

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 customers.

After 9-11, Memorial Day holiday means even more

Monday marks our annual celebration of Memorial Day, that day we break out the barbecues, cook up some chicken or ribs and take the day off work.

In recent years that's what Memorial Day has become for a lot of people. That's not what it's supposed to be about, of course. The holiday is designed to honor the folks who have paid the ultimate price, given the greatest of all sacrifices in service to their country to ensure Americans continue to live a life of freedom and prosperity.

Proclaimed May 5, 1868, by Gen. John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, Memorial Day was first observed 25 days later, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.

The South refused to acknowledge the day, honoring their dead on separate days until after World War I, when the holiday changed from simply honoring Civil War dead to remembering anyone who perished in any war. Congress established Memorial Day as the last Monday in May in 1968, ironically to ensure a three-day weekend for federal workers. Maybe Congress had a huge barbecue that year.

Since then, most states recognize Memorial Day as the last Monday in May, although a bill was introduced in 1999 to establish May 30 as the official day. Several southern states also still observe separate days on which Confederate dead are honored.

Most communities honor the day with a brief ceremony, or a parade. But watch the crowds at such events. They're made

up largely of old-timers, veterans remembering comrades in arms, a more patriotic time. It touches their hearts because it touched their lives. We wonder: Can young people today have the same sense of pride, the same patriotic feel?

If not, it would be easy to understand, because they have no frame of reference. After all, it's been nearly 10 years since the United States has been involved in any kind of military conflict. And, before the Gulf War of the early 1990s, it had been some 20 years between armed conflicts.

Two major military operations in 30 years probably aren't enough to demonstrate to people — particularly young people no longer subject to the draft or any sort of required military service — just what a sacrifice military people are called to make.

All of that should have changed in the wake of Sept. 11, when thousands of innocent people died in an act of war perpetrated by a coward holed up in a desert hideout.

Opinions should have changed, understanding sharpened, sacrifices made more clear in the days since, when Americans have died trying to ferret out a monster and wipe out the network with which he terrorized a nation.

The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 seemed to pique a renewed zeal for American patriotism. Sure, we'll still barbecue our steaks and have our picnics and take our day off. But let's hope we all do one more thing Monday.

For the sake of those who died last year, and in all years past, let's remember.

Afterthought:

The deal isn't sealed, but it looks like Clarenceville Schools may lose a fine superintendent in Dr. Thomas Tattan, who has been with the district for the past six years.

In that time, he has worked hard to improve this tiny district's image and school spirit, to involve staff in an important accreditation process and guide building improvement projects that have

made folks even more proud to be Clarenceville Trojans.

Certainly, he will be missed, but the work he has done will stand on its own, because Tattan understood how true leaders effect change: by involving those most directly affected by it.

If he does move on, Clarenceville's loss will clearly be Waterford's gain.

For OCC trustee, we endorse Ritter, Towar

With two seats up for election on the Oakland Community College Board of Trustees Monday, June 10, and six candidates running to fill those posts, voters have the luxury of a good field from which to choose.

Nearly all in the race appear to have the best at heart for OCC, the community and its students. It's a pleasure to see a quality field of candidates come forward to contest for these elected positions, because posts like these sometimes get overlooked.

Still, we endorse Ritter and Towar to the incumbents, Sandra Ritter and Jeanne Towar. Simply stated, the challengers did not make a compelling case for voters to make a change.

Overall, the college is on track and headed in the right direction, delivering high quality educational programs at a pretty reasonable price. And Ritter and Towar can both take credit for their part in setting that direction.

Ritter is a long time veteran of the OCC board, having served on it since 1978. She is also a life-long educator, working as a teacher and administrator in the Waterford School District until her recent retirement. Now she's back at work as principal of a charter school in the Flint area. Experience like that is hard to duplicate and provides her with a unique perspective of the college.

Towar is completing her first term on the board, seeking a second. At the time she first took office, the board was confronted by numerous controversial issues. She counts among her achievements that the board has come to work better together, more effectively addressing issues before it.

There remain subjects of debate, and there should. But civil discourse on those

topics is the best avenue for reaching resolution, and Towar has played a strong role in leading the board to that end.

Readers should be aware that Towar is a member of the HomeTown Communications Network, serving as Vice President of Editorial for the company that owns this newspaper.

This is not to say Royal Oak accountant Philip Abraham, retired OCC

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employee and past union president Rose Couture, and graduating Walled Lake Central High senior Mike McGuinness wouldn't make good trustees.

As we said, they all appear to have the college's best interests at heart, as well as those of the students. We would encourage them to remain active in the future. Royal Oak resident Sandra Tyndall chose not to participate in our interview process.

Nonetheless, our endorsements go to Ritter and Towar.



LETTERS

■ Appalled at letter

I am appalled that you printed on May 12 the hate-mongering letter by Elizabeth O'Brien. The proposal for Farmington Public Schools to share teaching time in music, art and gym with Our Lady of Sorrows School certainly deserves consideration. O'Brien totally failed to address the issue.

Instead, she railed against Priests in general, and OLS' Pastor, Monsignor Walter Hurley in particular, calling them dishonest and lacking integrity. She cast "immorality" complaints freely, unsuccessfully trying to tie them into shared-time. Character assassination, in my opinion.

The subject of shared-time deserves honest discussion by logical-thinking persons of good will. Also, its press coverage deserves balanced presentation from editors who may otherwise be tempted to fan flames that should be doused.

Betty Monson
Farmington

■ Where are the parents?

Who is the brainless twit that gave the 16-year-old the keys to the brand new killer Camaro? Who is responsible for these misguided young men involved in the drug race?

Where are the "parents"?

Annalee Morrison
Farmington

■ A letter to Chief Dwyer

Now that most of the orange barrels have finally left the intersection of 11 Mile and Orchard Lake, I made my usual left turn on Orchard Lake from 11 Mile, which I have made a thousand times, many in one of your Handicap Police cars as a volunteer.

I was promptly pulled over by one of your alert officers, given a polite notice that a very prominent No Left Turn sign is hanging in plain view above the intersection, and cheerfully sent on my way.

It is certainly a pleasure to know that our cops are out there, not just to write tickets, but to remind us of our city's progress and changing road conditions.

Bill Shortt
Farmington Hills

■ Opposes P.A. 112

I believe this Public Act 112 of 2002 further erodes our Fourth Amendment Rights, this time under the catch all feel good umbrella of being against Domestic Violence. Why are Republicans sponsoring garbage like this? Here is an argument against the Bill which is now Law:

Since the affidavit contains the reasoning for probable cause, it is important for a person to know why he or she is the subject of a search and seizure warrant, and to know whom his or her accuser is. Unnecessary delays in receiving this information can hinder a person's right and ability to construct a defense.

Besides, though presented as part of a domestic violence package, this bill is not restricted to domestic violence incidents, but is broad in scope. Therefore, it could have civil rights implications.

More scrutiny is required to see if there is a different way to protect victims or witnesses without interfering

with constitutionally protected rights of the accused.

Ron Oliverio
Farmington Hills

■ Hurley should level

Of course there is more to the story than meets the eye. That's the whole problem.

Monsignor Hurley is the pastor of a very wealthy parish, so he shouldn't need to go to the public school for anything. Other churches are laughing at this; they would love to have the kind of money he gets in the collection basket. Thirty thousand a week!

He won't level with his parishioners, so what choice do they have except to go to the only other place they can and appeal to the public school to help them keep their Catholic school Catholic. How absurd is this?

Along with Hurley, the Archdiocese has also turned its back on the parents. Can you blame the parents? If I were paying \$3,000 for each of my children for a Catholic education I'd be enraged over this as well.

Hurley's a busy cleric right now? Balance! That's a smoke screen. He just won't make the time to deal with the issue. It's all power. The children and parents in his own parish aren't important enough for him.

C. Kelley
Farmington

■ Granholm's accomplishments

I went into this with an open mind. And I know my opinion doesn't count for much.

But I did an evaluation of Jennifer Granholm's accomplishments as Attorney General of Michigan and counted them. She is running for Governor, you know.

I had my calculator at the ready and began the task. I thought the number was going to be a lot bigger than it was. In fact, I could have counted "them" on my fingers. I could have counted them on the fingers of one hand.

No, I didn't need any fingers at all to count her accomplishments as Attorney General. There haven't been any to count. The number turned out to be a big fat zero.

Turn it, twist it, multiply it by a hundred, take the square root of it. It is still zero. I guess you can fool some of the people all of the time.

At the moment of this writing, she is the front runner in the polls. Go get 'em Jennifer.

Kenneth Kemp
Farmington Hills

■ Catholic bigotry

As a member of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, a former public school teacher with five years in Michigan public schools, and 11 years as a licensed, independent social worker in Minnesota, I was appalled at the little squirts of anti-Catholic bigotry erupting from the letter appearing in your May 9 issue.

The murky reporting on the Farmington schools/Our Lady of Sorrows shared time program produced obfuscated the issues so thoroughly that the newspaper account seemed to consist of reporting only the impolite behavior

of some Sorrows parents at the Farmington school board meeting. If there was an attempt to interview Our Lady of Sorrows parents both pro and con, the OLS administrator or the parish CEO, Msgr. Hurley, as basic good reporting demands, I must have missed it.

Plunging from a ham-handed attack on the shared time program, the writer uses the issue to flay about her in a melodramatic reenactment of the late senator Joe McCarthyite hysteria. In fact her fevered, gothic scenario of the "unspeakable things" that she darkly hints would occur to innocent visitors to Our Lady of Sorrows school carries the McCarthyite witch hunt to a new low. Guilt, not just association, but by remote association. Who are these would be attackers? The pastor and assistants? The administrators? Teaching staff? Perhaps the janitors or the children?

If this or any other writer thinks that \$3,000 a year per pupil covers the entire cost of education a child they are either too lazy to check the facts or too focused on their own agenda to care what the facts are. Michigan grants to public school districts are \$6,500 per pupil to which the districts add, amounting to over \$11,000 per pupil for the wealthier Oakland County districts.

From here, the writer gives a grotesque lurch into an ad hominem attack on Msgr. Hurley. Has she followed him about to check his "lifestyle," gained access to his credit card limits, savings and investments? Perhaps she sniffed disapprovingly through his wine cellar (if he has one) or dislikes the type of car he drives. Secular (or diocesan) priests, unlike order priests do not take a vow of poverty. They are paid a fixed salary by their diocese. Their "lifestyle," other things being equal, are their own business.

It is an election year. We have been treated to the spectacle of some — mercifully not all — of our regional county prosecutors mugging for the cameras, waving thick sheaves of "secret" papers pitifully echoing Senator McCarthy waving his "secret lists day, promising to bound out miscreants. How nauseatingly familiar it all is.

One hopes that the clergy undergoing the smear campaigns get angry enough to bring suits for character defamation against the most egregious of their slanderers.

Kit Radzowski
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 content.

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