

Edison It's time to keep the lights on

We'll say it again: Someone needs to turn the lights on for Detroit Edison. Once again, Farmington Hills residents and officials, including Oakland County Commissioner Terry Sever, have delineated problems — particularly power outages — in the area with electrical service.

And once again, frustrated residents and officials received few answers from the utility company.

Last Thursday's meeting of the Farmington Hills/Detroit Edison Citizens Committee provided yet another opportunity to blast the utility. But once again, Edison representatives, this time in the form of Jim Conley, gave only vague assurances: "We've got plans to respond to every area having problems."

That's great. But what are the plans and where is a timetable for improvement?

Oakland County Commissioner Terry Sever, formerly of the Farmington Hills City Council, knows only too well the depth and scope of electrical problems in the city. There's no doubt he spent many years on the council, listening to residents' complaints.

He is to be applauded for co-sponsoring a resolution authorizing an expenditure of

\$50,000 for a consultant to investigate the electrical problems.

We urge county officials to move on this resolution. Again, Sever is right when he says: "We have to understand why we are having the problems."

And with Edison's poor track record lately, it is best that an outside source determine what is being done properly and what needs work.

As Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagozzi has long claimed, it is time to get Edison's equipment in the Hills assessed to determine if it is adequate and if improvements are necessary.

It is time Edison officials come to terms with the public relations nightmare they have created for themselves. Acts of God are one thing, but what adds salt to the wound is Edison's lack of accountability. When power outages continue for days on end, whose financial responsibility is the spoiled food in refrigerators and freezers?

Residents want and deserve solutions to the problems that cause predictable and consistent power outages in the area.

Retired? Try going to college

A growing number of retirees or near-retirees are going to college with young adults the same age as their grandchildren.

With colleges and universities offering scholarships or discounted tuition, more and more elderly persons are making an appearance in the classroom. There are a variety of reasons, all of which reflect a positive change not only for the individuals involved, but also for the community and educational institutions.

Some seniors are in college to achieve a life-long goal of earning a degree. Others who already have one or two degrees are happy to be in a classroom to take a class "because I want to, not because I have to."

A good example was observed during the opening weeks of classes at Schoolcraft College. A retired Garden City elementary school teacher on campus commented that he is taking a music class — clearly for his own enjoyment, not to enhance his chances for a promotion or a pay raise.

The move by colleges and universities to recruit retirees has another benefit, other than the school filling empty seats while gen-

erating additional income from registration fees.

The elderly students provide a valuable resource for the younger students. "The retirees bring a sense of history and "institutional memory" to subjects that are more words in a history book for young adults.

Nearly all schools of higher education offer substantial discounts. The most liberal is the University of Michigan-Dearborn, which has a 100 percent scholarship program for those at least 60 years old and retired.

To make it easier for retirees who haven't been in a classroom for up to 40 years, some schools offer bachelor's and master's degrees without requiring advanced foreign language, science or math classes. For example, students at U-M-Dearborn can earn a general studies degree.

The bottom line is that local retirees don't have to sit around the house or apartment worrying about how to spend the day or week. Colleges and universities offer an invaluable opportunity to enrich their lives and the lives of those around them.

(Readers are urged to read the "Higher Education" special section in today's Observer.)

Autumn brings us renewed living

We often think of spring as a time of renewal and autumn as the season of death. But the rhythms of our lives seem to work the opposite way.

It is spring when the school year, the legislative session and the television season come to an end. It is a time when thoughts drift to summer vacations and languid days of doing nothing.

But autumn, that's when life really begins anew. The air becomes crisp, chilly, making feet walk a little faster. The slow, precise pace of a baseball game is replaced by the run and thunder of football.

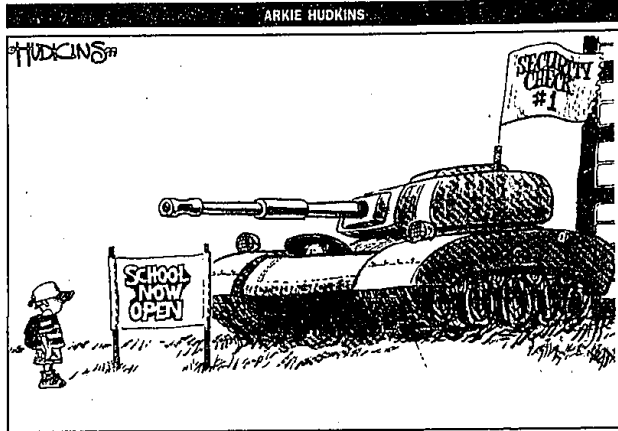
School children begin another year with anticipation, hope or dread. They acquire new clothes, supplies, books, classmates and teachers. For some it is yet another chance to begin again and get it right.

The pace at work picks up. The vacation

season is over and we vow to buckle down, get serious, work harder in that season between the sluggishness of summer and the weariness of winter.

We have rituals for autumn that have a special quality in Michigan, the most autumnal of states. We hold tailgate parties, sip cider and nibble doughnuts at creaky old mills, drive down winding backroads through tunnels of crimson, yellow and amber leaves. We enjoy raking, an activity that has some of the regular rhythms of tai chi. We rally around opposing forces for a showdown of football rivals.

Autumn's holiday is Halloween. It conjures images of the dead but as a lark, a statement of the triumph of life. It, too, is about renewal, getting on with life. This is the season to begin again. Go for it!



ARKIE HUDKINS

LETTERS

Opinions are to be shared. We welcome your ideas, that's why we offer this space for your opinions. We will help by editing for clarity. To assure authenticity we ask that you provide a contact telephone number and if mailing or faxing a letter, please sign it. Letters can be mailed to: Joanne Maliszewski, 33411 Grand River, Farmington, MI 48335, faxed to Joanne at (734) 469-2700 or emailed to jmaliszewski@oc.homecomm.net

Deplorable environment

Upon arrival at the visitors' stand at Farmington High School for the Farmington/North Farmington varsity football game last Friday night, I thought I was on the wrong field as there appeared to be a pitcher's mound built into the middle of the field, highest in the middle, mounded but tapering at both ends. Probably for drainage was the comment, but I thought that's what underground tiling was for, yet enabling a smooth playing surface.

The turf accounted for one tackle of a Farmington runner, and numerous trips of other players. On kicks, the home team had the advantage of knowing how the ball would bounce, mostly in their favor.

The last millage was for the improvement of our schools, but if any of that money was used to change the football field, it was ill-spent. TV 10 announcers commented on the haze appearing later in the game, thinking it was weather induced, when in actuality it was dust and dirt kicked up from the surrounding construction mess, and caused nearly unbearable breathing/sinus difficulties.

I've never seen a football field in worse condition, but I was reassured by another spectator that Harrison's field was, indeed, worse. The game of football may be just another sport to some, but it means so much more to participants and spectators alike. Homecoming is held during football season, the income derived from admittance is the highest of any sport, and the game pulls the most spectators of any outdoor game around.

There's no reason for the fields not to be in tip-top shape. Any visiting game is at a distinct disadvantage, and players hurt because of the uneven surface would have a viable gripe against its engineers.

The field aside, Farmington showed a lot of class by not running up the eight-point differential at the end of the game by allowing the clock to run out when they had third down and goal at the one yard line.

Area newspapers were wrong about the touchdown catch reportedly made by Brian Johns, when it was actually Brian Lafer, who played an outstanding game with few exceptions. I commend both teams for making the most of what I consider to be a deplorable environment.

Lori Johns, parent
NFHS player/student

Heartfelt thanks

On behalf of the present and future users of the Kids World PlayScape, please accept and extend to your entire staff, especially reporter extraordinaire Tim Smith, my earnest appreciation and heartfelt THANKS for your coverage of the PlayScape project. Without the Farmington Observer's coverage it is unlikely the fund-raising and volunteer recruitment would have enjoyed their resounding success.

You and your exceptionally capable staff have again overwhelmingly demonstrated the Observer's deep commitment to not merely observe and report what is happening in the Farmington community, but to be an active participant in what makes Farmington great. I am sure that long after my service to Farmington is finished I will fondly remember the following about Farmington: great people, great history, great community — and a great newspaper!

Bill Richards Jr.
Asst. City Manager and
PlayScape Project Director

Deserve better

Iam writing regarding the Sept. 16 article entitled "Home rule bill draws criticism." The citizens of Farmington and Farmington Hills are not getting what they deserve — a representative in Lansing who listens to their concerns before he acts.

Why is Rep. Raczowski signing his name to a bill and then flip-flopping on it? He admitted the bill he co-sponsored has "language that appears to be contradictory." Doesn't Rep. Raczowski read legislation before he co-sponsors it? Obviously, Rep. Raczowski is not performing his job well and the people of his district deserve better.

Mark Brewer, Chair
Michigan Democratic Party

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:

What's a favorite book that you have recently read?



"Private Woods." It's about Vietnam and what it did to families and relationships."
Suzanne Lenning
Redford



"Cold Mountain" by Charles Frazier. It's beautifully written."
Anne Albaum
Farmington Schools



"Corelli's Mandolin." It has so much history... and a love story."
Sophie Eisenberg
West Bloomfield



"The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis.""
Richard Luteran
Farmington Hills

Farmington Observer

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— Philip Power