

# High notes

## Congratulations to the bands

The Harrison and Farmington high school marching bands have made the community proud during this latest season, capped by national championship competition Nov. 13 in Indianapolis.

What both bands accomplished is tremendous. Both made it into state finals Nov. 7 and both walked away with recognition. Bands do not assume they will perform in a statewide competition. They must be accepted into state finals — no easy achievement.

But Harrison took third place in Flight III and the Farmington Falcons placed ninth in Flight II.

The Harrison band went one step further and performed in the Bands of America Grand National Championships on Nov. 13 at the RCA Dome in Indianapolis. They received a Division I rating.

Anyone who has performed in a marching band surely has to know the dedication, hard work and sweat, talent, that's required from all involved in a performance.

All the more reason we should all give a round of applause to these students who give up their afternoons to practice and march and do it all over again until it is near perfect.

And then we need to give them another round of applause for all the weekends they give up during their teenage years to travel to wherever competitions are taking place.

As school activities go, high school marching bands are often taken for granted, and often don't get the spotlight reserved for other high school activities and sports.

But it should be known that during their years in a marching band students learn plenty. They learn how to practice over and over again. They learn how to coordinate and work as a team. And more importantly, they learn how to be dedicated, how to work out their own schedules between marching band, school work and social and school involvement.

These students who work so hard often go on to college marching bands. Those who choose to end their marching careers in high school nonetheless move forward with a knowledge of what teamwork and camaraderie are all about.

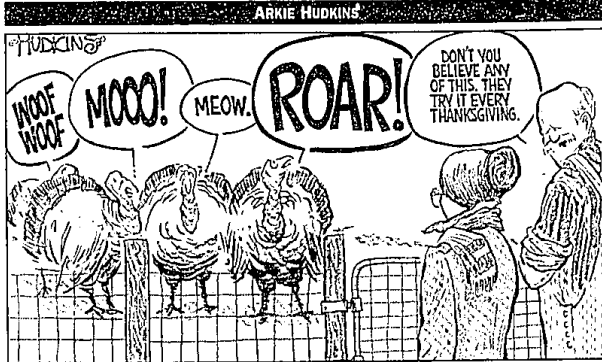
The marching band students also carry into their adult lives an appreciation for music and can make their interest and talent an avocation throughout the years.

In a society where a priority is put on science, math and technology, it is refreshing to see so many young people involved with music and dramatic performance as displayed at state and national competitions.

Kudos must also go to Farmington band director Norman Lagan and Harrison director Mark Phillips, who clearly work as hard as students, and who lead both bands to top honors.

Students and the band directors should be proud of what the bands have accomplished. The awards both bands brought home are well-deserved and represent the culmination of a lot of hard work.

Congratulations!



### LETTERS

#### Good neighbors

On behalf of the students at Cloverdale, we would like to extend a most sincere "thank you" to our neighbors who opened their homes and hearts for our recent trick or treat adventure. This was a first-time experience for many of our students. Due to the generous expression of sharing and acceptance by our neighborhood friends, this adventure was truly a success.

the students and staff  
 Cloverdale Developmental Training Center

dwelleth in the heavens.

Henry Grysh  
 Farmington Hills

#### Why was it approved?

I recently attended a meeting at Farmington Hills City Hall in which our sympathetic Zoning Board Members granted a ridiculous 1,300-foot variance to the minimum 16,500-square-foot lot required to build a house in Pasadena Park Subdivision. Over 80 percent of subdivision residents opposed it.

Why was it approved? Some ZBA members call it a hardship. A "former" neighbor and resident said the family had paid taxes on this parcel of property for 40 years and should be able to sell it for a profit. It was also state the mother was ill. (Get out the Kleenex).

The truth is as I see it is it's a "self-inflicted" hardship or, better yet, self-inflicted "greed." This former resident owned several parcels surrounding him, which he split and sold off throughout the years. Is it Pasadena Park residents' fault he made a bad business decision in spitting these properties? Why did our "former" neighbor wait 40 years to do this? Is it because he didn't want to spoil his own view? Also when he sold his home, why didn't he include this property as part of the home it adjoins. Oh, I forgot: He made \$50,000 by selling it separately.

I remember back in July, 1993 Farmington Hills ZBA granted a 20-foot height variance to a 6-foot maximum fence code to another Pasadena Park resident. Same reason — hardship. I've come to believe that our subdivision residents' majority vote doesn't count when an individual comes to you for a variance.

Well, folks, remember you can bend the rules with the Farmington Hills Zoning Board if you remember the magic word — hardship. What a cop-out. Is it too hard for you to just say NO?

Susan Keon  
 Farmington Hills

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 Michigan 48335. Or they can be faxed to (248) 477-9722.

# Holiday brings home giving

The topics aren't light and frothy, but they're good ones for a family gathered for Thanksgiving and upcoming holidays. These topics are dying and organ donations.

■ Last illness — Medical people can't "pull the plug" when they believe there is no brain activity or any chance a patient will regain consciousness. Families have gone through much courtroom agony saying a patient "would have wanted the plug pulled." But they can't prove it. Not unless you discuss it with your family and put it in writing on a form your family doctor can supply.

Does your family know your wishes about use of life-sustaining equipment if you become comatose? According to Dr. Anna Eschelman, senior health psychologist at Henry Ford Hospital, if the family is in conflict as to the patient's wishes, "any hospital would choose to keep the patient alive by whatever means and resolve the conflict" before making a life-altering decision.

Eschelman said physicians would prefer to honor the wishes of the patient and that's made easier if a discussion has taken place beforehand and everyone is aware of what their loved one would like to have happen in that situation.

"Unfortunately, people typically don't think about these issues until a person is terminally ill or an unexpected tragedy occurs," said Eschelman.

"I would encourage someone to designate a surrogate decision maker who not only knows the person well but knows what they want to have happen," said Eschelman. "The physician would then honor the wishes of the surrogate decision maker."

"The Henry Ford psychologist said it's easier on everyone if the patient's wishes are clear and it's much better if their desires were put in writing through an advanced directive.

■ Accidental death — Under new state laws, drivers renewing their licenses will be asked to include organ donation willingness. So will people applying for state identification card. Votes in both chambers were unanimous, although there was much behind-the-scenes wrangling about details.

Basically, you are asked if, after death, your heart, kidneys and corneas can be salvaged and transplanted to a patient in need. "About 11 people die in Michigan each month because organs are not available, and more than 2,000 are on an organ transplant waiting lists," said Rep. Lynne Martinez, sponsor of one of the laws. "Michigan ranks 45th among 50 states in the number of people who are registered organ donors."

One law requires the Secretary of State to give an applicant for a driver's license information on making an anatomical gift and forming a central registry.

■ Last step — Even if you have signed a license sticker, when you die, hospital officials may ask your next of kin if your organs may be donated. Your next of kin make the final decision. But you certainly will make their moral obligation easier if you discuss the matter with them first.

"We never talked about donation in our family because it just didn't seem important to us," said a Michigan cornea transplant recipient. "Not until my eye injury forced me into blindness. Now that I can see again, I make it a point to help others realize the importance of family discussion and the impact that a donated cornea has made in my life. I am thankful to my donor family every day of my life."

Now, there is one family that will have special reason to give thanks this holiday. Next year, you may be the recipient. Or the donor. Think about it. Talk about it over turkey.

### COMMUNITY VOICE

#### QUESTION:

What's the best and worst of Thanksgiving?



"Being with my family and Christmas is right around the corner."  
 Marta Clark  
 Farmington Hills



"Turkey dinner and preparation."  
 Don Durham  
 Farmington Hills



"Family get-togethers and cooking."  
 Marie Bonadeo  
 Livonia



"Dinner and I don't have a worst. I like holidays."  
 Dan Wilk  
 Farmington Hills

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 — Philip Power