

# Entrepreneurs

## Give tattoo parlor a chance

By all accounts, Ken Rekiel and Todd Davis, owners of Red Crown Body Art at 12 Mile and Orchard Lake Road, will be responsible and accountable business owners and community partners.

The idea of a tattoo parlor undoubtedly may make some residents and local government officials nervous. After all, tattoos and those sporting them in some cases have created a certain stereotype, especially to those who wouldn't be caught dead covered in body art.

But Rekiel and Davis have taken steps not only to assuage people's fears, but they fully intend to operate an upscale business that caters safely to adults.

For example, they have decided to close an hour earlier than allowed in their lease - 9 p.m. instead of 10 p.m. - so the business is closed before pizza and sub shops in the same mall close. Rekiel and Davis are determined that their shop will not be a hangout for teens.

Keeping young people in mind, the owners also will not provide services to anyone under 18, even with a parent's permission. State restrictions prohibit body art businesses from tattooing anyone under 18, or 16- and 17-year-olds with parents consent. Davis and Rekiel say they are committed to their own rules. Anyone who cannot prove their age won't be allowed inside Red Crown Body Art.

Rekiel and Davis also must be credited for supporting county attempts to regulate body art and piercing parlors. "I'm all for that," Rekiel said. "I would love to see them impose some restrictions. I think everyone should be doing it right."

A resolution that offers rules to be enforced by the public health department was accepted by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners during a public hearing on the issue. The resolution, however, is in the process of revision based on what commissioners heard at the hearing. It is expected to come before commissioners for final approval in early May.

With the rise in popularity of both tattooing and body piercing, the county commission would be wise to establish regulations that cover licensing, safety and cleanliness - all designed to protect customers.

Licensing and regulations - enforced by the county government - would go a long way in weeding out the fly-by-night operators and those who tattoo customers in their homes, cars or elsewhere.

The need for safety and cleanliness, as well as concern for teens, is paramount for legitimate body art businesses. Rekiel and Davis have shown their interest in maintaining a



Ken Rekiel is one of the owners of Red Crown Tattoo.

healthy, clean shop and to cater to adults, not children, or the teen who wants to sport a tattoo because it is the thing to do.

Rekiel and Davis want their business to be successful, not just financially, but to be accepted within the business and social community. You don't have that unless you are upfront and above board and offer a sophisticated environment.

Additionally, the new entrepreneurs are clear that they have and will enforce policies for loitering and business hours and intend to use a security camera for safety.

While both owners promise they will do their part, parents who don't want their children to come home with a tattoo have to do their part.

Davis and Rekiel with any luck will succeed in creating a new image for body art, all within a shop that provides a healthy service to adults.

The community should give the Red Crown Body Art shop a chance. If you don't want a tattoo, don't get one. If you do, it will clearly be done by experienced artists who also don't mind being regulated, and in fact, want regulation. What more can you ask?

## Trigger-lock program good move

Most of us have already forgotten about 6-year-old Kayla Rolland.

Her face, now hidden by the cover of a casket, doesn't grace the pages of every newspaper in the country any more. Kayla's 15 minutes of fame have come and gone, and in a year, most of us will be hard pressed to remember her name.

The child who died at the hands of a classmate will never be forgotten by those who loved her. For the rest of us, she'll be remembered as the child whose death inspired a national debate over gun safety and trigger locks.

Experts will endlessly debate whether a law requiring the devices would have saved Kayla's life. The gun that killed her had been hidden in a crack house, not a place where folks pay a great deal of attention to gun safety. But that doesn't mean trigger locks don't save lives.

In Arizona, a 1998 study of 940 child fatalities found that guns left unlocked by adults were, as in past years, the most common weapon used in child homicides and suicides. A report filed by the Arizona Child Fatality Review Team, a volunteer organization, recommended trigger locks as a means of preventing those deaths.

Though its conclusions have been disputed - and let's face it, what "facts" about gun control aren't? - a 1997 study conducted by the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center in Seattle examined the results of laws in 12 states that impose criminal penalties on gun owners who have failed to take measures that would keep kids from being hurt by firearms.

The researchers found accidental deaths among children under age 15 were almost 25 percent lower than expected. While overall statistics for accidental gun deaths were lower

■ **Even when it's properly stored, a gun can fall into the hands of a determined child. Adding a trigger lock provides another layer of protection, another chance to prevent an accidental or purposeful discharge.**

nationwide during that time period, certainly it makes sense to assume at least one trigger lock has saved one child's life, somewhere down the line.

That's why we applaud the Farmington Hills Police Department's new trigger-lock giveaway program. This is just the kind of community where those devices will do the most good.

Crime isn't rampant here and people feel safe walking the streets. When people buy guns, it's probably not to carry them concealed for personal protection. Those who aren't hobbyists or hunters are probably keeping a gun in the house to defend themselves in the event of a break-in.

Even when it's properly stored, a gun can fall into the hands of a determined child. Adding a trigger lock provides another layer of protection, another chance to prevent an accidental or purposeful discharge.

This community should be proud of the Hills Police Department's leadership in establishing this program, which is supported with drug forfeiture funds. It makes perfect sense to use the ill-gotten gains from illicit drugs - from an environment that ultimately led to Kayla Rolland's death - to pay for devices that could make this community safer for children. Maybe it balances the books a little.

GEORGE 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 48336, faxed to Joanne at (734) 459-2700 or emailed to jmaliszewski@oc.homecomm.net

### Distasteful

Your selection of a featured front page story on Easter Sunday was distasteful and a disgrace. How could you possibly choose what was nothing more than a free advertisement for a tattoo parlor to run as a front page story on any day, let alone on one of the most holy Christian days of the year.

Obviously, someone at the Observer thought this to be more important or newsworthy than the Jewish celebration of Passover on the prior Thursday or the Christian celebration of Easter. Then again, perhaps you felt your readers would be more attracted to the full color photograph that accompanied the article than they would have been by a picture of a local synagogue or church. If so, the Observer has sunk to new depths of journalistic insensitivity.

Tom DeWard  
 Farmington Hills

but are all in support of this being a maintenance issue, paid for by the city.

Finally, we appreciate the fine job that the city does on road grading, snow removal and the applications of sand on icy roads in the winter, all considered part of road maintenance. We just don't understand why four applications of calcium chloride over a six month or more stretch of summer weather is labeled an improvement. Will road grading become the next improvement? As Ms. Barnett so succinctly pointed out, maintenance is something that needs to be done over and over, improvements do not. Calcium chloride applications last for only a few days, four of them over the summer is no improvement. Believe me, I've lived on an unpaved road for over 30 years.

This issue will come up every year until it is resolved fairly. Maybe next year we will do better. Thank you again for your continued support.

Irene Kernicky  
 Farmington Hills

### Unfair assessment

The Farmington Observer's editorial on Thursday, April 13, hit the nail on the head, stating that maintaining city roadways should be part of what Farmington Hills offers its taxpayers, including those who live on gravel roads, approximately 22 miles of them. Speaking for those residents, I am most grateful to the Observer for their support, both this year and last, also to reporter Joni Hubred for her excellent article on this topic in the same issue!

Mayor Bates, Councilmembers Barnett and Brickner were most supportive in calling this an unfair assessment at the public hearing on dust control determination and cost hearing held at City Hall on Monday, April 10. Over the years, both Mrs. Bates and Ms. Barnett have eloquently pleaded our cause and our hopes rose when Mr. Brickner added his voice. However, the vote was 4-3 to continue this arbitrarily imposed assessment. As expressed at the hearing, it's not the cost, everyone agrees on this fact, it is the principle.

Thanks too, for the support of Council of Homeowner Associations' new president, Mr. Ed Spring, who was the first speaker at the April 10 public hearing. He reminded council members that COHA is made of many associations, most of whom reside on paved roads,

### Good advice

To rebut Melody Janske's letter berating the Farmington Public Schools for their decision to inform her fifth grader about the shooting in Flint, one might ask, is she living in the same world as the rest of us?

If her fifth grader doesn't watch television, listen to the car radio, or overhear conversations, chances are good that her schoolmates do. And she decided not to tell her fifth grader about the shooting!

The school district has a duty to educate our children. Part of the educational process requires students to become aware of the world around them.

I am also the parent of a fifth grader who attends the Farmington Public Schools. My child is secure, well-adjusted, loves school, and (gasp!) independently reads the newspaper. When the schools advise the students to tell an adult if they know of anybody who has a gun, they are advising those students to be aware of their surroundings and keep their eyes open. This sounds like good advice to me.

Sara Ventura  
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— Philip Power