

Farmington Observer

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Twenty-Five Cents

School issues debated

By Jean Adamczak
staff writer

With less than two weeks left until the school board election, only a handful of residents showed up Thursday night for the final candidates' show-down at Dunckel Middle School.

Candidate Edmund Starrett took note of the low turnout and expressed his disappointment.

"I hope it means everything is going OK, running smoothly," Starrett said, looking out at the sparse audience.

"I hope it doesn't mean people are apathetic and don't care."

Starrett considers more parent and teacher involvement to be important to the school system and calls for a strengthening of elementary education.

"The most important thing we can do in our school system is to make sure first, second and third graders can read, write and spell," Starrett said.

"My contribution would be to establish a firm foundation at the elementary level and then continue it in high school."

Five candidates are vying for two seats. One seat is held by board president Helen Prutow, who is seeking another term. The other was recently vacated by James McGilincy.

The two top vote-getters in the June 11 election will serve four-year terms.

THE FIVE candidates are James Abernathy, Tom Buck, Roxanne Fitzpatrick, Helen Prutow and Starrett.

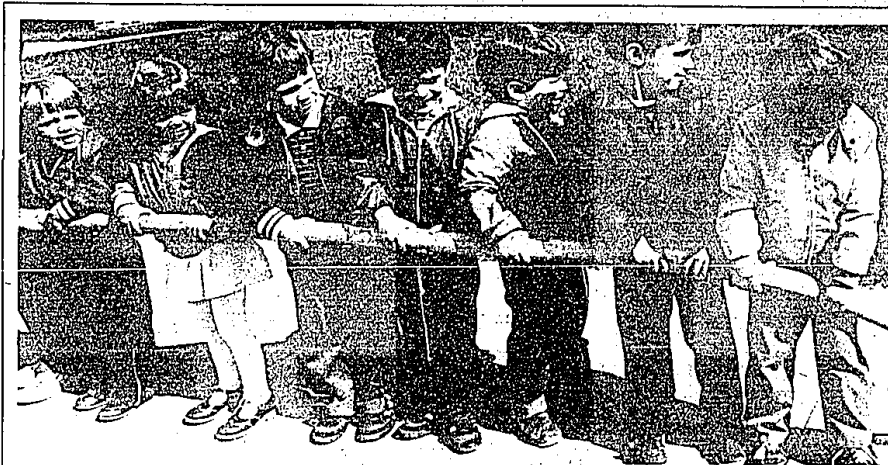
Each of the five competitors gave a five-minute presentation outlining their qualifications and goals.

Abernathy, a teacher by profession and a 17-year resident of Farmington, feels he particularly can relate to the challenges faced by teachers in the district.

"Children are not being challenged to their potential and it is in this area that I would be directing myself and my candidacy," Abernathy said.

Candidate Buck said his job as a training manager at General Motors will be especially valuable in light of the departure of James McGilincy who is also a manager.

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Students at Fairview recently had a chance to learn all about fire safety from Firefighter Mike.

Firefighter Mike helps kids learn to combat dangerous blazes

By Jean Adamczak
staff writer

Stop, drop and roll.

That's what the children at the Fairview Early Childhood Center found themselves doing earlier this week under the direction of firefighter Mike Garr from Farmington Hills Fire Station No. 2. He spoke to a group of preschoolers on May 28 about fire safety and prevention.

Known to the children as "Firefighter Mike," Garr talked about the danger of matches and how a smoke detector works. He then led the children around on their hands and knees in an exercise to practice getting away from a fire.

"You have to stay down low," Garr

instructed. "You don't want to breathe that smoke above you."

Garr then took a young volunteer from the audience to demonstrate the stop, drop and roll method of extinguishing a fire on your clothes.

"Don't run if you're on fire," Garr stressed. "You can put it out yourself by stopping, dropping on the floor and rolling."

The children watched attentively as a classmate rolled dutifully on the floor, making sure to keep his eyes, nose and mouth covered to protect his face.

"If you bump into something, roll the other way. You might get a little dizzy, but the fire will go out," Firefighter Mike assured the children.

GARR HAS been presenting fire

safety and prevention programs twice a year throughout the Hills area since he became a full-time firefighter in 1982. Before that he was a volunteer with the department for six years.

Dealing with preschoolers is not Garr's specialty, although he obviously enjoys it.

"I really love doing this," Garr said. "I have two children of my own at home which enables me to relate with these children."

"You have to get down on your level in order to get things across to the children."

"He's marvelous with the children," said teacher Sue Adelson. "The children really enjoy his programs."

Adelson says Firefighter Mike's image as the children's friend is import-

ant because sometimes parents frighten children about fires or about men in uniforms.

"It's good to let the children see firemen like Mike and know how friendly they are so they will not be afraid of firemen in an emergency situation," Adelson said.

Although the fire department has run such fire prevention/safety programs for a number of years, Garr recently solicited all area schools to invite him to speak.

"It's reciprocal," Garr said. "We (the fire department) go to the schools and in turn we invite them to the station to visit us."

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Docs' license battle looms

By Joanne Maliszowski
staff writer

If state Rep. Sandy Brotherton (R-Farmington) has his druthers, judges will be denied the authority to temporarily reverse orders to revoke or suspend a physician's license.

Brotherton is a member of a five-person special panel formed last week in response to recent newspaper reports documenting "the failure of the state and medical profession to protect the public against incompetent doctors."

"The study found that most incompetent doctors never lose their licenses and that the Licensing and Regulation Department is poorly organized and financed," Brotherton said.

The panel's task is to consider the need for more legislation covering the state's medical licensing system. The panel is also investigating the effect of budget cuts on the state Licensing and Regulation Department, which licenses physicians.

"We're reacting to the problems that the state should be doing something about," Brotherton said.

As part of his work on the panel, Brotherton has introduced House Bill 5088 which would give judges the authority to stay orders of the (Michigan) Board of Medicine and the Michigan Board of Osteopathic Medicine.

"Doctors have learned over the years that they have a right to appeal any decision that comes out of the boards," Brotherton said.

PHYSICIANS HAVE also learned that when they can get a judge to delay the revocation or suspension of their license, they can continue practicing for years because of the court's backlog of cases, Brotherton said.

Herm Fishman, the licensing executive for the state medical boards, said that with any luck, HB 5088 might "get the court to show some responsibility before a stay is executed."

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The best award

Farmington High's Jeff Lawton had a big hug coming from his mother, Nancy Lawton, Wednesday evening after he set a Western Lakes Activities Association polo vault record at 13 foot 8 inches. See Page 1C for a story.

TOM BAER/staff photographer

Walled Lake board contest features 5 for 2 openings

By Patricia N. Bowling
Novi-Walled Lake News

Public relations and school finances were topics most widely discussed last month at the first public meeting of the candidates for Walled Lake School Board.

Laurence Ereen, Dan McMillen, Ronald Sevold and Sam Wolfe faced a modest audience of about 25 for a "Candidates' Night" May 15 at the Walled Lake City Library, a fifth candidate, incumbent Board President Mario Torni, could not attend due to a prior commitment.

Another "Candidates Night" will take place Thursday at Oakley Park Elementary School, 2015 Oakley Park Road. Everyone is welcome.

LAST MONTH, Ereen told the public, "It was from the (December) millage campaign that I became interested in running for school board. It was a commitment that I felt I could and I should and I would make."

McMillen, a personnel manager at Williams International, said he wanted to lend his expertise in personnel matters to the school board. "We need to bring integrity, professionalism and trust back to the school board," he said.

Wolfe, a West Bloomfield resident, noted he has attended board meetings regularly for 8 1/2 years. He said he was an active participant in the tax elections and is "actively aware" of the promises made for expending the tax revenues. Knowledge of current district issues, board procedures and fiscal matters are needed, Wolfe said.

Sevold, an employee of Ramco-Gershenson Inc., noted he has been active in both business and volunteer community activities. A graduate of Walled

Lake Central High School, Sevold said he has noted "a decline in positive feelings in the community" toward the school district since his own graduation. Involvement and communication are two keys to improving those feelings, he said. The board needs to promote greater involvement from the community.

The district has received "bad press," he added, and the public "is not seeing the positive things happening in the classroom."

AUDIENCE QUESTIONS touched on recent events in the district, including the teachers strike last fall, the number of meetings closed to the public and the allocation of new tax funds.

"Should public employees be allowed to strike?" asked one observer.

"This is most destructive," Ereen replied. Noting he hoped there never would be another strike, Ereen added that employees should have had that right "as a last resort."

"Unions are a way of life in Michigan," said Sevold, who along with McMillen has received the endorsement of the Walled Lake Education Association, the teachers' union. "A strike is an indication of a greater problem," he said, adding that employees should have the right to strike.

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