

Bolsen from page A11

Issue of *Kids Discover* magazine, an article entitled "Pioneers" states, "far fewer pioneers died from Native American attacks than most people think. Movies, stories, and TV shows about the West made Native Americans seem like a serious threat to the pioneers, but this was not the case. Of the 10,000 pioneers who died on the Oregon Trail between 1836 and 1855, only about 400 were killed in such attacks."

There have been several comments recently regarding the MCMR council's parade concern being a minor political correctness issue. Is the inhumane treatment of people, whether in the past or not, fodder for humor? Let's hope not. It may seem harmless to some, but let's remember that Hitler's Nazi atrocities began as cartoon depictions of Jews and others who weren't in his majority group. And keep in mind how you would feel if your heritage was being made fun of at the biggest venue in the community each year.

Potawatomi Indians were the earliest inhabitants of Farmington. Majel DeMarsh, a Potawatomi and Oneida Indian woman, says, "It is an offense to see my people portrayed in a Hollywood image, so historically incorrect. Indian youth need a good self-image. So much has been taken away from my people.

They need to feel the strength of their culture."

One of the African-American members of our council recently remarked that re-enactments of black lynchings certainly would not be acceptable in the parade. In fact, when the Shriners National Organization was contacted we were told that portrayals of American Indians, like the one in our Farmington parade, are not acceptable at the Shriners National Parade. The Shiner Protocol, revised in February 2000 states, "No impersonations of ethnic groups, females, or political figures are allowed in parades."

We are well aware that the Shriners do much good work in this country, one example being the hospitals they fund for child burn victims. This work is admirable and we have expressed this to the Shiner representatives we met with to request very politely and thoughtfully to omit two acts in the FAFF parade.

Many of us have or have had good men in our lives who are or were Shriners, as in the case of my paternal grandfather. Times change and so should the actions of a community that benefits from many international businesses and residents from all over the world. The Farmington school district is made up of a student population speaking approxi-

mately 80 languages. This surely benefits our students by preparing them for working and living in the international economy that now exists. Isn't it our responsibility as a community, then, to show respect to all the residents of the community? The MCMR council has offered to help the Shriners develop parade acts that are respectful; however, to date we have not been contacted.

At one time, our council was advised that the local Shriners stated if they withdraw one parade act, they will withdraw their total participation from the parade. I was raised and educated in this community and agree the parade is a summer highlight in Farmington. However, as the MCMR council unanimously voted to request that the Shriners be more respectful in their parade acts, we know it was our responsibility to request respect for a group of people and therefore all human beings; at the same time, we would teach our children well.

Hopefully, the Shriners will see this opportunity to make a shining example of respect for others and the need to change behaviors as we learn that they offend and hurt.

Karen Bolsen is the co-chairwoman of the Multicultural-Multiracial Council of Farmington/Farmington Hills.

LETTERS

Differences

Thank you very much for the story pointing up the differences in the financing of the candidates for state representative in the Farmington-Farmington Hills district race. Your story correctly pointed out that it will be a battle between the outside special lobby interests who have heavily financed my opponent's campaign and my own, which will depend on individuals mostly living in the two cities and Oakland County.

In his last report my opponent had taken 98 contributions with 86 of them from special interest lobbyists, with only three of them from within the two cities. Of the three, none were from individuals. Since I announced my candidacy I have had 211 contributors, all but one from individuals and two-thirds from persons living in Farmington and Farmington Hills. About 90 percent of all the contributors either live in the district or in nearby Oakland County communities.

My opponent somehow claims that my running against him is going to cost him the speakership of the House. Nothing could be further from the truth. He faces three obstacles to winning that pot. First he has to be re-elected. Secondly, his party has to win control of the House. And thirdly, if his party wins control of the House he has to win the support of a majority of his Republican colleagues.

Besides, there are two other excellent candidates for speaker from Oakland County, one from each party - Republican Pan Godchaux and Democrat Gilda Jacobs.

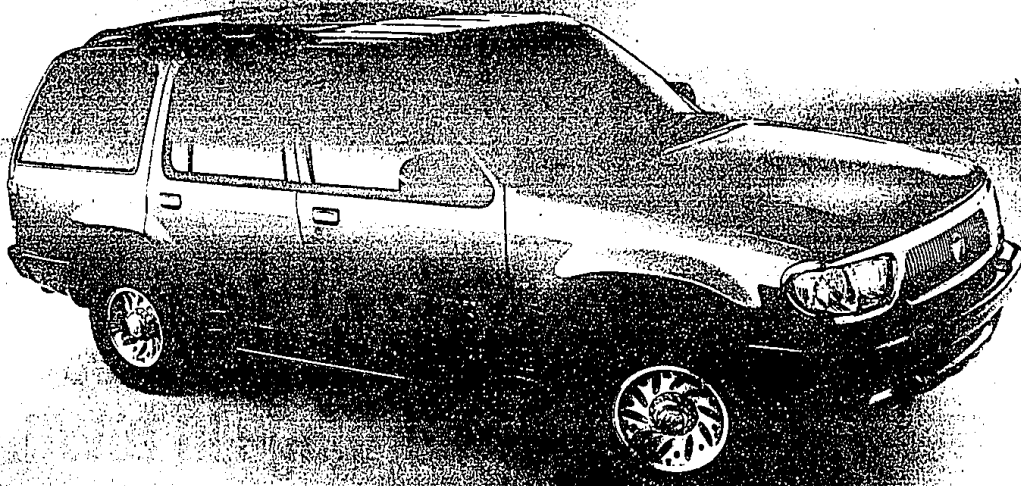
I have repeatedly asked my opponent to rein in the influence of special interest lobbyists by agreeing not to accept any of their funds and to limit expenditures in the campaign to \$25,000. He has repeatedly refused to do so as he has refused to debate me twice monthly between now and the election so that the public is made aware of our positions and our differences.

I also indicated to him that I would not accept political action committee funds if he agreed not to, but that if he continued to collect 90 percent of his finances from special interest PACs, I would accept some funding from groups that speak for residents of our two communities. The Pipefitters fit that description since they are building their new headquarters in Farmington Hills and have a number of members living in our two communities.

I know I will probably be outspent by as much as 5 to 1 or even higher but I will make up for it by hard work and by turning on the charm.

Aldo Vagozasi
Candidate for state representative
Farmington Hills

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