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To honor **Women's History Month**,
the Greater Muskegon Woman's Club
is revisiting the club's original mission of promoting
literature, art and music with the following programs
that align with the 2012 national theme of Women's
Education/Women's Empowerment.

- **March 14 - Literature**
- **March 21 - Art**
- **March 28 - Music**

Please visit our website for program details:
www.muskegonwomansclub.org



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Had to get this off my chest Letter to the Editor:

Locally, one participant recently claimed Occupy Whatever Street would continue "til things change."

Apparently they're worked up about corporate greed. You know, corporations are insensitive; they don't care; they don't sing "Kumbaya."

Well, consider a couple of local billion-dollar corporations: Meijer and Wal-Mart. Neither cares about me. But boy do they compete for my money, lowering prices so much that neither nets more than one-tenth cent on a can of beans.

Yep, each rakes in billions. Each also pays billions: huge local, state and federal tax bills, enormous payrolls and gargantuan utility bills. Meanwhile, the demand we shoppers assert through both generates innumerable jobs.

My desire for Florida oranges, Mexican poblanos, Caribbean bananas, Russian vodka, and Korean kimchee creates jobs in transportation, marketing, paving, construction, packaging, printing, logistics marketing and advertising. And don't forget the IT universe behind bar codes.

By the way, without corporations, Occupy's pickets would have no poster board or markers or wooden handles or staples to make their signs.

Now, are corporations truly greedy? Well, every corporation earns the highest possible profit. Its motivation seems identical to mine. My income never satisfies me. I always want more.

If that's greed, then I guess corporations are greedy. Likewise occupiers, I bet.

Speaking of greedy corporations, consider public employee unions — and they are corporations — that have raised greed to an art form, having pension and health benefits far exceeding those of assemblers at Government (previously known as General or Generous) Motors — pensions so costly the taxpaying public can't sustain them. The only public employee unions that pretend to care are teacher unions, and I doubt their sincerity.

But here's the truly sad thing: Occupiers seem to think that if they just occupy space and complain loudly, government will make it all better.

Well, kids, it doesn't work that way. Never has. Never will. Never can.

See, public education apparently didn't expose Occupiers to something it once taught routinely. Possibly students nowadays are unaware of The Federalist because it's hard to read and nobody has made it into a cartoon or video.

Here's the meat of it:

Humans tend to be greedy and selfish. Therefore, to keep them from each other's throats, they need to be governed.

Just one eternal problem with that: Government is comprised of people — who tend to be greedy and selfish. Government, therefore, needs limits. Lately those limits have gotten shaky.

You probably haven't seen too much about this, but the Securities and Exchange Commission recently brought suit against the former multi-million dollar CEOs of both Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae for deliberately misrepresenting their corporate financial pictures — thus leading up to the 2008 financial collapse. Note, guys, these are government — get that? G-o-v-e-r-n-m-e-n-t corporations.

Now let's say an ordinary greedy private corporation fails.

Pop it disappears — just like Norge, LifTech, Lakey Foundry, Continental Motors Corporation and so forth.

But when a government agency fails, it just keeps on failing and growing and failing and growing.

The federal War on Poverty has reliably failed — and grown — for nearly 50 consecutive years. Yet the feds say poverty is worse than ever even after we've spent untold billions to defeat it. What's wrong with this picture?

The Department of Education has a glowing record of on-going failure. Either because or in spite of it, dropout rates rise, test scores fall and American kids' literacy rates are pathetic compared to, say, the Europeans. But like that battery bunny, the D of E just keeps on failing and sucking up tax dollars.

Remember HUD — The Department of Housing and Urban Development? It's been around since the Johnson years. If you want a good look at its results, take a ride along Detroit's Eight Mile Road. It would be wise not to stop and get out to stroll around.

You want to Occupy 'til things change?

Well, if you wait for government to make it better, you've got a long, long, long wait.

R. A. Shackles
Muskegon

A sad memory

By Al Schneider

A February 2009 AP headline reads: *Elian Gonzalez joins the Communist Party*. It was inevitable. It was also avoidable. The headline, which received little national attention, should have been emblazoned in red and sent to every U.S. official who served in the year 2000. It should have been sent Special Delivery to Janet Reno, U.S. Attorney General, who orchestrated the hellish plot. In truth we are all responsible for not making ourselves heard in a deafening protest. But the deed was so hurriedly done that there was little time to react.

Elian was a young Cuban boy, six years old at the time, and in the eyes of many, too insignificant to cause concern. The boy had come to America from Cuba on a raft with his mother who was seeking a better life for herself and her son. Elian's mother died on the way, while young Elian managed to reach the Florida coast by clinging to an inner tube, all the while being protected by dolphins. Relatives greeted the young boy and tried to protect him during the legal battles. This should never have become a legal decision. Not any more so than for any of the other Cubans who escaped to America. This should have been a decision based on love and compassion. His father, a Cuban Communist, demanded custody of the boy, and won the legal battle. All this, while an impassive U.S. Attorney General let it happen.

This was the same Attorney General who marshaled the attack against the Branch Davidians, resulting in fatally burning more than 70 compound occupants, including women and children. In this case, too, there was little public reaction. What kind of people have we become?

Elian Gonzalez was just a kid when he was removed from the Florida residence at gunpoint under the cover of darkness with the use of machine guns and tear gas. Granted, illegals, including children, have no legal right to be here. But how can you return an innocent boy to an evil dictator? And then consider our situation today, just eight years later, when we have an estimated 11 million illegals roaming about. There seems precious little interest in removing any of them from the country.

Elian, at 14, was quoted as saying that he would never let ex-President Fidel Castro or his brother Raul down. He is now a full-fledged Communist, loyal to the cause. Is that what we wanted for him? What should we have expected? Did we think he would yearn to be back in a country that terrorized and deserted him? Or to serve the same God as those who abandoned him?

Elian's is a story that should be remembered and one that should never be repeated. Surely we can do that much. •

Our representative working for the polluters

Letter to the Editor:

The purity and quality of our groundwater is a vital concern to all of us who depend on West Michigan's water table. Like many other local volunteers, I am active in a group that monitors foreign elements deposited into our freshwater lakes and streams; in our case, the Duck Creek watershed. The contribution of our members, many of whom have been active for decades, is something of which we can be very proud. Fishermen, hunters, tourists and well water users all benefit from our work.

As a result of the good work done by area conservation professionals and volunteers, our problems are identified and targeted. We are making real progress cleaning up decades of freshwater pollution.

That's why it was deeply disappointing to receive *Clean Water Action's Midterm Legislative Scorecard* on Michigan's House of Representatives. According to Clean Water, a national watchdog group that monitors state legislators, 58 state representatives in Lansing received a grade of zero for their votes in the last term. More important to our community, our own state representative, Holly Hughes (R-91), is one of the representatives who earned a zero score, the worst possible rating.

According to the official record, Representative Hughes is working against our freshwater cleanup by removing reporting requirements for contaminants (HB4994), barring communities from prohibiting dumping of septic wastes (HB4578), allowing farms to discharge pollutants into groundwater (HB4213), allowing road projects to destroy freshwater sanctuaries (HB4303), weakening requirements for landfill liners (HB4875), and numerous other voting actions harmful to West Michigan residents.

It's very frustrating to learn that our elected representatives are working for the polluters. Representative Hughes is running for reelection in November. It's time for voters to decide if she is working for us or for the chemical and agribusiness polluters.

Bill Traynor
Muskegon