

Farmington Observer

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Post card voting is given nix

By LYNN ORR

It's thumbs down from local officials to house bills pushing postcard and election day registration.

Rep. Willbur Brotherton (R-Farmington) echoed City of Farmington Clerk Nedra Viane and Farmington Hills Clerk Floyd Cairns in his opposition to the house package.

"There are Democrats as well as Republicans who are afraid the system would lead to fraud and confusion at the polling places," Brotherton says. He doesn't believe the package—House Bills 4898 and 5064—will be passed by the legislature.

Eligible voters now can register at the City Clerks' offices or at the Secretary of State's office. In fact, when a new resident applies for a driver's license, the registration is automatic, if the card is signed.

Postcard registration probably would allow eligible voters to mail in a postcard requesting registration.

Officials say that's looking for fraud. "Our present system assures accuracy of the records," Ms. Viane says.

ELECTION DAY registration could be chaos, she says.

"We'd have additional lines, one for voting, one for registering. And in a presidential election or in the case of a long ballot, there would be a lot of confusion."

Cairns says fraud would be harder to control.

Election Day registration is allowed in Minneapolis, Minn., and 45,000 persons registered on one election day, he says. Officials said 3,750 of those votes were questionable.

"What if someone votes in two or three precincts?" he questions. "What can the judge do but slap a wrist?"

Farmington Hills has 120 workers for elections, and that number would have to be expanded to accommodate registration, he adds.

The bills may not affect other city drastically. Farmington Hills currently has about 30,000 or 95 per cent of the eligible voters registered. City of Farmington registered voters num-



Drag on the new year

The Chinese New Year was celebrated last Monday at the Mon-Jin-Lau Restaurant in Troy with the traditional Dragon Dance. This year, 4676 on the Chinese calendar, is the year of the horse, which officially began Feb. 7. Every Chinese year is named after an animal which symbolizes its tone. The 12 animals were selected, according to Chinese tradition, because they were the ones who responded first when Buddha called together all his animals. Those responding were the rat, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, serpent, horse, ram, monkey, rooster, dog and boar. (Staff photo by Charlie Kidd)

Crime dipping in Farmington, police report

Crime took a nosedive in the City of Farmington last year.

Major crimes, including armed robbery, aggravated assault, burglary and larceny over \$50, decreased almost 22 per cent from 1976 levels.

In fact, the annual police report indicates that crime in the city has almost been scaled down to 1969 levels, Chief Dan Byrnes said.

There were five incidents of armed robbery in 1977, compared to 13 incidents in 1976 and 2 in 1969. Eight cases of aggravated assaulted revealed one more incident than recorded in 1976. Larcenies were down 24 per cent, from 449 in 1976 to 339 in 1977.

There were 24 auto thefts last year, down 11 from '76 and only one more than occurred in '69.

There were no murders or rapes recorded in the city in any of those years, Byrnes said.

The five robberies netted thieves only \$562, for an average take of \$116. Byrnes reported.

Net value of property stolen dropped from nearly \$400,000 in 1976 to just under \$200,000 in 1977.

SOME offenses, including assault and battery; arson; forgery; embezzlement; vandalism; drug violations; disorderly conduct; sex offenses; liquor law violations; and other non-major crimes, increased by six per cent.

"However, there are some noteworthy decreases," Byrnes pointed out. Drug violations dropped by 31 per cent, liquor law violations involving juveniles were down by 40 per cent, and vandalism complaints were down by one per cent, he says.

"Disorderly and public nuisance charges increased substantially. Miscellaneous offenses decreased by 16 per cent from 1976 totals, including a notable decrease in curfew and loitering violations of 75 per cent. Miscellaneous juvenile complaints were down by 38 per cent; citizen traffic complaints down by 11 per cent; and animal ordinance violations were down by 53 per cent."

The total decrease from '76 in all offenses is 14 per cent, Byrnes said.

WHILE CRIME was down, fire reports jumped 10 per cent last year.

"The largest factor contributing to the 10 per cent increase in fire runs was due to miscellaneous outdoor fires," Byrnes said.

Actual structural fires totaled 21 in 1977, compared to 22 in 1976.

Ten of the fires, however, required a call back of off-duty officers and reserves, he adds.

Property loss in dollars was up from about \$85,000 in 1976 to nearly \$300,000 in 1977. A large part of that increase was due to the Valley View Condominium fire at the end of last year.

Vehicle accidents closely followed 1976 levels, with one fatal accident; 139 non-fatal injury accidents; 465 property damage accidents; and 142 private property accidents, for a total of 687 accidents as compared to 676 in 1976.

WHILE OVERALL crime was down, overtime costs for the department soared, from 1,390 hours of paid overtime in 1976 to 2,425 hours in 1977.

Changes in the public safety officers' contract increased the hours of paid overtime, Byrnes explained.

"We used to reimburse overtime with compensatory time, but we're paying for overtime now," he says.

Some shortage in manpower is behind the overtime increase, he adds.

Officers have to work overtime to maintain shift strength when other officers are off.

"That may stabilize when we hire a new officer," he says.

The Public Safety Department is currently seeking applicants for an officer position.

Last time due to sickness decreased in 1977, but compensatory training time increased, Byrnes added.

Lichtman ponders public life

By STEVE BARNABY Farmington editor

Ten years ago, Fred Lichtman decided to get involved in Farmington Township politics.

As many persons can attest who either have felt the wrath of his acid tongue, the wit of his keen mind or the wisdom of his legal thinking, this area never will forget his influence.

Some persons are glad Lichtman decided to call it quits after serving his community for a decade. But many others feel Lichtman's resignation from the city council is a true loss to Farmington Hills.

All agree politics won't be the same up at the corner of Orchard Lake and Eleven Mile where, on Monday evenings, the controversial Lichtman would do battle.

In a recent interview with the Farmington Observer, Lichtman, a very private person, talked of the personal philosophy which motivated him as a township trustee, charter commissioner, councilman and mayor of a city he helped to found.

Lichtman resigned from the council after taking a job which keeps him in Washington D.C. and Louisiana during the week.

"You either get involved in local government and exercise your rights in a civilized, lawful atmosphere or you don't give a damn. I guess that has been the object of my life—to civilize suburbia."

-Fred Lichtman

which some call a smirk, and frank language graced the 50-year-old city executive's conversation as he gestured with the ever-present cigarette in hand.

"Ever since I was a little kid, I've loved the law. I've practiced it and I respect it. I didn't make it, but I live by it," says Lichtman, who is a graduate of the Detroit College of Law.

His interest in politics and law came to the fore when a seventh grade school teacher, Earl Ball, gave him a copy of the Federalist Papers, a compilation of articles written by Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and James Madison extolling the virtues of the U.S. Constitution.

"Ever since that time, I knew that law would be my profession," he says. And although he has spent his life working as a businessman and local politician, Lichtman says that he has used law extensively in both of those endeavors.



FRED LICHTMAN

feeling of obligation to be involved.

"I used to live in Allen Park. Everytime I went to Lansing on business, I would drive through the Farmington area. I told myself that someday I would live here.

"I know it sounds corny, but I love Farmington Hills," he says.

While many perceive Lichtman as a rough hewn person, his personal interests defy that image. He paints, plays musical instruments and loves to read. Among his favorites is Winston Churchill's "History of the English Speaking People" and the historical writings of Will and Ariel Durant.

"One of the quotes I remember from the Durants and which guides my life is 'at the edge of every civilization stands the barbarians.'"

This, he says, is especially true in local government.

"You either get involved in local government and exercise your rights in a civilized, lawful atmosphere or you don't give a damn. I guess that has been the object of my life—to civilize suburbia."

Priest guilty: sentencing set

Our Lady of Sorrows priest, Fr. Gary Berthiaume, will be sentenced March 2 in Oakland County Circuit Court.

Berthiaume, 35, was arrested last September on a charge of second degree sexual criminal misconduct involving a 14-year-old boy. The boy is believed to be a parishioner at the Farmington church.

Berthiaume pleaded guilty to a lesser charge of gross indecency between males, a felony which carries a maximum five-year prison term.

Second degree criminal sexual mis-

conduct, also a felony, carries a maximum 15-year jail term.

Oakland County Asst. Prosecutor Michael Schloff and Judge Alice Gilbert agreed to allow Berthiaume to plead to a lesser charge.

Schloff said concern for the young boy involved in the case motivated the prosecutor's office to allow Berthiaume to plead to a lesser charge.

Oakland County Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson usually stipulates that plea bargaining does not go on in Oakland County.

BECAUSE OF his strong belief in the importance of local government, Lichtman believes that more residents should become involved.

"A real problem is that too many of the people who get involved just don't have the tools to do the job. The people who have it on the ball either are too busy or just aren't interested enough."

Lichtman became involved after reading an editorial in a local newspaper concerning incorporation of the township into a city.

But his participation goes beyond a

Hills' agenda set for tonight's meet

Although the Farmington Hills City Administration Building is closed Monday for George Washington's birthday, the city council will meet at 8 p.m. in council chambers at Eleven Mile and Middlebelt.

Old business on the agenda includes:

- Discussion of a report from the Commission to increase Voter Participation.
- Enactment of an ordinance to the city code changing the definition of intoxication.
- Request for a parade permit for a Memorial Day parade to be conducted on May 29.

NEW BUSINESS includes the following:

- Reconsideration of a request for a dance permit for the owners of Be My Guest, 28505 Nine Mile.
- Consideration of vacating an alley between Boetsick and Longwood in Fleming's Roseland Garden subdivision.
- Consideration of an introduction to an amendment to the city code referring to "interfund loans and cash advances."
- Consideration of the introduction of an amendment to the uniform traffic code which would prohibit parking in front of mail boxes.
- Consideration of an amendment for all correspondence which mentions Parkside subdivision to read Parkway subdivision at the request of Orchard, Popke, Schultz and McClint Inc.
- Consideration of entering into a landscape contract with the Michigan Department of Highways and Transportation for the area of M-102 from Grand River east to U.S.-10.
- Approval of a traffic control order for eastbound Fink traffic to yield at Tuck.
- Resolution supporting the landscaping of the median area at the junction of M-102 and Grand River. Contract would include the participation of Farmington.

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Fun activities

Ever wonder what to do on these cold winter days? The Farmington libraries have some good ideas to turn those bored children into happy tykes. To see what they have to offer, turn to Page 5C.

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