

Farmington Observer

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Ross launches campaign to beat down paperwork

State Sen. Doug Ross has introduced legislation he said would launch the country's most extensive effort to reduce paperwork.

"Government is disappearing in its own paperwork," said the Oak Park Democrat, whose district includes Southfield, Lathrup Village, Farmington and Farmington Hills. "If we don't turn things around, we won't be able to find the people for the pulp."

The legislative bill is co-sponsored by Senate Majority Leader William Faust, a Westland Democrat, and Senate Minority Leader Robert Vanderlaan, a Grand Rapids Republican. With their support, Ross said, he's optimistic the measure will pass.

"The cost of red tape is far greater than the bills that we pay the printer," Ross said. "For every \$1 the state spends on printing, we spend \$30 on

processing and storage. The state has some 20,000 different forms."

The total state expenditure includes development and design costs, secretarial and clerical pressing, mailing, analysis, data processing, filing and storage, Ross said.

"There's also a hidden tax that paperwork levies on the public," he said. "Responding to government paperwork costs the public millions of dollars in time, money and hassle."

"The total cost of federal paperwork is estimated at \$100 billion. If this is correct, Michigan's costs are more than \$1 billion."

THE BILL, according to Ross, requires a statewide effort to cut down paperwork. It wouldn't require new state funds. The measure gives current state employees tools and the mandate to cut red tape, he said.

Ross said similar efforts to trim paperwork resulted in a 25 percent reduction in Kentucky and 30 percent in Indiana.

Ross's bill proposes a forms management center to provide technical assistance to government representatives and to insure every form in the state is needed, simple and effective. Persons in each agency would work with the center and oversee their own agency's operations.

A 10-member special legislative committee would review over a two-year period every form used in state government. The committee would be authorized to disapprove unnecessary, redundant or excessive paperwork requests.

"The proposed legislation also lists criteria for paperwork reduction to guide the state," Ross said. "This bill enables the state to continue to provide services while we snip every inch of unneeded red tape."

The effort, Ross contended, would especially help small businesses which aren't as well equipped as large corporations to handle volumes of paperwork.

Brotherton fights to boost pensions

A bill to increase the income tax deduction on private sector pensions has been introduced in the Michigan State House of Representatives by Representative Wilbur "Sandy" Brotherton, R-Farmington.

If the Brotherton proposal becomes law, income tax deductions for single persons would increase from \$7,500 to \$10,850 and for joint returns from \$10,000 to \$14,500.

"Our present pension deductions were set in 1974," Brotherton said. "Inflation has cut into them significantly during the past five years."

"The 1974 dollar is worth only 68 cents today. This means that people living on pensions have seen their buying power erode 32 percent because the Legislature has not increased the deduction levels."

"Inflation hurts each one of us," he continued. "Those people on fixed incomes are hit hardest. It is our responsibility to keep up with the changing economic tides to ensure retirement security for our citizens living on pensions."

Under the provisions of the Brotherton bill, the pension deduction would be indexed to reflect the effects of inflation. On July 1 of each year, the deduction would be adjusted up or down to

conform to the rise or fall of the Detroit Consumer Price Index for the preceding 12 months.

"INDEXING IS the only way to guarantee that people are not robbed of their livelihood through inflation," Brotherton said.

"It is a procedure which has been adopted in Canada and in several of our states."

"As inflation drives the value of the dollar down, the dollar amounts written into law — such as the pension deduction — also decrease, and indexing is a way to counteract that."

Brotherton said the present single person pension deduction is now worth only \$5,100, and the joint deduction is worth only \$6,800.

"If we don't index deductions such as this, we will continue to permit the federal government's inflationary policies to set much of Michigan tax law," he said.

Brotherton said no action will probably be taken on the bill until January.

Co-sponsors include state Representatives Ruth MacVanece, R-Birmingham, and Lucille McCollough, Dearborn.

"Most people are fairly sympathetic to it," Brotherton said.

Independence is goal for retarded at homes

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Mary Wagner and her staff want to give Community Living Center residents a chance to live like everyone else.

For the mentally retarded men and women who live in the CLC's eight Oakland County group homes, that commitment has allowed them to learn new skills and acquire a degree of independence.

The CLC's home on Tuck in Farmington Hills and its newest home scheduled to open in January on Freedom and Farmington roads offer residents a chance to learn what it's like to be on their own. They get a chance to keep their own rooms clean, make their own lunches, plan menus and manage money.

For many of the residents it's a chance to learn within a group of their peers and live outside of an institution. "An institution no matter how good it may be is still an institution. Our homes are run like homes," said Mrs. Wagner.

"It gives the residents a chance to live in their own peer group. There is no competition. They aren't the last man on the totem pole here."

The 15 men and women who live in one of the two homes on Tuck Road help out with household tasks at the end of the day.

Their days are taken up with going to class or working in a sheltered workshop. Some have outside employment.

SOME WORK in nearby factories, cafeterias and nursing homes.

For those who have a job, it's an important part of life. For those who haven't a job, it's one more task to tackle in a world that moves too fast.

A job's importance can be seen on one young man's proud announcement to CLC housing administrator Joanne Wasielewski that he found work after being laid off by his employer.

It can be seen in a young woman's matter-of-fact admission that she couldn't do the job she tried for but she once found employment in New Horizons.

"We'll help you find something when

you're ready, when you find something you can do," says Mrs. Wasielewski gently.

In the kitchen another woman is helping house manager Sister Shirley Ruder with dinner. She describes in detail her chores at the Mercy Center kitchen. Stacking plates and filling the salt and pepper shakers are among her responsibilities.

Household chores and jobs don't fill up the residents' lives. Hobbies and social events as well as adult basic education courses offer other activities.

IN THE LIVING room before dinner a young man carefully spreads out a newspaper on a coffee table before beginning to assemble a model of a

souped-up Firebird.

Around him others are laughing about the costumes they wore for a recent Halloween party. Bagged-eyed masks, Spanish ladies and vampires are recalled in detail.

For those who have lived in institutions, a group home with a supervised environment offers an opportunity for such new experiences as learning to cross the street or approach an escalator.

While things seem to be humming smoothly inside the home, the presence of such homes has stirred initial controversy in other locations.

"You have to go in and prove yourself," said Mrs. Wagner.

Farmington posts agenda

FARMINGTON CITY COUNCIL
23600 Liberty

8 p.m. Monday Nov. 5

• Presentation of Plante & Moran, certified public accountants, 1978-79 audit report concerning the general fund, water and sewer fund, highway fund, etc.

Petitions and Communications

• Request from Gordon Meyers representing owners of Winstons Olde Town Pub in reference to a sign variance.

• Resolution from city of Northville in reference to Senate Bill 428 controlling automobile and homeowners fire insurance rates.

• Resolution from city of Birmingham opposing creation of Energy Mobilization Board.

• Resolution from city of Novi supporting Senate Bills 528 and 529 in reference to the Municipal Finance Act relative to Bonds.

• Memo from Laymen's National Bible Committee, Inc., in reference to National Bible Week proclamation.

Reports from City Manager

• 47th District Court proposal: employees salary increases.

• Progress report: Cable television franchise.

• Proposed ordinance controlling tax exempt property.

• Proposal to use Shawwassee Elementary School as a recreation center.

• Bid results: annual report calendar.

• Progress report: Orchard Lake Road improvement.

Miscellaneous

• Public comment

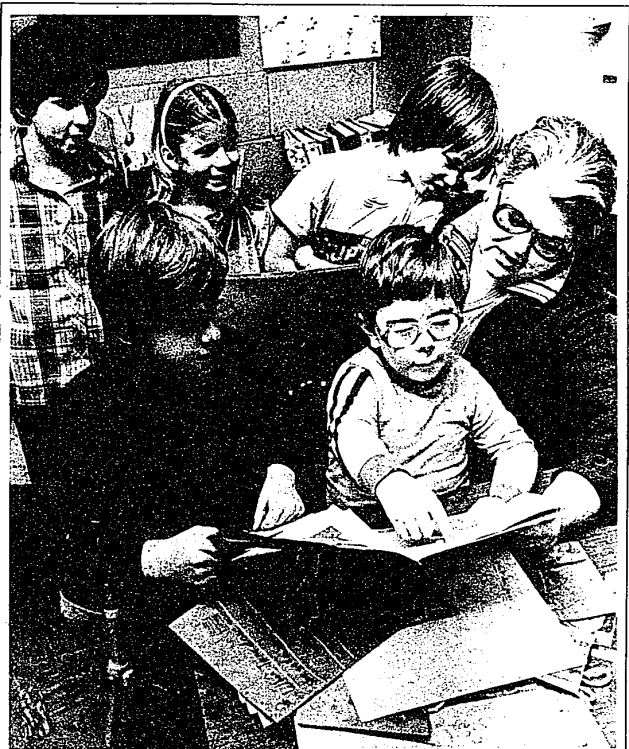
• Department of Public Services Quarterly report (July 1-Sept. 30, 1979)

• Building department: first quarterly report

• Financial report: general fund, four months ended Oct. 31, 1979.

• Financial report: water and sewer fund, quarter ended Sept. 30, 1979

• Financial report: 47th district court, four months ended Oct. 31, 1979.



Mrs. Bennett and friends look over some of the Galat, Nancy Uhl, Gordon Spence, Mildred Bennett homemade cards of congratulations from students. and Jerry Videcoq. (Staff photo by Randy Borst) Clockwise from left are: Michael Logan, Justin

A leader Principal honored by peers

By MARY GNIEWEK

If you plan to visit Longacre Elementary School, don't expect to find principal Mildred Bennett sitting in her office.

"She'll probably be in a classroom helping students with a tough assignment, or taking a sick child's temperature, or maybe out on the school playground checking equipment."

She has overheard at least one student refer to her as "our school mother."

She knows everyone by name — no small feat in a building with 420 kids. She even tells them to wear boots, not sneakers, when it snows.

"Mildred is a super school principal," said Lawrence Freedman, an assistant superintendent of Farmington schools and a former colleague.

"She's warm and understanding. One of the most knowledgeable about curriculum and instructional skills."

"She's not just an administrator, she is the instructional leader of her school."

Freedman's kudos were echoed recently by the Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association (MEMSPA), which named Mrs. Bennett "Outstanding Principal of the Year" for Region 7. The region includes 28 school districts in Oakland County.

The award was presented to her at MEMSPA's fall convention at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

"IT'S ONE OF the highlights of my life," said Mrs. Bennett, seated in her small office plastered with hundreds of congratulatory messages from students.

"This was my surprise Monday morning," she said, motioning to the bright construction paper cards taped to the walls.

"I came into circus world. I was speechless — and I'm usually not. There was something here from every one of my children. The sentiments are marvelous."

The state is divided into 14 regions, each may present an award to a principal for outstanding service. Mrs. Bennett was recipient from a field of 300 principals.

"It's so meaningful to be selected by peers — people who practice the same craft, do the same things. For them to say 'You do well' is very humbling."

"I like my job. But I don't feel I do anything others don't do. You don't win for being outstanding principal without an outstanding staff, students and community."

"I accepted the award in the name of all the people here at the school and in the district."

Mrs. Bennett has been principal at Longacre 7 years. Prior to that, she spent two years as principal of Woodcreek Elementary School.

An educator in the Farmington school district 16 years, she first taught five years in Detroit.

She plays the role of house mother, counselor, disciplinarian, and administrator — but most of all, teacher.

"MY PHILOSOPHY is that I'm a teacher first. I always feel everything we do here is a learning situation. We teach by example."

"We're very child-oriented."

A graduate of Albion College, Mrs. Bennett also has two degrees from Wayne State University.

Since becoming principal, she has served a term as MEMSPA regional president, and two terms as vice president-membership chairman.

Her husband, Gerry, is assistant principal of East Detroit High School and an Episcopal minister. They decided to move to Farmington 16 years ago so their daughter, Cathy, could attend Farmington schools.

Cathy, a music major at Albion College, took a break from her intern training with the Chicago Opera Company to surprise her mother by attending MEMSPA's awards banquet last week.

Mrs. Bennett sifted through the plaques, letters and homemade cards on her desk and reflected on her job.

"I like what I do very much. Bringing all facets of education into play, meeting a child where he is and taking him as far as he can go. That's near and dear to me."

"I'm interested in a positive self image for people. It applies not only to students, but also to staff. I believe in commending people when they've done a job well."

The staff returned the compliment to Mrs. Bennett last week. Their congratulatory gift: a paperweight in the shape of a large number one.

Singles rock

The Oakland Singles, an organization offering activities to the single persons of Oakland County will conduct its first function, a disco-rock party at 8 p.m., Nov. 11 in the Steak and Ale, Twelve Mile and Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills. Singles and couples younger than 39 years old are invited. Proper attire is requested. Cover charge is \$4 at the door.

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A FINAL WORD

Editor Steve Barnaby, after listening to the Farmington Hills candidates talk and talk and talk, has decided to have the final word over the Crackerbarrel. To see what he has to say, turn to Page 6B.