

Playscape

Pick-A-Picket for the holidays

With Hanukkah upon us and Christmas not far – and we're all in a giving mood – there's a great gift that's obtainable at a reasonable price and one that will last forever. You can't find it in a store, but you will find it in your community.



The planned playscape – recently dubbed "A Kids World" – is in need of contributions to make it a reality in Farmington's Shilawassee Park.

To make the project fun for giving, the planning committee has established the Pick-A-Picket effort for the picket fence that will decoratively enclose the family oriented 130-by-200-foot playscape, designed by Allen & Laux.

For \$25 you can buy a picket and have it personalized with your name, your kids' names, or for that matter, anyone's name. Indeed, it will be gift that will keep on giving because your contribution, as well as the personal touch you choose for your two-by-four picket or pickets, will remain in the park for future generations.

A number of other communities, such as Milford, Plymouth Township and Canton Township, have playscapes which provide a focal point in their parks. The play structures, which require volunteer help to build, become gathering spots for families, kids and even adults.

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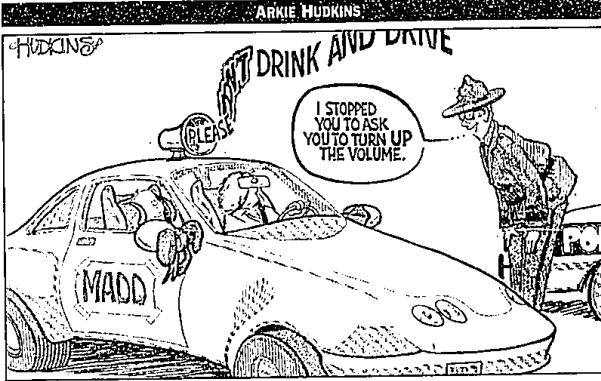
The effort is yet another show of community and camaraderie among individuals, families and businesses.

The fund-raising goal is \$50,000 in direct or in-kind contribution of materials and services by the end of this year. The city of Farmington has already pledged \$60,000 to get the project started.

So far, private citizens have donated the biggest chunk of money. It would be a boon to the planning committee to also have corporate sponsors for the community project. And it wouldn't hurt corporations' images, either, to be associated with the grand plans that will bring the community together.

We urge both individuals and families, as well as corporations and local businesses, to step up and join the community spirit that's building momentum behind the playscape.

It's a giving time. And there's no better place to give than back to your community.



LETTERS

Proud of Raczkowski

With all the negative campaign ads bombarding us from every angle and on every imaginable medium, I for one was very impressed and proud of the way our state representative, Andrew Raczkowski, was able to put his message out to the voters without being dragged into the mudslinging.

This was the tough election for Raczkowski. That first time you come up to the voters for re-election is a real nail-biter. You second guess yourself and the decisions you made during your first term in office over and over again.

It should be very clear that all of Rep. Raczkowski's detractors that he has done a great job! Andrew has upheld his contract with the community he loves and then some. Andrew is everywhere! It does not matter what the event is, as long as it is happening in our community our state representative is there, taking an active role in it.

Raczkowski's youth and vitality have paid the community back great dividends. It has been a long time since we have had such an outstanding young citizen do so much for our area. I feel the biggest payoff we are going to receive is with our young people. Andrew enjoys nothing more than going into one of our local schools and meeting with the kids. He is at his best when he sets up a mock government with the kids and even appoints one of them as speaker of the House. The kids are eating this up!

Those that would pick at Andrew for his youthful exuberance would better serve Farmington and Farmington Hills by supporting Andrew in those areas where they can find common ground with him. Encourage him and root for him once in a while. It won't hurt! I am going to tell you right now that this young man is in a position to serve Farmington/Farmington Hills in a way we haven't been served in a long time. Imagine having our tax dollars coming back to our community instead of being sent elsewhere in our state.

In closing, more people now know Andrew Raczkowski. He has gained their trust and their respect through his own hard work. From this, Andrew received an additional 7 percent of the vote. For this, Andrew is very grateful. He is the only politician I know who personally places "thank you" notes on his signs after an election to let the electorate know they are the reason he won. It is a way to share the victory with the electorate since there is no victory lap to run. I know Andrew will continue to take the tough stands on issues. He will continue to err on the side of families. It is for these reasons that I write to let you know that I am proud of Farmington and proud of our state representative, Andrew Raczkowski.

Kim David Jaske
Farmington

Congestion is the problem

The other day the Detroit Free Press read, "Business group warns Oakland County traffic congestion is strangling area growth."

Today almost every person 16 years and older has to drive a car. Big trucks are rapidly catching up in number, but they occupy the space of five or six cars, and each one does about the same damage to highways as five or six cars. They drive sometimes, I think, 85 miles an hour in a 70 mile zone. Needless to say, our country has been modernizing trucks and neglecting the railroads.

I read recently that because we are building condominiums, shopping centers and expressways (occupying farm land) we will NOT be able to grow enough of our own food and will be dependent on foreign countries for food.

Not roads – congestion is the problem. Simple math can do the job, less vehicles – less congestion.

General Motors' big office in Detroit – envisions probably, plus sport games and concerts there is a need for a fast way to travel from N. Pontiac to the People Mover. Busses for the time being and maybe People Mover can expand north. Parking buildings about every six miles because people are afraid to wait along roads.

State and federal – There is a need for a fast train to travel from Michigan to Florida. Big trucks should go piggyback on rail cars so Canadians and those who wish to go south can take their cars with them and sit in recliner seats in rail cars.

Raise tax on diesel gas and ticket trucks for speeding. Big trucks should only be allowed to drive 100 miles from their own base and we turn more to the railroads for long distance transportation. This may not be popular but it must come.

I think I read where railroads are going to hire 6,500 employees out west. That has got to come in our area also.

Leslie Swanson
Farmington

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.

Holidays shouldn't be a chore

Readers don't have to be reminded what time of year it is. There are traffic jams on the roads leading to the malls. Retail clerks seem a tad unfriendly. Shoppers in front and behind you in line are more impatient.

Part of the negative emotional health experienced during the Christmas shopping season is that TV commercials raise our expectations to unrealistic levels. Those TV images show everyone in a perfectly happy mood. There are long lines at the malls with everyone – shoppers and clerks – smiling.

That's certainly a far cry from the reality of the season.

But shoppers can do a lot of things to reduce, if not eliminate, the stress of last-minute holiday shopping.

First, focus on things you can control, not things you have no influence over.

Second, gift buying is only a holiday activity, something less crucial to people's lives than brain surgery.

There are several tips you can use to not only reduce potential stress this week and next but also make the holiday more enjoyable.

First, realize that you are in control of what you do, not the malls or retail centers.

Second, create a positive mental image of what you want to do. That positive attitude will probably rub off on the clerks you will be dealing with.

Third, do your shopping as early as possible. Most retailers open at 8 or 9 a.m. At that time, there are no crowds and close-to-the-entrance parking spots. Another advantage is that the clerks are fresher in the morning than after a long 10- to 12-hour day.

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Fourth, have a good idea of what you want to buy.

Fifth, not every gift has to be the "perfect" item.

A former counselor offered our readers some advice.

"Christmas is only one day of the year," she said. "There are 364 other days of the year. Not everything has to revolve around that one day."

If you expect Christmas Day to be a perfect day, you would have failed, she said.

She suggested people ask themselves, "What do I want from the Christmas season?"

For many, it is really a warm family atmosphere at the dinner table, she said.

That's certainly a sharp contrast with the TV images of people with happy faces hugging family members.

So with only one week left to buy gifts, enjoy the holiday and look at it as a possible, enjoyable activity, not a chore to be dreaded.

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:
Impeach or
censure ...
Which
should it
be?



"I think they should forget the whole mess."
Thelma Akin
Farmington



"Leave him alone."
Andy Magyar
Farmington



"I think he should be impeached. He's supposed to be the leader of our country."
Dee McAuliffe
Farmington



"I don't know if you can print what I think. He ought to be hog-tied, tared and feathered."
Pat Michael
Farmington

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— Philip Power