

## Letters:

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freedom of thought. They believed those rights were god given. That was our forefathers' experience. These were the very same fundamental rights of which Thomas Jefferson so often wrote! So again I ask: who are these men that Bellavita speaks of?

In yet another sentence he says, "Aliens are welcome into this country as long as they come in legally. We applaud their desire to better themselves." I understand this argument, but fortunately I know some history and some truth, also. The fact is that America is a land of immigrants. In the beginning there were the pesky, godless, natives. But Europeans came to give them liberty! Actually, they brought sickness and death, yet again another story. Anyway, the British puritans came to escape religious persecution. But there were also the French, Dutch, and other European immigrants that came to this continent around the same time.

Later, some of these new "Americans" bought Africans for use as slaves on their farms. They purchased their fellow humans from British and Dutch slave traders. These human traffickers went back and forth from the east coast of America and the west coast of Africa making a great deal of money (were they possibly Republicans?). Then there were Africans here in America. Later on the in our short history, the Chinese and Irish came by the boatload (literally) and helped to build our railroads, and cities. The "Americans" at that time didn't like these immigrants at all. They thought of them as dirty. They hated that most immigrants didn't speak English at all or at least properly. They paid them very poorly, and treated many no better than animals.

Not much has changed. "Americans" today like Mexican immigrants in a very similar way. I did forget to mention an important fact though, and I am sorry for this. None of the above mentioned individuals or groups of immigrants filled out a single form to become and American! Not even the native Americans! Funny huh? I guess it worked for them. I think it works for me, also.

I'm going to side with what has worked for America in the past 250 years to guide my judgments on the issue of immigration, not my current and limited perceptions.

Countless others have come to this country seeking liberty. I believe that our country has become what it is, not by the attitude of false tolerance, but by one of understanding and appreciation for the individuals and cultures that have come here to participate in individual Liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I'm not a tree hugger, nor religious right wing zealot. I'm not black, yellow, or green. I'm white, of English heritage I believe, but even that doesn't really describe me.

What I am is a good man. I am a father, a brother, and a son. I love my family. I spent 22 years of my life serving this country in the military. And I must say Bellavista's views of the world don't reflect mine at all! I find many of his

statements to be ignorant of facts, highly judgmental, and racist in character. If he is a good reflection of his god, then that god is no god for me. Call me a sinner! I still feel as though I am called to my military oath: to protect and defend this country from all enemies, be they foreign or domestic!

My brothers and sisters are those souls that believe in truth and not blinkered by ignorance and intolerance. I call to all of you that hear this call. Don't be afraid to speak up against greed, intolerance, and ignorance! Say as I do. I am an American!

**Patrick Cox**  
Rock Lake Glen  
Fort Mill

## Antitrust exemption is not the answer

Dear Editor,

This is in response to an article that recently ran in your paper titled "Small Shops Want Law to Level Playing Field" (Nov. 5 *Fort Mill Times*). Independent pharmacists are critical members of our communities and, like everyone in the health care industry, are facing some tough challenges. But, exempting them from our antitrust laws is not a real answer to their problems or consumer needs.

Federal and state antitrust laws are designed to protect us from monopoly pricing, gouging, collusion, boycotts and other anticompetitive behavior. Some independent pharmacies claim they need the antitrust exemption to remain competitive. We disagree.

We believe the better solution is innovation and adoption of business strategies designed to accommodate an ever-changing marketplace, not making legal what is currently unlawful. Every reputable public and private antitrust authority agrees with us. They rightly fear the proposed exemption will raise prescription drug prices and reduce consumer choice. According to the Federal Trade Commission, seniors could be particularly harmed by the bill, as they are more likely to be on a fixed income and experience price increases for essential medications.

In these tough economic times, when millions of Americans struggle to pay their medical bills, we hope Congress will work with all sides to find solutions that do not end up penalizing the only group our antitrust laws are designed to protect – consumers.

**Mark Merritt**  
President and CEO,  
Pharmaceutical Care  
Management Association  
Washington, D.C.

## Diversity is needed in our schools

Dear Editor,

In a story in the Oct. 22, 2008 edition of the *Fort Mill Times*, Realtor Cyndy BellaVita implied that socioeconomic and ethnic demographics caused the Riverview Elementary attendance area to have fewer home sales. She further implied that a similar impact would be seen in the Sugar Creek Elementary attendance area due to its published demographics.

I take issue with these statements on many levels.

While I understand BellaVita's comments may have been taken out of context, I do want to clarify the issue as an employee of Fort Mill Schools, a member of the faculty at Riverview Elementary and as a homeowner in Fort Mill.

First, the relative stability of Riverview's attendance, prior to the enrollment freezes, has to do with the attendance area lines. This area consists of some of the oldest and most established neighborhoods and developments in the town. Little land is available for new homes to be built, which is in stark contrast to booming land development in the attendance areas for the other four elementary schools. I think it is plain to see that no space for new growth means fewer new students. In turn, this means socioeconomic factors contributed very little to limited growth in Riverview's attendance area over the past seven years.

In fact, the free and reduced lunch populations at Riverview and Fort Mill Elementary have been only a few percentage points different during many of the years the schools have been open. I see little indication that relatively higher ethnic and socioeconomic diversity impacted growth or home sales in the attendance area for Fort Mill Elementary. This is further evidence that blaming demographics is simply unfounded.

My final point is a personal one, not based exclusively on data. BellaVita is not the first to raise this issue of diversity in our community. Over the past few weeks, I have become increasingly concerned about the image of Fort Mill being projected in the media. By saying that people will not want to move to Fort Mill or to a school area because it has socioeconomic and ethnic diversity hints at a prejudice I find appalling. Would I wish to put my future children in a school with a 99 percent free and reduced lunch population? Probably not. But to accuse parents at a school with 20 to 30 percent of being too poor to fundraise or support the school is unfair and narrow-minded.

If there is a sudden drop in "property desirability" in Fort Mill, I suggest it may have more to do with prejudicial comments made by some Fort Mill citizens, not by the diversity found in our public schools.

**Amber Martin**  
Misty Plum Court  
Fort Mill

## Don't separate neighbors

Dear Editor,

As a resident of Wimbleton Woods it is with great disappointment and bafflement that I take in the proposed realignment of the Orchard Park and Riverview elementary school areas of attendance.

The surgical removal of Wimbleton Woods and Sutton Place from the Orchard Park Elementary area of attendance defies logic and the practical application of good sense. The removal is nothing more than a cold bureaucratic way of resolving a bureaucratic problem with total disregard for the residents of our neighborhoods and well being of our immediate community.

How can the school board justify having all neighborhood children surrounding Wimbleton

Woods and Sutton Place on the east side of I-77 attend Orchard Park, but require our children to go to Riverview?

Our children have attended Orchard Park since it was built and are a part of the larger community made-up of Baxter, Willowbrook and close areas – our neighbors, our children's playmates. Children in a 300-degree radius around our neighborhoods will attend Orchard Park, yet we have been unilaterally chosen to be the sacrificial statistic to make this ill-conceived realignment math work. A math that takes cold statistics into consideration while dismissing the affect on the lives of people who have to live with it.

Don't separate Sutton Place and Wimbleton Woods from our neighbors, friends and community with an artificial border encircling our neighborhoods.

**Allen S. Gray Sr.**  
Nichole Lane  
Fort Mill

## Meeting opened my eyes

Dear Editor,

I attended the recent Fort Mill School board meeting concerning the new elementary schools and the proposals of how the lines of attendance were going to be drawn. My family is

relatively new to Fort Mill. We moved here two years ago.

Until that night, I had thought that as one looked at Fort Mill schools that all were considered equal and that all were as desirable as any other one. That night I had some eye-opening moments that truly impacted my heart.

As I listened to some families who represented the Orchard Park Elementary school talk about a school that has opened its doors and whose families have paid the price from the freeze to have other children in their school, their talk was not one filled with gratitude but more like disdain. Referring to the options that would have their children permanently attend Riverview, they spoke of property values in an air that spoke of superiority and snobbery, applauding one another in agreement to each others points.

I do not live within the Riverview Elementary School zone. Yet, I have found some of that night's meeting so truly saddening that I could not be silent. If the older preexisting schools are not going to be cared after and kept at the same standard as the new ones or the schools that fall in predominately social economic areas that might have greater incomes then what are we saying about how we value education as a whole in Fort Mill.

It is truly my opinion that if that is how some of the schools or families within certain districts view other schools within the district then isn't the responsibility of our population to ensure that all these elementary schools are able to achieve the same great reputation.

Today I have chatted with friends asking my questions and done some research on my own. I have come to a bit more understanding though I profess to be no expert. I would ask that as these lines are drawn that these attitudes would be brought into consideration. And that the older areas of this wonderful town would not be penalized or forgotten.

I am newcomer I choose to move into this area. There are people here who have seen their town transform so rapidly that it has affected their schools and families. This isn't an our or their issue however I am truly saddened by the attitudes that were expressed last night which seemingly disrespect Fort Mill as a whole. It is my deepest hearts desire that we look at all our elementary schools and ensure that each of them can walk forward with great pride and great reputations. Our children (no matter where they live within this town) deserve that.

**Mims Driscoll**  
Winding Brook Court  
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177329  
**FORT MILL PHARMACY**  
3 x 10  
**Full Color**

## Cost:

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made that swayed his opinion.

It may also have been a factor that he lives in close proximity to Sutton Place and thus, listened to only the arguments from a small contingent.

Let's face it: the reassignment plans would have pleased some and angered others no matter how they were implemented. It is the nature of these decisions. There is no error in making a decision. What I question is the self-congratulatory tone of the board. Callicutt sounds proud that he took six months of work developed by a team and then came up

with his own plan hours before it was approved. In my opinion, it would have been better had Callicutt sprung the surprise, got the unanimous approval, and slunk into the night. That way, my selective listening could have been avoided. Because my selective listening doesn't hear that the board listens, it hears that the board ignores. It ignored the contingent from Regent Park.

Board members don't really seem too concerned about it. We'll see if the selective listening continues.

■ *Scott Cost has lived in the Charlotte area since 1994 and moved to Fort Mill with his wife, Stephanie, and their two children in 2006. E-mail him at costanalisis column@gmail.com.*

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