

OUR VIEWS

Time to sign up for Main Street

Believe it or not, there's still time to get involved in the Farmington Downtown Development Authority's Main Street grant program.

In fact, now is the perfect time for citizens to step forward, as organizers have launched Stage III of this downtown revitalization, which is called "Forming Committees." Volunteers aren't only wanted, they're needed.

The three-year Main Street grant offers our communities technical assistance, but that's not its driving force. People will power this effort, people who step forward to give of their skills, talents and time to address organization, planning, promotion, design and financial issues.

The list of seven recommendations made by national Main Street consultants presents a daunting challenge. In addition to forming committees, developing a volunteer recruitment plan and committee work plans, they advise effective promotions, assisting building owners with improvement projects and compiling a list of potential tenants ready, willing and sold on downtown Farmington.

That and encouraging more pedestrian-oriented development seem to us the greatest hope for downtown Farmington businesses. It takes a diverse mix of businesses to keep downtown humming with activity, but pedestrian shoppers must also have a safe and easy way to get from one place to another.

Those who have crossed the great divide called Grand River know that doesn't exist right now.

Main Street planners know everything on their "to do" list can be accomplished, but not without active participation from citizens, community leaders and elected officials. People from both Farmington and Farmington Hills should be involved, because Grand River truly is everyone's downtown.

The success of the Main Street Program lies in the hands of our greatest resources, volunteers who have stepped forward to make Farmington a better downtown of the future," DDA Director Brent Morgan wrote in a letter to prospective volunteers.

National Main Street planners were even more adamant: "No community using the Main Street methodology has achieved the total revitalization of its central business district without working in all areas of Main Street simultaneously and cohesively."

There is no better time than now to lend a hand — and you can start with your dialing finger. To volunteer, call (248) 473-7276.

Common sense is the best protection

In the depths of the Cold War in the 1950s and '60s the threat of nuclear attack was real and frightening.

The government was faced with the challenge of keeping the public on high alert while not stirring panic. It responded in less than stellar style. School children were taught to "duck and cover" under their desks (as if that would provide protection from a nuclear blast) while their parents were encouraged to dig bomb shelters in the back yard.

Today we are faced with the threat of terrorism, including nuclear terror, and advised by the government to buy duct tape to seal up our rooms.

Have we learned nothing in 50 years of threats from one source or another? Our government today issues a rainbow of alerts to keep us apprehensive, often without offering any reason for what prompted the latest warning.

The government, of course, is in somewhat of a no-win situation. No one appears to want to unnecessarily alarm the public, yet if a terrorist attack should occur without an alert being issued there no doubt would be hell to pay.

The bottom line here is common sense. Anyone wanting to create a safe room should do some investigating on the proper procedure on what works and what doesn't. Information is available on the Internet. Stock your surroundings and evaluate the terrain.

The common sense approach is true in dealing with the entire threat of terrorism. No one need live in constant fear. We must be vigilant, of course, but more than anything, that means securing our water supply, protecting nuclear plants and closely monitoring our airports. We are also confident that government is working on many intelligence fronts to derail terrorists.

But the CIA, FBI and Department of Homeland Security should leave the handyman products in the toolbox.



The group of pro-life protesters who prayed and sang hymns during the Mercy High School auction this weekend demonstrated the effectiveness and power of orderly demonstrations. As they expressed their opinions outside, bidders raised more than \$3,000 for the "Lunch with Gov. Granholm" auction item.

LETTERS

Diversify U-M's faculty

Phil Power in his column of Jan. 23 defends the University of Michigan's law school admission policy and claims that President Bush is disingenuous in his charge that it is quotas.

There is merit in a diverse body but it is how you get there that is the issue. U-M avoids points for minorities in its admission process to assure a certain minimum number of minorities. If this process did not achieve the minimum they desire they would change the points. That sounds like a quota to me.

Speaking of disingenuous, the university did not come up with the diverse student body idea until affirmative action was disallowed.

I would submit that a diverse faculty is even more important than a diverse student body. Yet U-M like most prestigious schools has a definite liberal / not left wing faculty.

Talk about a disadvantaged minority, it is conservative faculty members. However, I don't see a big campaign to recruit more of that minority.

Jim Collins
Farmington Hills

Not guilty

Ken Kemp asked, "Used car sales between private individuals are understood to be 'as is' whether or not 'as is' is written on a bill of sale. Does the buyer have any legal recourse against the seller?" Yes, if you hire a lawyer. A judge that listened to your argument must also listen to the seller's rebuttal. Judges are elected for their knowledge of laws, not mechanics. Courtrooms are not qualified to handle consumer complaints.

Private transactions like e-Bay may turn out fine but any agreement is strictly between buyer and seller.

Licensed businesses pay repairs, insurance, commissions and taxes. The price will be higher, but a store's reputation and goodwill require customer satisfaction. I don't find "the judge guilty of denying your legal rights."

Hank Bergman
Farmington

How can this be wrong?

Michael Jackson admits that he sleeps with young boys. How can this be wrong, and he still had the marriage permission and, according to Jackson, the boys welcomed his attention.

Have we not been taught by the liberal media, Hollywood, politicians and multiple organizations and individuals that tolerance, meaning not just acceptance but the celebration of the lifestyle choices of others, should be our ultimate goal in society?

And hasn't this same wonderfully tolerant group done their very best through television, films, music and public education to teach my teenage son that sex outside of marriage is nothing more than another form of casual entertainment? And as a parent how lucky I am to have an organization like the ACLU and the legal system to remove any reference to God in his daily walk. Really, the only ones to watch out for are those who try and

"impose" their moral values on others. Since Jackson's admission, I have been hearing an outcry from these "tolerant" groups condemning his behavior. Isn't Jackson's behavior a logical outcropping of what today's tolerance teaches? Those who espouse a world view which denies a transcendent moral authority logically find they have no grounds to condemn any behavior.

Those of us who accept the truth of God find that this world view fits the real world. If you've read His handbook you know that God has clearly defined His terms. Sadly, each and every one of us are in violation.

The good news is that God is perfect love. And, being perfect love He took upon himself the punishment that is rightly ours. The decision is yours. Choose Jesus, choose forgiveness, choose life.

Carol J. Lucas
Farmington Hills

Remember the academies

Again this past year, 2002, I had the honor of serving on the Military Academy Screening Committee for young men and women living in Michigan desiring to seek a nomination to one of the military academies for the class of 2007.

In November-December 2002 screening sessions were held by Carl Levin, Joe Knollenberg, and Debbie Stabenow. Approximately 187 files were considered.

During these sessions I had the opportunity to talk to many candidates and their parents. Much to my surprise, I found that many were not aware of the academies or structures.

I feel it would serve to acquaint the general public in this regard.

There are five federal academies with a four-plus year degreable program:

- U.S. Merchant Marine Academy - USMMA, Kings Point, N.Y.
- U.S. Military Academy - USMA, West Point, N.Y.
- U.S. Naval Academy - USNA, Annapolis, Md.
- U.S. Coast Guard Academy - USCGA, New London, Conn.
- U.S. Air Force Academy - USAFA, Colorado Springs, Colo.

It should be noted that many non-U.S. countries also use the five academies for training their military officers.

The academy cadets/midshipmen receive military pay. Upon graduation from one of the federal academies the commissioned officer is to serve five years in the military service or merchant service.

In addition, there are many state supported and private schools offering classes toward commissions (i.e. ROTC/State Maritime Schools, etc.)

Anyone seeking further information pertaining to the above, feel free to call me and I'll do what I can to assist you in your endeavors.

Howard L. Weber
Farmington Hills

Goodfellows say thanks

The 2002 Goodfellows year is over, and our pledge of "No child or senior without a Christmas" has been successfully completed. On our delivery day, Saturday,

Dec. 21, the rain made our work a little more difficult, but the job got done.

With a soft economy in 2002 our numbers were up. The Farmington Area Goodfellows helped 177 families, which included 389 children under the age of 12. There were 165 seniors that received assistance, and 38 disabled adults.

This program happens each year because of the many generous people who live or work in the Farmington area. The two weeks before delivery day we had over 14 people at our headquarters each day to help sort and pack the food boxes and process the applications. Many people came in the evening to help with the toy packing and the home boxes for the seniors. We put others to work typing gift certificates and sending out thank you notes to those who sent us money in response to our "All Community Mailing."

On delivery day we had students from the three high schools (National Honor Society) to help with delivery of the boxes and packages. The volunteers of the Farmington Area are the greatest. However, most residents don't realize the amount of time and effort that it takes to make the Goodfellows program happen. We have 11 standing committees who start working in early November to do the work needed to complete our mission. And, of course, we are all volunteers; no one is paid.

We have many folks that spent countless hours working at our headquarters, but one stood out and received the 2002 Goodfellow of the Year award, and that was Dave Hubbs. There are five others that I must mention. They are Joy DeFranco, who was in charge of toy packing; Lisa Ellis, who was in charge of sending out thank you notes; Aleta Bame of Metro Bank, our treasurer; Jim Dale, our warehouse manager; and Pat Bacon, our office manager.

All of us on the Board of Directors want to extend our most heartfelt thanks to everybody in the community who made a contribution or donated goods. We also thank those who were part of the working team. We hope you enjoyed what you did, that it made you feel good to help others, and will consider helping us again next year.

Richard L. Tupper
president and general chairman
Farmington Area Goodfellows

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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QUOTABLE

"There was loud applause when it was announced. The bidding was so furious."

— State Rep. Aldo Vagnozzi on the "Lunch with Gov. Granholm" auction item at Mercy High School's auction Saturday

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