

## Earth Day

### Best observed on local level

**E**arth Day is coming. Isn't it? Well, yes and no. If you're taking the national view, you're too late. We did hear something about the 26th-annual Earth Day being observed across the nation last Monday, April 22.

We can't speak for the rest of the country, but here in the Farmington area Earth Day '96 will be celebrated Saturday, May 4, with some worthwhile doings in Heritage Park.

The local program hasn't been announced officially, but Farmington Hills naturalist Joe Derek tells us that there'll be a pancake breakfast, pheasant release, Native American display and visit by top wildlife naturalist Rusty Prentner.

Of course, a seedling or two might be given out. In the spirit of recycling, a truck will deliver a large aluminum-foil ball. Earth Day participants will be able to add to the ball with their own (clean) aluminum foil.

Watch for more details in the next couple editions of the Farmington Observer.

Going over these upcoming events reminds us of one very important thing about Earth Day in particular and environmental causes in general: They're best observed on the local level.

Try as they might, the tastemakers in Washington and Hollywood and in the corporate boardrooms never could sell Earth Day to America — not in 1970 when the idea was considered to be a communal pipe dream of dangerous radicals, and not in recent years when they rolled away the rock and tried to resurrect the concept.

Earth Day never caught on with Americans as did, for example, President George Bush's short, successful war in Saudi Arabia and Iraq. But the Gulf War was all about maintaining a

**■ Hope springs from the grass-roots level, from places like Heritage Park in Farmington Hills on a sunny Saturday afternoon in early May.**

lifestyle. Earth Day is about changing it.

John and Jane Q. Suburbia might just scratch their heads and ask, "Why change?" It's too bad so many people feel this way because Planet Earth in the closing years of the 20th Century truly needs our help.

But there is hope. And, as is so often the case, that hope springs from the grass-roots level, from places like Heritage Park in Farmington Hills on a sunny Saturday afternoon in early May.

Hope also comes shining through in the spirit of volunteerism offered up by suburbanites in the annual cleanups the Rouge River and other long-polluted streams in the Detroit area.

It's an important story when people band together to tackle trash and brave toxins in an attempt to clean up what years of neglect and abuse have caused. It needs to happen more often and on a much larger scale, but it's good to see all the same.

And there's additional hope seen in the willingness of Farmington-area residents to accept a recycling program, even though it means inconvenience and sometimes added expense.

Little things like these make us realize that the promise of Earth Day exists in our communities. The hallelujah (or lack of it) from Washington and Hollywood isn't going to diminish that.

## Motorists win this road battle

**O**akland motorists can give thanks to an obscure federal bureaucrat and their hang-tough local officials for saving the 1996 road construction season and preserving money for local roads.

Rodney Slater, of the Federal Highway Administration, last week got leaders of the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments to reach something resembling an honorable agreement on how road money would be spent. SEMCOG unanimously approved it Friday.

We say "something resembling" honorable because it employs today's greatest labor-saving device — tomorrow. Stripped of its rhetoric, the scheme with the lofty appellation of "advanced construct" means the state and local units will use today's money to pay for projects that Uncle Sam will reimburse tomorrow.

SEMCOG negotiators from Oakland County included deputy county executive John Grubba (longtime boss at the county road commission), board chair John McCollough, R-Royal Oak, and SEMCOG chair Joan Buser, supervisor of Oakland Township.

Gov. John Engler saves some face because the big freeway projects he wants will stay on course. SEMCOG, Oakland and local officials bring home far more bacon than Engler wanted to let them have from the federal hog. Altogether, projects worth \$2 billion can be funded over three years.

On balance, however, Engler emerges looking bad. He announced last December he intended to commandeer a ton of money for state projects, the heck with local needs. He balked at endorsing a much-needed fuel tax increase for roads unless the state could eat the lion's share. Engler reportedly made political threats against the political future of Republican County Executive L. Brooks Patterson and against freeway exits in the new Tiger Stadium area in

Detroit, if he didn't get his way. His press secretary, John Truscott, made smart-aleck comments about "Wayne County politics" within SEMCOG, although clearly the two counties were on the same bipartisan track.

SEMCOG, under the cool guidance of executive director John Ambarger and Oakland's mellifluous Grubba, held its collective temper and responded with dignity, tact and fact. It is, after all, a planning organization, not given to the Engler-Truscott brand of bombast. Moreover, SEMCOG's clout has been enhanced under the new federal ISTEA (InterSurface Transportation Efficiency Act), making it a partner of the governor, not a subordinate to be bullied.

And so, many projects — including extending the Haggerty Connector and widening western Eight Mile Road — will proceed on schedule. Motorists should rejoice.

While a federal bureaucrat helped resolve the disagreements between Engler and SEMCOG, a major chore still needs to be accomplished. Anyone with eyes and a sensitive spine knows our roads are full of potholes; many need widening, turn flares and improved signals. Federal CAPE (fuel economy) standards mean less fuel is burned per mile, and less road revenue is generated.

We call on Gov. Engler to support a fuel tax increase that helps both state and local roads. We call on legislators, particularly Engler's fellow Republicans, to stop being afraid of gubernatorial rhetoric and threats.

As SEMCOG showed last week, this governor can be forced to listen to reason.

## COMMUNITY VOICE

### QUESTION:

How do you think the Tigers will do this season?



"They've got a chance if Cecil (Fielder) keeps hitting."  
C.J. Ghannam



"If their starting pitching does all right, then they'll finish in the middle."  
Tom Judd



"If they can keep at least seven runs a game on the board, then they win some games."  
Matt Sullivan



"I think the young guys have to contribute more than they're expected to."  
Aaron Iaconelli

## LETTERS

### They're for Sever

**W**e would like to encourage the citizens of Farmington and Farmington Hills to vote for Terry Sever in the upcoming special election.

Terry is a local businessman who has worked tirelessly for our community for many years. Since our community is a major population center of Oakland County, it would seem that we should have local representation in the state Senate.

Bill and Ann Hiner,  
Farmington Hills

### Abraham's sheep

**T**his year, on April 28 in Makkah, Arabia, about three million Muslims from all over the world will be offering the sacrifice of an animal such as sheep, goat, camel, cow, etc. in memory of the sheep, which was replaced by God Almighty to save Ishmael when his father, Ibrahim wanted to sacrifice his only son to obey the command of God (Allah, in Arabic).

Angels built the first House of God, Ka'bah in Makkah, Arabia, thousands of years ago. Adam and his Biblical successors kept on renovating it. Noah's flood swept it away leaving behind a mound. Ibrahim rebuilt it and it still is in a much improved, glorified condition with air conditioning and cooler walkways, etc.

The prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) in obedience to Allah's command took his only son Ishmael (Ismael) to the Kaaba to sacrifice him as commanded by God in his dream. To the Muslims, the Ka'bah is a symbol of unity and mutuality. Muslims, like their many predecessors don't worship the Ka'bah. Long time ago there were 365 idols placed inside it with one very large. Ibrahim (May Allah's peace be upon him) destroyed all but the largest one and placed a hammer in its hand.

When the idol-worshippers arrived and questioned Ibrahim, Ibrahim pointed to the biggest idol and suggested to ask him. The worshippers wonderingly replied how can it talk, it is only a stone. Soon they realized their folly but the powerful tribesman placed new idols.

Later on, Ibrahim (PBUH) peace be upon him was thrown in the fire which turned into a flower garden by the command of Allah.

For thousands of years, and again this year by April 28, millions of Muslims are gathering at Kaaba to perform the century-old tradition of Ibrahim.

They come for all corners of the world. They come by planes, trains, buses, taxis, cars, camels and some even walk.

Religious activities remain the same as instituted by Ibrahim.

In Islam all people are equal regardless of their national origin, race, ethnicity, color, etc. The pilgrimage is a unique phenomenon found only in Islam.

Masloom X observed it, preached it back in

the United States — and some say, lost his life, since his new teachings were disliked by others.

In Islam, there is no such thing as the caste system. There is no slaughter of baby girls and no widows have to be burnt alive with their dead husbands, as is practiced in some countries.

The visit to Ka'bah by a Muslim is called Hajj or pilgrimage. Every Muslim is obligated to perform Hajj at least once in their lifetime, provided all the requirements are met.

As said by Tayyibee and Durant, what sight to behold: million of people of all color, gender, height, shape and race wearing the same white robe and performing the same activities as prescribed by Ibrahim.

Muslims invite Christians and Jews to seek out the similarities in the three monotheistic faiths and to create more harmony. May Allah bless us all. Amen.

S.A. Razvi, president, Monotheistic Congregation,  
Farmington Hills

### Watch those dogs

**T**he Downtown Development Authority has invested nearly \$2 million in the district for streetscape improvements. This includes new sidewalks, pedestrian lamps, street benches, trees, flowers, banners and picnic tables.

The board is committed to maintaining all of these improvements and to keeping the district clean and free of litter.

Therefore, we are asking everyone who has a pet to please clean up any waste matter immediately. The DDA director has observed pets being allowed to eliminate waste on the buses of our beautiful street lamps and in the newly planted grass area of the Orchard Street park.

The DDA has made a large investment in order that the downtown shopping area will be a cheery, clean atmosphere for everyone to enjoy.

Perhaps the few who spoil the beauty for the many to enjoy do not realize there is a city ordinance prohibiting pet waste elimination on public property.

We hope that everyone will do their part in helping to keep our downtown looking its best at all times.

Judy Downey, executive director,  
Downtown Development Authority

**Opinions are to be shared:** We welcome your ideas, as do your neighbors. That's why we offer this space on a weekly basis for opinions in your own words. We will help by editing for clarity. To assure authenticity, we ask that you sign your letter and provide a contact telephone number.

Letters should be mailed to: Editor, The Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48335. Or, they can be faxed to: 810-477-5722.

## MEMORY LANE

This week in history as reported in the pages of the Farmington Observer and the Farmington Enterprise:

**■ 40 YEARS AGO — APRIL 28, 1966 (ENTERPRISE)**

A second request for "substantial increases" in police salaries was filed with the Farmington City Council. A \$4,600-per-year minimum salary was part of the proposal.

Jack K. Cotton, a Wayne State University professor, was named the inaugural athletic director for the Farmington Schools.

Short item: "Philip, three-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Morris Johnson of Parker Avenue, is ill with measles."

**■ 10 YEARS AGO — APRIL 24, 1986 (OBSERVER)**

Two .22-caliber rifles were fired from two upstairs windows during an afternoon of sniper fire from a house on 13 Mile Road, testified one of four teenagers allegedly involved in the shooting spree.

Sara Warren and Donald Munter were appointed to three-year terms on the Farmington Historical Commission.

**■ 1 YEAR AGO — APRIL 27, 1995 (OBSERVER)**

Farmington Hills voters were to decide the fate of SMART, the suburban bus system, in a special election set for June 6, 1995.

A \$300 air bag was reported stolen from a 1993 Ford Probe at the Twelfth Estate Condos. The Farmington Public Schools were to operate an extended-learning program for 160 youngsters during the summer.

## The Farmington Observer

TOM BAER, EDITOR, 810-477-5450

TOM BYRD, PUBLISHER, 810-901-2537

ROBERT SALLAR, MANAGING EDITOR, 810-901-2563

MARY SCOTT, CIRCULATION MANAGER, 810-901-2548

STEVEN K. POPE, GENERAL MANAGER, 810-901-2595

SUBURBAN COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION

PHILIP POWER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD JOHN REEDY, VICE PRESIDENT/EDITORIAL RICHARD AGHIAN, PRESIDENT

**Our Mission:** "Because we publish community newspapers, we think about community journalism in a fundamentally different way than our bigger competition. They consider themselves to be independent from the stories and communities they cover, swooping in to write the unusual or sensational and then dashing off to cover something else. We regard ourselves as both accurate journalists and as caring citizens of the communities where we work."

— Philip Power