

### Civic gala Paul, Tawyea deserve kudos

Think of planning a wedding. Now think of planning a wedding with just two-months notice. That's what the two-member planning committee faced for the recent grand re-opening gala for the Civic Theatre.

By all accounts, the gala Saturday night was pulled off with sophistication, good timing and aplomb. It was a success and an appropriate herald for the beginning of a new era for the Civic Theatre, now owned by the city of Farmington.

Planning committee members Suzanne Paul and Denise Tawyea are to be commended for their efforts and hard work. If something wasn't timed properly or didn't go off without a hitch, the more than 200 guests who filled Legato - next to the theater - were unaware. That's the mark of good, thorough planning.

Tawyea and Paul are examples of two very busy women who nonetheless took time to give back to the community by planning the event, the preparation of which might have daunted the rest of us.

Kudos must also go to Mike and Kelley Nowak of Legato, who opened up their salon for the gala. Truly, these business owners are examples of community partners who give of their time and business for the good of the downtown.

The success of the weekend grand re-opening - which also included movies at the 1940s

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price of 25 cents and an auction of theater memorabilia - is a testament to the intentions of city officials to make the theater a winner for the community.

City officials are on the right track by renovating the theater, banking on the nostalgia of the movie house and doing it up big.

It was appropriate that city council members participated in the evening's opening remarks, yet again showing wide support for the Civic. The fact that Farmington Hills officials also were present only shows that boundaries have little effect on a sense of community.

It was also a nice touch to present awards to Bill Clark, construction manager for the Civic's renovations, and to Greg Hohler, former owner of the theater.

To be a success, the Civic will need every-one's support. We hope the gala weekend is just the beginning of a successful future for the historic movie house, a landmark that will continue to stand for Farmington's community endeavors and community spirit.

### Celebration should make us think

U.S. Rep. John Lewis spoke at the University of Michigan Monday as a Raoul Wallenberg lecturer and medalist.

As a young man, Lewis was one of the central figures in the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The son of a poor south Alabama sharecropper, Lewis founded the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee. Lewis felt the blows from Sheriff Jim Clark's nightstick and spent many nights in Southern jails.

Yet over time he learned to forgive his oppressors, and he has continued to contribute to society as a distinguished congressman from Atlanta, Ga.

This coming Monday we celebrate the courage of John Lewis and his fellow "revolutionaries" in the civil rights movement by marking the birthday of Lewis' idol and slightly older mentor Martin Luther King Jr.

Many "holidays" are designated with the best of intentions. On Memorial Day, we are admonished to remember those who died in battle defending the principles our country represents. On Independence Day, we are urged to remember those founders who chose liberty over tyranny. On Labor Day, we are supposed to pay homage to the working person and the struggle for economic justice.

As we all know, Memorial Day is the first good day to hit the beach, Independence Day means a barbecue and fireworks, and Labor Day is the last good day to hit the beach (no more giant parades, even in this once-solid union town). There might be some people who get King Day off who think it's a good day to hit the ski slopes or catch a movie and not think about what the day really means.

In this racially divided and often antagonistic metro area, it is especially important that we don't let this holiday lose its meaning. It is important that our communities and schools take time to offer programs that draw our attention to what has been accomplished and what still needs to be accomplished.

In the Farmington Public Schools, individual schools and classrooms are doing their

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own creative activity to honor the memory of King and what he stood for. In late January, the Multicultural/Multiracial Community Council holds its annual awards to recognize people who have done their part to close the gaps that tear people apart.

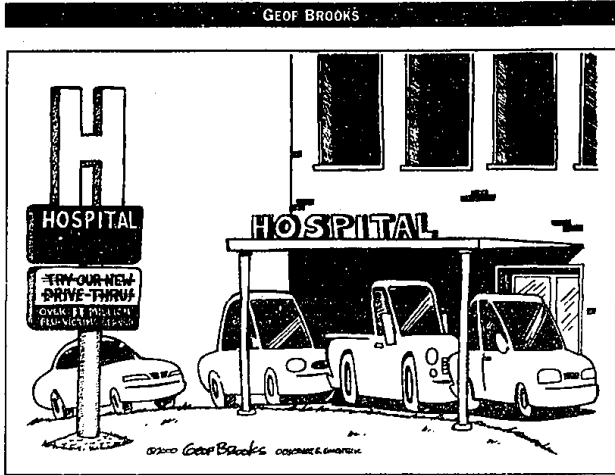
Livonia is holding its fifth annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day program at Stevenson High School. The program's sponsors, People of Livonia Addressing Issues of Diversity (PLAID), have the right idea about what should be done to mark this important day.

Colin Sheffield of Livonia's St. Edith School asks the important question in his essay: "You only need to turn on the evening news or pick up a newspaper to see that we still can't seem to get along. ...Why, when we have evolved so far in areas like technology, are we so behind in an area as basic as human kindness and compassion?"

Though we have a long way yet to go to right wrongs and change hearts, Rep. Lewis would offer Colin some encouragement that we have come a long way. He told the audience that when young blacks tell him they don't think the '60s accomplished anything since nothing changed, "I say to them, let me take you back to the South in the 1940s and '50s and then tell me things haven't changed."

He summed up his view of what he and his compatriots accomplished, "We led a revolution of values, a revolution of ideas. We live in a better country. We are a better people."

That deserves remembrance and celebration.



GEOF BROOKS

### 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 (248) 477-5450 or emailed to jmaliszewski@oe.homecomm.net*

### Implication questioned

Regarding: "Mansion gets a committee of its own" Sunday, Jan. 9, 2000.

Although I applaud the Observer's recent devotion to publicizing one of Farmington's most visible and attractive assets, I question the implication in the above headline that the Warner Mansion has been a ship without stewardship.

The Warner home was given to the city about 1980, and has been run by dedicated volunteers ever since. From the early 1980s, volunteers Dick Corvill and Nancy Leonard have been for more than "dozens" as named in this article. The definition of a dozen is "one who conducts groups through a museum or art gallery."

Dick and Nancy have worked with the city administration both as members of the historical commission and as the responsible parties for directing the activities of the Mansion. They have always been on call to open the doors for photographers, wedding appointments, special tour groups and scheduled meetings, backing each other up on vacations and sick days. They present plans and concerns to the historical commission and city council, write manuals, handle correspondence, keep track of income and outgo, oversee the 20 or more docents, direct the acquisition and recording of gifts, and in general run the mansion as if it were their home. Dick has been the guide and Nancy his able partner in nurturing this gem to the stature it has today. My hope is that this new committee is aware of all the nuts and bolts necessary to continue the accomplishments of these two and the many other capable volunteers.

**Betty Borgman**  
Former volunteer

minors, and is willing to follow through to the point of a ticket being issued. I am also curious, were the minors ticketed as well under the current state law?

**Cynthia Hellesk**  
Farmington Hills

### Never happened

We stocked our pantries, fridges, freezers, filled up every water jug, bought more firewood, filled our gas tanks; braced for the "Y2K bug." With the dawning of 2000, everything worked just the same - just another Happy New Year - dreaded glitches never came!

**Bea Scaglione**  
Farmington Hills

### Stinky deal

I would like to take exception to Nancy Bates' remark as reported in the Farmington Observer recently, "I would hope the people who are doing this will recognize the seriousness of their actions, and the seriousness with which the council is taking this," regarding feeding ducks and geese by residents.

Following Ms. Bates' triumph in getting five-year-old children liable for being ticketed for not wearing a bicycle helmet, now she wants to criminalize feeding birds. I don't think Ms. Bates understands how seriously like a control freak she is sounding.

Farmington's City Council rejected the Helmet Ordinance incidentally. One would hope that certain members of the Farmington Hills City Council, especially Nancy Bates, might have better things to do than look for ways to continuously restrict people's freedoms by enacting absurd and draconian ordinances.

It is especially ironic that Ms. Bates is concerned with the pollution of bird droppings, yet she voted to buy a former landfill (Eleven Pines). In my opinion, that deal stinks far worse than any bird droppings.

**Ronald Oliverio**  
Farmington Hills

### Pleased to know

Kudos to Farmington Hills police officer Warthman who questioned minors with cigarettes, which ultimately resulted in the ticketing of a gas station clerk with a reputation for selling to minors (Thursday, Jan. 6).

I am a taxpayer who is pleased to know that this officer is alert to both the law regarding minors in possession of tobacco and the law regarding the sale of tobacco products to

### COMMUNITY VOICE

**QUESTION:**  
Who's your hero?

We asked this question at the sled hill on Farmington Road.

"Daddy. Because he's strong, he's nice and he's funny."  
**Erin Watkeys**  
Farmington

"Mommy. Because she lets us drink hot chocolate."  
**Draw Watkeys**  
Farmington

"My dad because he plays with me."  
**Timothy Balkach**  
Farmington Hills

"Steve Yzermon. He scores a lot of goals."  
**Erin Scott**  
Farmington

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— Philip Power