PINION

Farmington Observer

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Our fundamental purposes are to enhance the lives of our readers, nurture the hometowns we serve and contribute to the business success of our

Couple's questions are well worth asking

We've got to hand it to Mark and Teresa Gordanier – they're committed to the cause they've champloned with passion since their house burned in 1998. It has since been rebuilt, but putting their lives back together has been a troubling experience for the Gordanier family. Since the fire, they've questioned the competence of the Hills Fire Department, claimed harassment by the Hills Police Department and been harshly critical of Mayor Nancy Bates and city council members, accusing them of turning a blind eya to incidents alleged in a \$10 million lawsuit.

Although they've dropped the lawsuit-cting concerns related to Sept. 11 and the national effort to honor emergency services workers – the Gordaniers have waged a war of words in public and private correspondence, making no secret of their personal distants for Police Chief William Dwyer.

William Dwyer.

We're not apologists for the City of
Farmington Hills, the Fire Department
or the Police Department. Records stand
for themselves. But we're not so naive as
to assume everything runs perfectly well.
Indeed, we quite often hear rumblings of

discontent.
Why don't we publish them? Because every organization has its nay-sayers, its cout-finders. Because people aren't perfect, and we are very, very careful how we treat reputations.
Once something's in print, it's there for-

Once something's in print, it's there forver.
You can't take it back. And if you don't
have the facts to back up your allegations
andor on-the-record testimony, you can
land will be held accountable in a court of
law.

The Gordaniers have come up with an
interesting bait to draw out these who
might have information about wrongdoing at city hall. They firmly believe
there's actionable activity afoot, and
hely co offered \$10,000 to anyone willing
to come forward with proof.

This isn't an original idea. Dr. Thomas
Prose, owner of Your Community Crier in
Plymouth, made the same offer earlier

this year. Through his newspaper, Prose said he was willing to pay \$10,000 for information on actionable activities by any municipal worker.

So far, he's had no takers.
Maybe there just aren't enough brave people in the world. Maybe there just aren't enough henest people, heroes willing to stake their carcers and their integrity on the truth.

Or maybe ... the level of corruption Dr. Prose expected simply doesn't exist, and people wonder whether he's using the reward to gather ammunition for a \$100 million civil suit he filed against the city. Either way, his newspaper has been

million civil suit he filed against the city.
Either way, his newspaper has been chastised by the Plymouth Observer—and an authority on newspaper ethics—for using a "reward" as bait. And rightly

for using a "reward" as bait. And rightly so.

What the Gordaniers are doing is a little different. They've dropped their lawsuit. And they're not a public institution, responsible to an entire community.

We believe cash tends to taint the truth rather than bring it out. Whistle-blowers are most credible when they come forward with absolutely nothing to gain, out of a sense of conscience or a duty to do what's right.

Still, it's hard to fault the effort, and we are certainly more admiring of these folks than those who operate in the shadews, spreading gossip and unsubstantiated accusations.

Officials seem confident they can with-

ed accusations.
Officials seem confident they can with-stand any additional scrutiny. We hope that's all this reward brings about. Hav-ing it become a greed-motivated witch hunt would do little to serve the citizens

hank would do little to serve the citizens of this community.

Is corruption afoot at Farmington Hills municipal campus? Will an informant come forward and blow the lid off a raging cesspool? Or will the Gordaniers find themselves in the same boat with Dr. Prose – waiting for a day of retribution that may never come?

We wouldn't hazard a guess about the answers to those questions.

Perhaps it is enough that they have been raised.

GOP 'reform' cuts choice for Michigan's electorate

Talk about chutzpah.

First, the Republican-dominated Legislature gerrymandered the state's legislature gerrymandered the state's legislature and congressional districts to guarantee themselves healthy majorities for enex 10 years. Then last week, they voted to eliminate straight-party voting, which will in effect disenfranchise mon traditionally Democratic voters.

The ban on straight-party voting came in a package of voting reforms. The rest of the package cleans up some confusing procudures and clarifies methods for determining qualified voters.

Republican legislators argue disingen-

procedures and clarifies methods for determining qualified voters.

Republican legislators argue disingenuously that eliminating straight-party voting forces voters to take more care in their decisions. What it actually does is take away the voter's option of voting for all the candidates of a party whose principles the voter supports.

It will also create long maits in congressional elections as voters are forced to vote for each office individually. In traditionally Democratic Detroit, this will lead to frustration for many voters who will decide not to wait. Of course the GOP legislators and the GOP governor work of the control of the contr

people claim there is nature universelectured that the two parties. Both parties avoid political and economic extremes. Both parties support a free market economy. Both parties pledge allegiance to omy. Both parties the U.S. Constitution

Still, the parties represent different

perspectives on regulating the economy, civil liberties, the role of government, the role of religion in public life and many other issues. Voters understand those party differences. They know which party is closest to their personal viewpoint and want to vote for candidates from that

Some voters will consider the personal Some voters will consider the personal merits of a candidate from another party and choose to split their ballots. Former Gov. William Milliken was a beneficiary of ticket splitting. Voters understood that his personal philosophy was somewhere in between the traditional values of the two parties and Democrats felt comfortable voting for him.

Michigan has given its voters the

Michigan has given its voters the choice.

State Rep. Jim Plakas (D-Garden City) and his fellow Democrats tried unsuccassfully to put the issue on a statewide hallot to let voters decide if they wanted the option taken away from them (and are now mounting a petition drive).

"For more than 100 years, voters in Michigan have had the option of voting a straight ticket," Plakas said. The Republicans who support climinating this option have never been able to present evidence that shows straight ticket voting is a problem in our state. This is nothing more than a political ploy to decrease voter turnout in the 2002 election."

tion." Township, city and county clerks have already voiced their strong opposition to the ban. Following the debacle of last year's presidential election, many states have sought to effect meaningful election. nave sought to these meanings election reform. House Democrats proposed such reforms as an Election Day holiday, a vote-by-mail election system and a pro-posal to make sure that senior citizens wait no more than 30 minutes to vote. None of these amendments made it into the neckurs.

What the GOP did instead was pass a "reform" that takes away choice, creates frustration and confusion and onds up disenfranchising voters. Shame on them!





... THE SPIRIT OF CHASTMAS

TTE R S LE

■ Won't spill the beans

I read with great interest the article by Paul Pace about the \$10K reward offered for info about Farmington Hills city official misdeeds.

city official misdeeds.

I have never met Mr. Gordanier in person, although I have spoken to him on the telephone in the past. As the mayor, city manager and chief Dwyer know, I could give anyone an earful about city misdeeds and back it up with written records I have kept.

Chief Dwyer's statement that the city's police department is sterling and recognized as one of the most profes-sional departments in the state and country may be true on paper, bu where the rubber meets the road. What I have witnessed by Farmington Hills police on occasion is enough to gag a maggot.

gag a maggot.

However, I will say this: In the last
few years, I think I have seen a large
degree of improvement in police officers in the city. Maybe it has something to do with the many complaints I
and others have directed to Mr. Dwyer
in the nest.

in the past.

Maybe he is laying down the law to his motley bunch, and they are beginning to get the message that the party is over. Every military group has its "goon platoon." Those are the ones that march out of step with the res

march out of step with the rest.
Probably most Farmington Hills residents do not know that Chief Dwyercame up through the ranks in the Detroit police department working under one of the crookedest police chiefs in the country, who spent several years in prison for looting the drug money fund in the department.
Chief Dwyer is smart and tough cookie with a good reputation, certainly nothing like that of his former boss. I have no interest in spilling my guts

ly nothing like that of an artist my guts for Mr. Gordanier's \$10K reward. And I am quite sure city officials who could I am quite sure city officials who could possibly earn the reward would not do so, for a variety of reasons. But things change.

Kenneth Kemp Farmington Hills

QAA response

I would like to respond to Mr. Elsey's letter to the editor on 12/13/01.

letter to the editor on 12/13/01.

First of all, my opinion is we (in the athletic department and FPS community) are doing what is best for students, particularly studen/Athletes. The public was invited and informed to partake in any decision the Athletic Department made regarding the move to the OAA.

As the accretary to the Athletic

As the secretary to the Athletic Director, and the person who answers the telephone there, I was well aware where and when the meetings were. I passed that information onto anyone who called, despite their name.

who called, despite their name.

Inct. there were two meetings that
were published to the best of my ability in short notice due to the time constraints. The reason for two meetings
was to meet the needs of our religious
community, as one of the meetings was
on a religious hollday.

I invite Mr. Elsey to join our Athletic
Advisory Council, that meets once a
month to discuss athletic in the FPS.
The entire community has been invited to join this (with invites in school
Booster Bulletins and in the Observer).

Here we are currently discussing the expansion of middle school sports. A

survey was sent out to the publicitied you complete yours Mr. Elsey?). As for block scheduling, havinhad two high school students who srceasfully went through this, my hujand and I think (as well as our chipen) that this is the best thing singsliced bread.

Our children hate the days hen a "traditional schedule" is runing. The benefits are endless, as Farrington Schools academic progress is proven. More academic classes can b taken, as well as further participan.

as well as further participaph.

Lastly, an extensive procis is in place to select our coaches. Jighly qualified people are involve in the process to select coaches. Either, we have a program (PACE) infurther education of our coaches, fe also have continued training for our outpacks and are initiating a mentorinj-program for our younger coaches.

We are proud of the egitinued aca-

our younger coaches.
We are proud of the cetinued academic success, as well athe athletic success, our students hie here in Farmington. I wholeheftedly believe we have done what is bet for stu-

This letter is being sat as a parent of FPS students, not a chool district employee.

Jody Militello Famington Hills

Donor thanled

On Monday, Decepter 17, 2001, a kind gentleman appared at the Farmington Hills Police Is partment lobby and gave the Commind Officer at the desk a \$20 donatio; in cash, to the Farmington Hills Pilice Benevolent Association.

Since this kind gntleman declined to identify himself, we would like to express our apprention through your public forum. The honey will be put good use in the association's charitable endeavore.

endeavors.
Whoever you ar, thank you very
much and Happy flolidays!
William J. Dwyer
Chief of Police
Farmington Hills

■ Trojans showed a lot

To the 2001 Charenceville football team and coacles: Thank you all for enduring the sweat and pain required to earn that tip to the Silverdome. The outcome was disappointing, but Dundee, Courtry Day, Crockett, and Capac watched the game on TV.

Capac watched the game on TV.

If you feel sad about it, remember that you played hard the whole game, did not resert to cheap shots or other unsportsemalike behavior (like going for it on 4th down - twicel - while ahead by 6TDs), and made several thousand alumni and fans who attended proud and elated just by being there. I spoke to many people its by being from my days at CHS, and this sentiment was unanimous.

Hopfully you all learned a few things from this experience as well:

1) No mitter how talented Tim

1) No matter how talented Tim Shaw is, you won and lost as a team, and as a team you can return to the final, and win.

final, and win.

2) Continue to respect the game.
Character counts more than trophies.
I'd rather see a clean program that
stresses education than a school that
recruits and offers scholarships like a

university. This is high school! It's supposed to be for the love of the game.

game.

3) Next time, don't show up the band from the opposing school. 4) The whole state now knows who Clarenceville is, and the meaning of "TROJAN PRIDE."

I had more fun watching football this year than any I can remember. I had not been to a high school game in 30 years, but I will definitely be back next fall. Thanks again.

Michael Gaiffe – class of 1974

■ DSO spoils New Year's

This letter is in reference to the DSO's New Years Eve Party for 2001 and their late cancellation. My family, friends and I purchased tickets for \$40 cach for their New Year's Eve party. Later, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra canceled our New Year's Eve tickets due to Sept. 11, 2001

New Year's Eve tickes due to the Err. 2001.

Three months later, on Dec. 10, my friends and I received a letter from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra stating that our previously paid tickets for New Year's Eve were canceled and being replaced for a dinner that cost \$1,000 per plate and that we could attend, if we paid \$1,000 per plate. It has been three months since the tragic events of September 11. The DSO has had its choice of evening performances since Sept. 11. Why then did the DSO take New Year's Eve? Why did it take three months to notify its former patrons? Or was it cleverly timed leaving no time to protest this injustice?

The DSO has left a faithful audience with little or no choices for this New

Year's Eve.

I would like to request that the DSO either inform their patrons on a more timely basis, honor their patrons' previously purchased tickets or at least offer another suggestion to replace their New Year's Eve plans.

Mary P. Miller
Exemptates Willer

Farmington Hills

Share your opinions

We welcome your letters to the editor. Please include your name, address and phone number for verification. We ask that your letters be 400 words or less. We may edit for clarity, space and

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