

'Hills' Picking Up Old Tax Battle

By DAN McCOSH

The Farmington Hills council has become the newest Dan Quigley to go after the trailing arms of the Oakland County tax allocation board.

It is threatening the Farmington school board with withholding tax collection to prevent the board from levy-

ing a differential millage in the district.

The "differential millage" is a long-standing policy of Oakland County that is archaic and unfair.

But the county government has been careful to restrict its application to small groups of persons, apparently by feeling minorities don't have the political clout to squawk.

This was never as apparent as the case of Farmington Township. Only about one square mile of the Farmington School district is involved — that portion covered by West Bloomfield Township.

analysis

The "differential millage", briefly, goes back to the idea that in the good old days, all the property taxes were collected by the county, and then allocated back to the township. Three units of government — schools, townships, and counties.

Cities were on their own. The "pie" cut up by the county allocation board has been limited to a total of 15 mills. If a township's slice

becomes larger, logically, a school's share must become smaller.

Since taxpayers living in incorporated cities pay no township taxes, the county gives the schools the millage which would otherwise be levied for the township.

This practice means that when a school district overlies a township and a city, there are two school tax rates.

The township residents find their school taxes lower, by the amount allocated to the township. City residents pay school taxes (usually slightly more than a mill higher than township residents.

But in the Farmington area, this hasn't caused conflict between the former township and the City of Farmington in the past.

The reason is apparently that due to the political cowardice of the county allocation board, the so-called "differential millage" was never levied in Farmington.

It seems likely Farmington was exempt from the "system" merely because of the large number of people living in the city.

Differential tax rates remain between West Bloomfield and Farmington; Birmingham and Southfield Township, and the City of Southfield and Southfield Township.

In these cases, however, the townships are a small minority — generally benefitting from the "inequity", and therefore silent.

An exception was two years ago when a group of Birmingham citizens nearly brought the whole issue to court, but later dropped the case.

Superintendents in Oakland County made much noise then over the issue, fearful that a retroactive court suit would threaten their carefully balanced budgets.

Now Farmington Hills is taking up the fight.

Its motives are twofold: •The shot is on the other

foot, now that the old township was incorporated — "differential millage" means residents of the new city (as well as old Farmingtonites) pay a full 1.4 mills more school taxes than West Bloomfield in the same district.

•Millage was a big issue in the promotion of cityhood. Charter commissioners (four are now on the city council) promoted the new tax rate as six mills — not mentioning 1.2 mills of former township tax would go to the school.

It is an embarrassing situation for the city council in the "Hills."

Another adverse reaction is predictable from the City of Farmington. For years, the county has simply chosen not to allocate about 1.2 mills in the city which could have gone to school taxes.

Now city residents are in the same boat as the "Hills" — with a tax increase, they really didn't bargain for, let alone vote for.

But in the fight Farmington Hills will have to take on the combined forces of all the school districts in Oakland County, if the Birmingham case was any indication.

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Waste Disposal Step Is Taken By County Board

PONTIAC This project marks the third step the board has taken recently in the solid waste disposal field.

In 1970, commissioners allocated funds to establish a county-recycling center, currently operating on Telegraph in Pontiac.

In 1972, the board designated the Board of Public Works to develop a county-wide solid waste disposal plan which is currently being worked on in cooperation with the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

The local and regional affairs committee developed the containerization program after working closely with Mrs. Monica Georing of Pence. R. Pernick Southfield, who directs the (D Southfield) as vice chairman.



MAJOR ROBERT D. ARRINGTON, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Arrington of 29107 W. 10 Mile Road in Farmington, wears the meritorious service medal presented to him by Maj. Gen. Allen M. Burdett Jr., commander at Ft. Rucker, Ala. Arrington is serving as an executive officer in the Fourth Battalion, Army Aviation School.

Plugs Fouled

Heavy stop-and-go driving tends to foul spark plugs quickly, requiring cleaning or replacement more often than the recommended 10,000 miles, according to auto experts. A roughness or break in the engine's rhythm generally indicates a misfiring spark plug.

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2 Are Winners At The Library

FARMINGTON Richard Shewbridge and Nancy Whitemore were winners of the applied counting contest which highlighted conclusion of this summer's reading program at the Farmington public library.

Each received a book as a prize. Young people taking part in the reading program qualified after each two books read to guess the number of apples in a jar displayed at both libraries.

Chris Champness and Eric Kerastas each won prize books when their names

were drawn from a barrel at a party which concluded the summer program.

"Travel the USA the Tall Tale Way" was the theme for this summer's program which attracted 228 children entering grades 1-6. The young people were allowed to choose books of their own interest or books about American folklore characters.

Children gave an oral report on each book read and discussed their reading with the librarians.

Folklore stickers such as Paul Bunyan's ax and John Henry's hammer were placed on reading records.

Attends School On Alcohol

Alfred C. Cavaiani, director of alcoholism therapy in Southfield, recently attended the 31st annual Rutgers University Summer School of Alcohol Studies in New Brunswick, N.J.

Cavaiani, of Grand River, Farmington, is a graduate of the University of Detroit. The summer school involved the aspects of the relationship between man and alcoholic beverages.

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