

Farmington Observer

OPINION

33411 GRAND RIVER, FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN 48335

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2000

A10(F)

Computers

Public access must be maintained

As the Farmington Hills City Council moves toward creating "paperless" packets of information for each of their meetings, caution must prevail.

There likely isn't a business or institution in the world that doesn't suffer a paper chase. It's cumbersome, sometimes overwhelming, and probably a waste of good paper.

But paper leaves a trail, and that is important in government and the public's easy access to information.

Technologically it makes sense to switch from mounds of paper in a notebook that council members receive the Friday before any Monday meeting to electronically delivered files of information on a laptop computer. It's the computer age, after all.

But city administrators and council members are cautioned to avoid getting so caught up in the use of computers to transmit information that they neglect to recognize the public's interest.

Perhaps it's just tradition, but paper has always been the public's way of keeping track of their government. Paper provides concrete evidence.

Certainly, the use of computers in city council meetings would streamline the information process and ease the paper chase for employees.

It's worth a try. But we are as concerned about this move as are some council members and administrators. In no way should the laptops the council receives be interactive, mean-

ing that all discussion and decision-making must remain in a public forum, not communicated between individual council members via computers.

As the computer age envelopes government, we urge the city council and administrators to always keep in mind that the public's right to know and right to access to government remains as strong as ever.

While the city council may have laptop computers for employees and administrators to transmit information, not all members of the public have been as fortunate in tapping into the computer age.

City officials are urged to keep in mind that plenty of their constituents still like to stop by city hall and look things up – on paper, and that agendas, reports and the like must remain accessible to all members of the public, including those who are without computers or lack the desire to get involved in the computer age.

There is no suggestion here that the city council and administrators will not be honest and open with residents. But information about government must always remain easily available to the public.

Caution must prevail as the city council changes its work habits from paper to computer. But always the public's interest must remain in the forefront. That's what the city council is there for – to serve the public, its needs and its interests.

Make your kids wear helmets

It isn't possible to make sense out of tragic accidents, like the one that killed 7-year-old Joseph Michael Mounikel of Livonia on Jan. 22.

Trying to make something good come from their son's death, the parents are trying to e-mail their message around the world. It's a simple message, marked with their tears of experience, and one that bears repeating: If you go sledding, put bicycle helmets on your children and yourself.

Back when many of us were kids, we didn't seem to worry as much about safety. For years, few Americans wore safety belts. Decades of death, injury and heartache taught people that they were safer with seatbelts on, and laws followed aiming to ensure safety and reduce the public health costs. Later, bicycle helmets moved into the forefront of the public, again through statistics and stories of injuries and deaths. Those are still optional, but strongly recommended for safe bicycling.

When it comes to bicycling or sledding, people will say, "We didn't wear helmets when we were kids and we survived." Others will say, "We cannot put our kids in a bubble and protect them from everything." Both points are true. But we can learn from experience and we can still enjoy the fun of something like sledding with a minor precaution that can, perhaps, save a life.

But don't take our word, listen to the words of Dianne and George Mounikel:

"On January 25, 2000, we buried our 7-year-old son; our baby, our angel, our heart. He wasn't sick, he didn't have some horrible disease or tumor. He was, as most 7-year-olds are, a happy child full of life and love for everything and everyone."

"So how did he die? It was a horrible accident doing something that most kids love to

do."

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?

We asked this question of staff members at Eagle Elementary in Farmington Hills.

QUESTION: Wednesday was Groundhog Day. Did you expect Punxsutawney Phil to see his shadow?