Speak up, you guys! It's getting late!

Phil Power is chairman of the company that owns this newspaper. His Touch-Tone voice mail number is (313) 863-2047, Ext. 1880.

Happy Anniversary

THE MICHIGAN HOME & GARDEN SHOW

March 2-5
at Pontiac Silverdome

THE Observer & Eccentric

NEWSPAPERS

Visit the beautiful anniversary garden at the Home & Garden Show March 2-5 at the Pontiac Silverdome...
If Your Anniversary is in the Month of March, receive a free photograph of you and your better half in this romantic setting!

First Fifty couples receive free portrait photo
Friday 6 - 9 p.m.
Saturday 1 - 4 p.m.
Sunday 1 - 4 p.m.
(Additional photos are \$2.50)

The anniversary garden. Displayed by Gillings Nursery, is just one of the beautiful gardens and landscape designs at the Michigan Home & Garden Show. Catch a breath of spring at the standard flower show.
Plus...see a \$32,000 Porsche-inspired hot tub, attend children's gardening seminars, and learn from landscaping, building, remodeling, interior design, and flower arranging experts. Homeowners will find exactly what they are looking for at The Michigan Home & Garden Show

Thursday, March 2, 3 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Friday, March 3, 12 noon-10 p.m.
Saturday, March 4, 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Sunday, March 5, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Admission: Adults \$6.00, Children (6-14) \$3.00 and 5 & Under Free