

the Farmington Enterprise & Observer

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YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

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today's
hot line

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what's inside

Helping Lower Grades

A pilot program is being started in Farmington Schools on the use of elementary counselors. The plan has been received favorably by local officials and has drawn praise from an educator from a neighboring school district. **Page 2A**

More Than Facts

A lot of things can be done to reduce drug abuse problems but education alone is not the cure-all. An editorial on today's local editorial page examines what the community should do and admits it will take guts. On the same page is a report on the approach Oakland County wants to take and how Farmington will be involved. **Page 3A**

A Fishy Feat

A Farmington Township pub will be the center of activity Tuesday night when a Trout will attempt to eat either a moose duck or antelope - or maybe all three. This unusual exhibition will result in more money being raised in Farmington for the March of Dimes than from all of Oakland County. **Page 5A**

Fun Time

It doesn't matter if the ballet, new movies or even the once-in-a-lifetime solar eclipse is your thing - you'll find details about these fields and even more on today's amusement page. **Page 6B**

GOP Reaction

Republicans sort of shrugged off George Romney's take-over of the party and decree that his wife, Lenore, will be the "consensus" candidate. The party faithful didn't want to be quoted by name, but they left little question about how they felt. **Page 6B**

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UNUSUAL NEWS

can be found today and every Wednesday and Saturday in the Want Ad Section.

To keep up with this unusual news, read and use the Observer Want Ad regularly. And when you have items to sell, be a newsmaker yourself... just give us a call.

Observer Want Ads
422-0900

Organizing Taxpayers Will Seek Millage Reductions

By WYLIE GERDES

The first organized opposition to increased residential property taxes has appeared in Farmington Township.

The Franklyn Ravines Taxation Committee, composed of five homeowners in Franklyn Ravines Subdivision, will ask the Farmington Council of Homeowners' Associations to endorse lowering millage rates

as the way to reduce residential property tax bills.

THE FARMINGTON Council of Homeowners' Associations will hear the statement at a meeting Monday in the Thompson-Brown Conference Room beginning at 8 p.m. The Thompson-Brown building is at 3223 12 Mile Rd. in Farmington Township.

The Franklyn Ravines Taxation Committee, whose chairman is M. G. Campbell of 2958 Geraldine Ct., says assessments increased by 15% with no decrease in millage rates should result in a comparable increase in revenue to taxing authorities.

"There is no question of the right of governmental authorities... to assess property at the

state equalized rate of 50% of market value, but it is questionable if the delegates to the state constitutional Convention contemplated an upward surge in property values which would yield revenue increases of this size.

"We should expect that such increases in assessed value would be compensated for with a downward adjustment in millage rates, so as to yield a more modest rise in real property taxes. Such a revision does not appear to be forthcoming," the committee's statement says.

"The question we should like to place before the meeting is: Are we willing to make representation to the taxing authorities on behalf of the Farmington Township homeowners with a view toward influencing a reduction in millage because the state Constitution forces assessed values upward so steeply?"

PROPERTY TAXES fall primarily on one segment of society, the statement argues, and eventually a more equitable system of taxation should be found.

"Seventy years ago, when most wealth was held in the form of property, it was a more equitable tax. Today, however only about 3% of all wealth is held in the form of real property, and it follows that the main burden of sup-

porting those services which are financed by this tax (schools in the main) is falling upon a minority, the homeowners, while all benefit."

"Ultimately, of course, a more equitable progressive system of financing will have to be adopted but, in the interim, it would appear that the homeowner is going to have to concentrate on seeking equity through a downward revision in the millage rates whenever assessed valuation increases so drastically.

"Philly Power, publisher of The Observer Newspapers, recently wrote a very perceptive editorial on this subject. He raises the spectre of the homeowner who can no longer afford to live in his own home and who finds difficulty in selling, because of the large tax which accompanies it."

Campbell says the statement embodies "the sentiments of a good many of the residents of Farmington Township."

"They are, as you can gather, rather unhappy with the current state of property taxation and are looking for a group around which to coalesce," he says.

DON ALICE of 2925 Hemlock Dr., recently elected president of the Franklyn Ravines Homeowners' Association, said officials in 30 homeowners' associations in Farmington Township and government offi-

cialists were sent copies of the statement.

Alice noted the committee is concentrating on millage rates because "there's not a heck of a lot he can do about assessments."

He said homeowners opposed the 50% assessments when the state constitution was being discussed, but now the provision is law.

"I don't think it was the intention of the constitutional convention to have two ways of increasing revenue," Alice added.

Increased assessments and increased millage rates both mean higher taxes, he said.

He said assessment increases in Franklyn Ravines, which is west of Middle Belt between 10 and 11 Mile Rds., were as much as \$3,500 this year, "and yet the homes are all the same homes essentially."

"The increases, while high, are far from what we could sell our homes for," Alice said.

Another aspect which Alice questioned was the assessment of homes on ravines in the subdivision. He said lots on ravines originally sold for about \$1,000 more than lots on flat land. The township, however, has assessed the ravine lots at less than the flat lots, he said.



EXCHANGITE RETURNS — Manoel Barreto of Recife, Brazil, is spending the weekend in Farmington to help exchange students get settled with their American families. Barreto, himself an exchange student two years ago in Grand Rapids, is now a Youth For Understanding group leader. He will return Monday to continue medical studies at the University of Recife. David Hawthorne of Farmington is shown with Barreto looking at a page from a Brazil magazine. (Evert photo)

Landmark Ruling Isn't For OCC

State and local lawyers are studying a new U.S. Supreme Court "one man, one vote" ruling to see if it will require reapportionment of the Schoolcraft College board.

To a layman, the court's 5-3 decision Wednesday would seem to require it. Each of the five member K-12 school districts, which all have different populations, elects one member to the Schoolcraft board. Three trustees are elected at-large from the entire college district.

Said Associate Justice Hugo

Black, who wrote the majority opinion:

"We hold that the 14th Amendment (equal protection of the laws) requires that the trustees of this junior college district (in Missouri) be appointed in a manner which does not deprive any voter of his right to have his own vote given as much weight as far as practicable, as that of any other voter in the junior college district."

IN MICHIGAN, local K-12 school districts elect trustees

at-large, but some community colleges have other methods.

Schoolcraft alone elects trustees from areas of unequal population, namely the local member districts - Clarenceville, Livonia, Garden City, Northville and Plymouth.

Oakland Community College elects its trustees at-large. Wayne County Community College elects its trustees from seven districts of approximately equal population. Henry Ford Community College covers a single local school district and elects at-large.

The Supreme Court decision was made in a Missouri case where six taxpayers challenged the make-up of a community college board. Kansas City, with about 60% of the population, had only 50% of the board seats (three of six).

The taxpayers' suit was dismissed in the lower court, but that decision was reversed by the Supreme Court, in effect striking down the Missouri law.

The majority opinion, written by Black, was signed by William O. Douglas, William J. Brennan Jr., Thurgood Marshall and Byron White.

Dissenting were John M. Harlan, Potter Stewart and Chief Justice Warren Burger.

ASKED BY THE Observer Newspapers whether the opinion would apply to Schoolcraft College, a spokesman for Justice Black declined to answer because:

"We can't give advisory opinions. You will have to consult lawyers, form your own opinion from the record, or submit a case for litigation."

Michigan Deputy Attorney Gen. Leon S. Cohan and

TRUSTEE FRED LICHTMAN said he had two concerns:

1. That the North Farmington SMC might take direction from the national organization instead of instituting its own activities;

2. That the school board might cover the NFHS administration into an untenable position and force something it was unable to cope with.

Miss Graf answered the local committee does not have

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Is Bias A Roadblock?

Dissenters Seek Recognition

By EMORY DANIELS

A small group of students at North Farmington High School is appealing to the Board of Education for assistance in organizing a Student Mobilization Committee (SMC) at the school.

The students claim they have been negotiating for over three months with Clayton Graham, principal of North Farmington, and have been unable to obtain permission to organize an SMC chapter at the school.

MISS MAXINE GRAFF, a student at North, is attempting to organize a local SMC and has about 30 classmates backing her effort.

She says the club, if organized, would be affiliated with the National Student Mobilization Committee - a group opposed to U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

"The SMC's main goal," she explains, "is to end the Vietnam War. Most of the committees in the Detroit area work in the schools to educate the kids and community about the war."

She described the Detroit Student Mobilization Committee as a conglomerate of metropolitan SMC chapters associated with the national SMC with headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Miss Graf says students at North became interested in forming an SMC group during last October's Vietnam Moratorium. The administration at North was asked if a student assembly on Vietnam could be held.

The administration refused, she reports, saying an assembly was not needed or desired since it would interfere with class time allocated for education.

During the past three months, she continued, the SMC backers have been denied permission to use the school's public address system for announcements "because we are not a recognized club."

ACCORDING TO Miss Graf, teachers at North have been told by the administration that the SMC is an "illegal" group at the school.

The students were also denied permission to place letters in the teachers' mailboxes. They were told they could not be recognized because they had not obtained a faculty sponsor and there did not appear to be any faculty members interested in sponsoring the group.

IN A LETTER to the board, the SMC backers wrote they "feel the hesitation in giving approval is based on a narrow administration viewpoint on

the war" and asked the board to "protect the rights of all students."

The letter was read at last Monday's school board meeting and was followed by a lengthy discussion.

Trustee Aldo Vagnozzi attempted to read a memo from Graham to Supr. Dr. Roderick J. Smith concerning the controversy. Vagnozzi changed his mind after Dr. Smith objected that the memo from Graham was provided only for the board's information and was not for public consumption.

A number of resolutions were introduced but were met by a 3-3 vote. When Richard Peters, board president, arrived late at the meeting a resolution was introduced that received a unanimous vote.

That resolution, introduced by Trustee George Washburne, asked Dr. Smith to meet with Graham and SMC representatives "to attempt to develop a mutual, satisfactory solution of the question of organizing" an SMC group at the school.

A report on that meeting is to be made at the next school board meeting.

Vagnozzi said the problem should be solved at North Farmington without school board intervention being necessary. "I hope the administration will make some effort to help this organization and it won't have to come back to this board."

He added that faculty members may not be volunteering to sponsor the group because "they aren't quite sure it has the blessing of the school's administration."

"I think what this group is saying," said Vagnozzi, "is they want to meet within the system we have established."

"It would seem a lot better to have them meeting in the school with a faculty sponsor so we can have some control on case questions are raised about their activities or operation."

On procedure, Vagnozzi commented: "Let's follow the rules, but if the rules are found wanting, let's take another look at the rules."

of that high school and be self-containing.

Frankel added that the school board may ask the SMC to sever its relationship with outside groups in order to fit within the framework of the school district.

TRUSTEE RICHARD FRANKEL said he had questions about the group's philosophy but "they have certainly a right to assemble."

Frankel suggested the meeting with students and Graham should investigate the possibility of organizing an SMC chapter to fit within the framework

Correction

Last Wednesday's issue of the Farmington Enterprise and Observer inadvertently omitted the name of a candidate for the Wood Creek Farms village council - Donald F. Fiesher.

Polls will be open March 9 from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the Paul Inman Associates Building, 3009 Northwestern Highway.