

editorial opinion.

Teamwork bears fruit in millage victory

Quality education still has a chance in the Farmington School District.

District residents, along with administrators, students and teachers deserve a round of applause for their efforts in seeing that the four-mill renewal was approved in this week's election.

A brief glance at surrounding school district's millage results shows a disturbing tendency to reject quality education by turning down either millage renewals or increases. The districts of Southfield, Livonia, Walled Lake, and Fitzgerald all fell prey to voter cynicism.

SUCH CYNICISM died a violent death

Back scratching

Oakland County Treasurer Hugh Dohoney approached the county road commission recently about opening a branch of his office in the road commission's administrative center in Beverly Hills.

The road commission quoted him a price of \$6 per square foot for 350 square feet, and Dohoney went back to the county board for approval. What said a county board member, noting that the county general government leases the road commission space in a Pontiac Lake Road office for \$1 a year. Why should the road commission charge another county department six times as much?

The road commission reconsidered and authorized an open-end lease for "no more than a dollar per year."

Scratching back

Bob Greenstein, the flamboyant Canton Township supervisor, told a legislative hearing on the Detroit water system about the time the Detroit water board rented out some unused space in its building to the general city government. The price was \$5 per square foot.

The water department renovated and improved the building. When the lease was renegotiated, said Greenstein, the city was charged only \$3 a square foot.

in the Farmington district. Voters, by a 2½-1 margin, demonstrated they are willing to support their kids, and hence the future of the community.

Rejection of the millage would have meant drastic cuts, with more than 200 teachers and other school employees facing the axe. Valuable programs also would have been destroyed.

In a world racked by disharmony, the Farmington area community showed a keen sense of harmony by working together to get this millage renewed.

The scene Tuesday night at the school board office saw Farmington Education Association members shaking hands with school administrators in jubilation over the millage approval. It was a rare scene, indeed.

All concerned groups worked hard to see the millage through.

The board and administration showed wisdom in choosing only to put a renewal question on the ballot. The Southfield district fell prey to voter dissent by lumping a renewal together with an increase. Most increases in school districts were defeated this week.

BUT THERE STILL is a long road to recovery for education in Michigan and the Farmington district, in particular.

Even though the millage renewal was approved, the district, nevertheless, is forced to lay off some 80 teachers and cut programs. Meanwhile, parents are going to have to hold their breaths to see just exactly how the state is going to deal with aid to education in the future.

On the other hand, if state monies continue to decrease, voters should be prepared to approve a millage increase in a future election.

STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor

from our readers

Private ambulance service criticized

Editor:
It seems important that the events of Sunday morning, March 21, be brought to the attention of the city council so that they might take actions which will settle the record regarding the volunteer fire department and our department of public safety.

On Sunday, during a service at Prince of Peace Church, a gentleman from our congregation suffered an attack and quickly was attended by a nurse who was present. A call was placed to the Farmington Hills emergency number. After waiting for what seemed to be an interminable length of time, firemen arrived and a while later an emergency vehicle from the Farmington Hills Ambulance Co. Once the victim was in the ambulance, the "professional" who was driving didn't know how to get on the expressway or the route to Providence Hos-

pital where the man was to be taken at the request of his family. The route he took along side streets and access roads was both dangerous and time consuming.

Fire Station Number Four is just one-half mile down Twelve Mile from the church. When the call was placed, Station Number Two, located at Northwestern and Fourteen Mile was dispatched instead. Since Mr. Holko and his department are presently in disagreement with Station Four, it would appear they were slapping the wrists of the men from that station by dispatching Station Two or the department of public safety isn't familiar with the geography of our area.

Had this been a case of cardiac arrest the delays caused by dispatching the wrong station and the incompetence of the ambulance driver would have been fatal. It is time that our city council take quick

and positive actions to see that the present situation be rectified for the welfare of the citizens of Farmington Hills.

We have seen first hand our volunteer firemen functioning in a number of medical emergencies in our neighborhood. We had a small fire in our home several years ago and were pleased by their actions and their concern for the safety of our home. We were allowed to manage until, these dedicated men did a professional job. The idea that these men are involved in this service to the community for personal gain is absurd.

Whatever is needed in the way of the purchasing of new equipment, whatever must be done gracefully and admit they are in error, whatever action is necessary, I hope it will be done before the events of last Sunday are repeated with more serious consequences.

Our community wants and needs the dedication and services of our volunteer fire department. I feel that it is the duty of our public officials to see that the welfare of our citizens comes before petty grievances.

MRS. JOAN E. ROBBINS,
Farmington Hills

Trust fund says thanks

Editor:

An appropriate thank you for your help toward the success of "Redeavor Detroit—Reentertain '76" is my first duty of the new year. What a pleasure it gives me to learn that 10,000 calendars were sold, adding a handsome amount to the Junior League Community Trust Fund.

Adding to our cup of joy were all the community-minded people, both young and old, who saw the need for positive expressions about Detroit and responded with more kindness than I can enumerate.

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Farmington
Observer & Eccentric

DIVISION OF SUBURBAN COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION

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THERE MUST BE ANOTHER REMEDY FOR THIS HEADACHE



A new chance to reform high cost of campaigns

Last week, the Michigan Supreme Court threw out the Michigan political reform statute that had been hailed by its supporters as "the most far-reaching in the nation." The same law had also been called by its opponents "the Michigan political incumbents' preservation act," as well as a "gross invasion of individual privacy."

The court's decision was on the narrowest possible technical grounds. Technically, the court issued an advisory opinion which said that if a suit were to be brought challenging the constitutionality of the new law, the suit would be upheld. Why? Because the law in its present form has too many subjects to be contained in one piece of legislation.

This is hardly a stirring evaluation by the court of the substantive constitutional issues involved in the political reform statute. Although no one on the court is talking about the motivation behind the decision, I have speaking hunch at least a majority of the justices felt that the law had been passed in a political atmosphere supercharged by the temporary aberration of Watergate and that a more reasoned look by the state legislature might be useful.

THE DECISION was greeted with cries of joy from its opponents, who are basically divided into two groups.

One consists of various local office-holders, school board members, city councilmen and women, planning commission members and so forth. They have been arguing, with considerable justice, that the political reform act's provisions regarding public disclosure of their financial dealings and those of their immediate families are an invasion of privacy. Some office-holders have threatened to resign, especially in Southfield, and others have worried out loud that the public disclosure provisions of the law would create such a disincentive against public service that local government would suffer.

Another group consists of old-line politicians and assorted lobbyists for whom any political reform is anathema. In their view, the more closed the political system, the better. In my view, the less said about their self-serving arguments the better.

THERE IS a third group involved in this debate one which is basically in favor of political reform legislation but which has serious reservations that the law as originally passed would do anything more than insure incumbents would be forever re-elected.

Their worry is that by doing very little to restrict the amount that can be spent in a given campaign, the law does little to reduce the ever-increasing costs of elections. Further, they are

Observation Point

by PHILIP H. POWER



concerned that the law, by restricting sharply the size of individual contributions, would tend to tilt the balance of fund raising overwhelmingly on the side of a well-known incumbent and thereby tend to exclude fresh faces from entering the political process.

This group, which oddly enough consists of deeply involved politicians of both parties, is basically concerned with getting good candidates to run.

WHAT WILL happen now is that the whole law will go back to the legislature for another prolonged wrangle.

My own hope is that a political reform law will emerge eventually. The present law is vague on conflict of interest, it tends to hide unnecessarily the identity of political contributors, and it leaves the activities of lobbyists virtually uncontrolled.

But the legislature might wish, as it reconsiders the bill, to pay attention to the arguments of some of its critics.

1. What should be the extent of public disclosure of private finances, especially for local officials who serve their communities without pay or at very low salaries? Conflicts of interest on city councils or zoning boards of appeal or planning commission are a disease that must be eradicated. But is the illness so serious as to warrant a serious blow to privacy? Perhaps, widespread financial reports, covering office-holders and their families, could be filed with a Political Ethics Commission for confidential hearings before full public disclosure occurs.

2. Why not get to the problem of the cost of campaigns by strictly limiting the allowable level of expense? This would tend to reduce the disproportionate political advantage of the wealthy, but still make possible the entry of fresh faces at all political levels.

3. Why not, in fact, get right to the heart of the issue of tilting the balance of the rules over, overwhelmingly in favor of incumbents by declaring that campaigns should be publicly financed?

Such a system would tend to insulate office-holders from organized pressure groups who use their campaign contributions power as a lobbying tool, and simultaneously it would tend to set a flat—and low—expense limit to campaigns.

Driver protests ticket

Editor:
As a resident taxpayer of Farmington Hills, I feel compelled to comment on a recent demonstration of police administration and utilization.

The Farmington Hills police participated to the cheapest shot of "enforcement." I have seen what a magnificent fundraising effort.

During the week of March 26, a squad car was positioned at the corner of Middle Bell and Edgell across from East Junior High School. The officer was directing drivers into the street, having them turn around because he was so far behind and line up for processing.

They were being ticketed for violating the local ordinance that prohibits passing on an unposted shoulder. Ignorance is not excuse for the law, but when the citations are tallied for this aggressive piece of diligent police work, the city is going to find a lot of ignorant people. In the case of "Badger 22," he just asked for the driver's license, registration, etc. and started to write the citation. He didn't tell you the offense. You had to ask.

Furthermore, he was so busy, drivers had to get out of their cars and go to the corner to get the ticket processed.

The passing situation occurs when cars are lined up on two-lane Middle Bell to turn into the school area. The common practice, morning and afternoon for the four years I have lived here, is to pass around the shoulder.

If this mass citation effort was in response to a complaint, it seems the reasonable approach would be to post a sign giving warnings or better yet, provide another lane as with common established. Traffic is continually backed up because of turning.

It doesn't speak very highly for city and police administrations to practice such a fund raising rip-off on its residents. It certainly has done nothing to solve the basic traffic problem unless the 80 lines collected are to be used to finance the driving.

D. BRIVEN,
Farmington Hills

Wrong places, wrong jobs

People gathered in Washington over the week-end, trying to lobby Congress for legislation creating more federally funded jobs.

It must be the impression of these people that the more federally funded jobs produced the less our nation's unemployment will be. In reality, more subsidized jobs may, in the long run, create more unemployment. Even though the country has an unemployment figure of more than seven per cent, there are more people working today than ever before in the history of the country.

We have high unemployment because we have had a tremendous number of job seekers entering the job market for the first time.

The war babies, who created bulges in our education system over the last few years, are now entering the job market in large numbers, and since 1960 there has been a 23 per cent increase in the number of women in the labor force who previously were not recorded as job seekers.

IF THE FEDERAL government tries to provide jobs for these people, the cost, of course, will increase the federal deficit. As the federal deficit is increased, the government will have to borrow money which, in turn, creates inflation.

Inflation puts pressure on the private sector to reduce the number of jobs available in order to reduce costs.

Large city mayors have been pushing for a federal job-subsidy program not really to solve the unemployment problem, but really to convert local costs into federal costs.

Using the City of Detroit as an example, when there is more federal money to subsidize workers,

Eccentricities

by HANK HOLLIN



the city lays off people on the city payroll and re-hires them on the federal payroll. This is not a net increase in jobs. It is a transfer of costs to relieve the deficit budgets of the major cities.

THE ONLY REAL way to solve the unemployment problem is to get the private sector to hire more people. The only way the private sector can be confident that they can afford to hire new people is if there is some stability in wages and prices.

Once the private sector hires these people, they will, of course, make wages which they will spend, which will help the economy, which means that more workers can be hired.

The United States really did not get out of its depression of the '30s until World War II. One of the reasons the economy didn't react faster was that so many federally funded jobs were created that the private sector never had a chance to work out its problems.

Our economy is starting to improve, and most of the heads of households are back to work on a regular basis. We should not let the entry of new job seekers into the statistics force us into action which, in the long run, would put more heads of households back out of work.