

## POINTS OF VIEW

## LETTERS

## It's common sense

I read with great interest Ronald Oliverio's letter regarding the helmet law passed by a majority of the Farmington Hills City Council on May 11.

I respect Mr. Oliverio's right to his opinion and he stated his case quite strongly. However, I would like to express a different opinion.

I have watched races, albeit on the tube, and have noted serious bikers who occasionally ride through our subdivision. It seems to me that I have observed all of them wearing helmets, even in extremely hot weather. I presume they wear them for a good reason, that being to protect their heads in the event of an accident.

I noted that Mr. Oliverio took great objection to the lady from our neighboring community of Farmington, who gave the crackling egg demonstration to represent what happens to the human head when it contacts a solid object, such as the ground, pavement, or a tree. Although she was not a member of our community, let's just say she was a caring member of the greater community.

I would like to digress a bit by using this example. As a retired automobile designer I was privileged to have been the manager of a safety studio at the former Chrysler Corporation Design Office. As part of our research we studied the effects of what happens to the unrestrained human body. I remember very clearly the photographs I saw taken by a professor at the University of Michigan, who, as part of a research study, would be called out, at all hours of the day and night, to come to the scene of fatal accidents to photograph the accident scene and then go to the morgue and photograph the injury that led to the demise of the victims. A grisly business, and not much fun to view. He even wore a special harness and a helmet in his own car, as a result of his research. However, that research helped to establish the many safety measures that protect all of us in our vehicles today, in spite of ourselves.

I used to visit my cousin in Pennsylvania who objected to wearing his seat belt and shoulder harness. He was quite adamant about it and felt it usurped his God-given and Constitutional rights. I remarked to him, after belting up myself, "what do you think would happen to a bag of groceries if it was placed on the seat beside you and you had to make a panic stop?" He reflected for a moment, then allowed that it would fly off the seat, spilling the contents and perhaps breaking any items in glass bottles or jars. I pointed out that because we feel secure and comfortable in our moving vehicles, our bodies are traveling at the same speed as the vehicle itself, be it 20, 60, or 80 mph. As a

little exercise try walking into a wall without protecting yourself, at say, 4 or 5 mph, considered a fairly brisk walking speed. Well, I think without actually doing it you can imagine what might happen. Need I say more?

Now, as for the intrusion of government into our lives. We have traffic lights at intersections and other locations deemed dangerous. We have a myriad of safety regulations imposed on the automobile manufacturers. We have laws and rules that govern our daily lives and no one in this densely populated urban society of ours would advocate repealing those laws and rules that safely and sanely protect us and regulate us in an orderly manner. If that were to happen society would break down and there would be anarchy.

Having said that, certainly there are laws and rules that are too intrusive into the lives of too many people, do not enhance the common good and demean society as a whole. These should be repealed or recast. However, freedom is wonderful, but without integrity and responsibility it too can lead to anarchy.

Finally, I believe we should accept those rules and laws that are just plain common sense and are designed to protect and enhance. It seems to me that with the traffic we have today, anyone riding a bike, whether child or adult, should wear a helmet. It protects the human head from serious injury that could potentially lead to life as a paraplegic or seriously debilitated on some level. Think about it, if you ride a bike, you wouldn't want it to happen to you, and you certainly wouldn't want it to happen to your son or daughter. I rest my case.

Richard W. Steiger  
Farmington Hills

## A legacy

It has been inspiring to watch our community mobilize behind the creation of the Kids World PlayScape. Together we've built a PlayScape that will feature in generations of Farmington childhood memories.

As a citizen of Farmington, a parent, and a friend, I would like to thank those individuals who through their generous donation of time, energy, resources and visions have helped make the PlayScape a reality. Thank you Arnie Campbell, Bruce Lilly, Bill Richards, Mardy Stirling and Nancy Tashman. You have left us all a legacy of laughter.

Julie Duvine  
Farmington

## A new newspaper is born

One of the most special things that can happen to somebody in the newspaper business is to be in on the birth of an entirely new newspaper.

Over the 30-odd years I've been in the business, I've been lucky enough to have been present at the creation of a new newspaper a fair number of times. But it's always a thrill when it happens. I suppose the birth of a newspaper is much like the birth of a new baby, with all the attendant effort, anxiety, pain and hope.

It also serves to remind us why we are in the business in the first place.

Our company specializes in publishing community newspapers that provide local news, information and advertising that are relevant to the daily lives of people in their own home towns. We believe that any company has to have a firm ethical and philosophical foundation in order to be successful. We sum up that philosophy as follows:

Our fundamental business purposes are to enhance the lives of our readers, nurture the communities we serve, contribute to the business success of our advertisers, provide fulfilling careers for our staffers and earn a fair profit.

In carrying out this philosophy, we practice a special kind of journalism which we call "community journalism" to distinguish it from the kind of journalism practiced by the big city newspapers and TV stations with which we compete.

That's why on the masthead of our editorial pages, we run this statement:

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

Today marks the first edition ever of the new Waterford Eccentric, designed to serve the needs of readers in Waterford Township, a thriving and rapidly growing community in Oakland County, just west of Pontiac. Delivered Thursdays and Sundays each week, it's one of the community newspapers published by HomeTown Communications Network, the company that owns this newspaper.

The founding of a new newspaper usually has to do with community residents and leaders wanting a real hometown paper and/or being dissatisfied with an existing paper.

In the case of the Waterford Eccentric, it turns out that a group of civic leaders approached us several months ago. They were unhappy with the existing newspapers circulating in the area, none of which were centrally concerned with Waterford residents or invested



PHILIP POWER

**In carrying out this philosophy, we practice a special kind of journalism which we call "community journalism" to distinguish it from the kind of journalism practiced by the big city newspapers and TV stations with which we compete.**

in meeting the needs of the community. They asked us to start a new newspaper, one that folks in Waterford could call their own.

Because HomeTown Communications already publishes a number of Eccentric newspapers serving communities throughout Oakland County, their request fell on receptive ears.

We ran the numbers and determined that a new Waterford paper had a fighting chance of being profitable. We found a good office location right on Dixie Highway, in a high traffic area right next to the Blockbuster video store.

We looked for an editor and found a real star in Dan Dean, who had established his credentials with our company as a brilliant photographer and then editor of the Troy Eccentric, a sister newspaper in Oakland County. Dan and Justin Wilcox, the publisher of our newspapers in Oakland County, recruited a corps of reporters and an advertising sales staff, some already Waterford residents.

And now, after several months of detailed planning and frantic effort, a new newspaper has been born.

Our company philosophy lays down the marker by which we expect to be judged by our readers and the communities we serve. I hope you'll get in touch with your community editor or me, both when we meet that standard and when we don't.

Phil Power is chairman of HomeTown Communications Network Inc., the company that owns this newspaper. He welcomes your comments, either by voice mail at (734) 953-2047, Ext. 1880, or by e-mail at [ppower@oonline.com](mailto:ppower@oonline.com)

**SUMMER CLEARANCE COUPONS!**

**20% off**  
DRESS BARN ANY DRESS DRESS BARN WOMAN  
Not valid on 50% off merchandise. One coupon per item. Will not be honored on previous purchases. Gift certificates or store credits are not allowed. Excludes sale items. See store for details.

**20% off**  
DRESS BARN ANY SHORT DRESS BARN WOMAN  
Not valid on 50% off merchandise. One coupon per item. Will not be honored on previous purchases. Gift certificates or store credits are not allowed. Excludes sale items. See store for details.

**20% off**  
DRESS BARN ANY PANT DRESS BARN WOMAN  
Not valid on 50% off merchandise. One coupon per item. Will not be honored on previous purchases. Gift certificates or store credits are not allowed. Excludes sale items. See store for details.

**20% off**  
DRESS BARN ANY T-SHIRT OR TOP DRESS BARN WOMAN  
Not valid on 50% off merchandise. One coupon per item. Will not be honored on previous purchases. Gift certificates or store credits are not allowed. Excludes sale items. See store for details.

**DRESS BARN**  
Also Dress Barn Woman!

For a store near you visit [www.dressbarn.com](http://www.dressbarn.com) or call 800-639-6064, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm EST. M-F  
DRESS BARN WOMAN PRICES SLIGHTLY HIGHER. MOST STORES OPEN 7 DAYS. 8 FIGURES. MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED.

**ANCIENT GOLD**  
The Wealth of the Thracians  
TREASURES FROM THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

Now through August 29

THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

A major exhibition of over 200 brilliant gold & silver objects, recently excavated in Bulgaria from 15 royal Thracian sites, dating from 4000 BC to 200 AD.

Tickets at the DIA box office: 313/833-4005  
Free tickets for DIA members  
5200 Woodward Ave. [www.dia.org](http://www.dia.org)

**MERITOR**

This exhibition is organized by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria & The State for Museum Exhibitions. It is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities. In Detroit, the exhibition is made possible by a generous grant from Meritor Automotive, Inc. Additional support is provided by the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs and the City of Detroit.

**THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS**