



Farmington Observer

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Board election lags in resident interest

By LYNN ORR

The three R's, conflict of interest and inadequate teachers were in the minds of about 25 persons who turned out for the first school board candidates' night last week.

The question-and-answer evening was co-sponsored by the Farmington Democratic and Republican Clubs. Three of the four candidates were on hand to get acquainted with voters before the June 12 election.

Many of those in attendance agreed with Democratic Club president John Campbell's assessment of the evening:

"It's a little more fun when it's a little more controversial," he said, adding that the candidates' viewpoints seemed homogeneous.

Others, like board member Emma Makinen, expressed conviction that the candidates' answers revealed some conflicting points of view.

Howard Aldrich, 23 and a Farmington High graduate, reflected on his proximity to students' needs and viewpoints. Jack Inch, an Oakland Community College instructor, and Janice Rolnick, a former elementary school teacher who instructs one class at OOC, emphasized their teaching background as an asset for a board member.

Catherine Egypt was not present. The sole area of major disagreement among the candidates concerned teacher tenure and licensing.

A recent Farmington School District graduate asked the board members to comment on what they would do with unresponsive teachers who have 25

years in the district.

"Because of declining enrollment, the staff that gets cut has less tenure but is most responsive to student needs," he said. "These old guys that have 25 years in the system are left with their rotten curriculums. Do you see an answer to that?"

Mrs. Rolnick said she finds the problem an administrative, rather than board, issue.

"In any system or any job, you're always going to have the bad along with the good," she said.

Aldrich believes teacher accountability is important.

"I feel we are all accountable for our actions. I'm subject to recall if you don't like what I'm doing if elected. I feel teachers should be more accountable to the community, administration, students and parents. I don't think it should be overlooked, and I'm probably in trouble," he added.

Inch believes teacher accountability is the most difficult question in education, and that the board should tackle teacher motivation.

"How did that person ever stay in education?" he asked. Perhaps a board statement seeking innovation would be helpful, he said.

"How do you feel about the passage of teacher strike legislation?" asked another audience member.

"The strike is the only weapon a teacher has," Inch said, adding that he strongly backs compulsory arbitration.

Aldrich said he is not union-oriented and would oppose strikes by "almost anybody. I don't have an answer to keep someone from striking, how-

ever," he explained.

Binding arbitration was Mrs. Rolnick's response.

"If it wasn't for the teachers' organization, teachers would still be making \$6,000 like I was making when I started."

Building costs, maintenance and new buses, and following a priority list are the budget cuts that would be made by Aldrich, Mrs. Rolnick, and Inch, respectively.

Aldrich emphasized that students can't be forced to learn or realize the importance of education, but that students must have an opportunity to develop their own interests. Working as a Michigan court officer, he said he sees the results of youths without career goals.

Inch would like to see more people with backgrounds in education sitting on the policy-making boards.

"I think we have insight that others cannot have because of experience, or lack of it," he said.

Mrs. Rolnick added that a teaching career gives her a better look at teachers' and students' needs.

"We know the implications of what is dropped during budget cuts," she explained.

All three candidates agreed that teaching the basics is important, in response to a question from Hills resident George Roberts.

Mrs. Rolnick added that the middle school concept (moving sixth graders into a school with seventh and eighth grades with emphasis on individual needs) currently adopted by Farmington is pursuing a step in is another step in that direction.

"Every student has their own learning capacities, but we must work to afford them opportunities," Aldrich said.

Better communication and support from parents would reinforce the teaching of basics in the school, Inch added.

All three candidates agreed that the basics were important in special education, in response to a question. All students' needs require a response from the educational system, they said.

"After you get your seat on the school board, what will be your first motion or proposal that you will offer on your own?" queried board member Michael Shipce.

Efficiency in policy-making is Inch's priority, although he didn't specify what course he would pursue to achieve that goal. Mrs. Rolnick said she would probably attempt to establish better communication between the board and the community, possibly through a monthly newsletter.

Better communication is a priority with Aldrich as well, although he said he would like to be better acquainted with board functions before making a specific proposal.

Both Mrs. Rolnick and Inch denied the possibility of a conflict of interest during negotiations. Mrs. Rolnick is not a member of the Michigan Education Association. Inch said being a member would not affect his role on the board.

"In some professions, the members of the entire board are made up of members of that profession, and I've never heard conflict of interest posed," he said in response to board member Dr. Mervyn Ross's question.

Republican president Jack Forbes asked what programs the candidates would augment or add if funds were available.

"Nutrition education," responded Mrs. Rolnick.



Mildred Nelson collected about 45 Chinese elm bees from her dining room window in less than five minutes. The bug invasion is a laughing matter for city and county officials, but a nuisance for the Nelsons and other area residents. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Insects, bureaucrats bug Hills homeowner

By LYNN ORR

Farmington Hills resident Mildred Nelson has brightened the days of a lot of city and county officials.

What's a laughing matter to them is a serious problem for the Nelson family.

For the third year in a row, Chinese elm beetles have invaded the family's home in the southwest section of Farmington Hills. The tiny brown bugs cover the windows and ceilings of the house and fall indiscriminately to the floor, dying when they land on their backs, Mrs. Nelson says.

Calls to Oakland County, Farmington Hills, and the Board of Health have elicited laughter and scorn, she explains.

The beetles feed off the leaves of Chinese elm trees, but the Nelsons don't have any such trees on their property. And spraying the trees is the only way to stop the infestation, an exterminator says.

"He said he could do nothing for me but take my money, that he could get rid of these, but they'd be back in three weeks. The only way to get rid of them is for Oakland County to spray the trees, he told me."

THE BEETLES leave a yellow stain on everything they touch, which has meant replacement of living room

drapes, sheer curtains and lampshades. Mrs. Nelson will have to repaint the walls again, she says.

Now she's worried that the spray she's using to control the insects may be harmful to her family, particularly her daughter, who has allergies.

Besides, the bugs are a nuisance.

"This morning I woke up with one on the sheet," says Mrs. Nelson. "My kids are a nervous wreck, and we have to eat next door, because I'm afraid of those fumes in our food."

Lack of concern from city officials has made the problem worse, she says.

"When I call anyone, they just laugh or get mad. They tell me Oakland County isn't wealthy enough to spray the trees, but Detroit does it. Everyone thinks it's a big joke."

One woman in city hall put the phone aside and said: "Can you imagine—this woman wants us to spray her home for bugs?" Mrs. Nelson relates.

"They tell me I shouldn't be calling Farmington Hills."

When she called the city manager's office for some help, Mike Dorman, assistant to the city manager, "hollered" at her, she says.

"He told me he didn't want to hear from me and that it was my problem," Dorman told her he called the Board of Health, which informed him the

beetles aren't a health hazard.

"I think Farmington Hills could at least help me get some help if they can't do anything," Mrs. Nelson says.

Dorman denies that he was rude to Mrs. Nelson. He says he told her to call back "when she calmed down," and to provide him with a list of neighbors with elm trees on their property.

"She's misinterpreted what I told her," he said.

According to the exterminator, the Nelsons are one of many families in Oakland County plagued by the beetle problem.

"He told me lots of people have this problem, but they're afraid it's their fault because of not cleaning or something. He says it's not our fault."

Mrs. Nelson has had hairline cracks in the fireplace cement filled, but the exterminator says that the bugs are tiny enough to get in anywhere.

Although the beetle invasion is bad enough, the lack of respect and aid from city and county officials is worse, Mrs. Nelson says.

"The exterminator told me there's a run of these bugs in Oakland County. The least somebody could do is look into this problem."

"But all anyone does is tell me to shut up and that it's my problem. Where problem would it be if they were all over City Hall?"

Hills agenda ready

CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS

Council meeting
7:30 p.m., May 22
31555 Eleven Mile

The city council meeting will begin with two public hearings.

The first will be concerned with establishing the necessity for road improvements in the Franklin Forest subdivision.

Secondly, the council will conduct a cost hearing regarding dust control for the city's roads.

Among unfinished business is a report on the Hamilton street storm drain project.

In addition, the council will consider enacting the following amendments to the city's zoning code: changing land on Eight Mile between Gill and Drake from single family residential to multiple family dwellings. Land between Drake and Gill in Grand River is to be switched from light industrial use to business service district use.

The south side of Twelve Mile will be the subject of consideration to enact an amendment switching its zoning from single family residential to office use.

Also under consideration is the property west of I-96 and south of Ten Mile on Grand River which is up for a change from light industrial use to business use.

Other old business which will be considered includes an amendment to the city's code ordinance regarding school property control.

There will be consideration of an amendment to change the city's uniform traffic code regarding motor vehicles on school property.

Under new business, the council will consider accepting a lease indenture bond resolution, bond purchase contract for Parish Co. Industrial Development Bonds.

There will be consideration of a request by the Coventry Lake Civic Committee to pave Fourteen Mile Road.

There will be consideration for a request for a carnival license for St. Alexander Catholic Church, 27835 St. Lawrence, for 11 a.m.-11 p.m., Sept. 8-10.

Council will consider establishing a special assessment district on Greening and Bond streets in Glen Oaks.

There will be consideration of acceptance of an easement for a sewer from Michael Surg to serve the Bridle Hills Subdivision.

Consideration of settlement for a necessity hearing for road improvement in Kendallwood Four.

Consideration of a request to advance money for the purchase of Sun Marten Golf course by Farmington Hills.

Consideration of request to delete the sidewalk requirements for Manufacturer's Bank building on Thirteen Mile Road and Northwestern Highway.

Consideration to amend the city code to require connection for sanitary sewers.

Consideration of request by the Fancy Farmers of Farmington to use the city hall parking lot for a series of summer dances.

Crafters are invited to Founders Festival

Crafters are invited to reserve a table for the arts and crafts sale during the Farmington Founders Festival, July 27-28.

Crafters Corner is sponsored annually by the Farmington Masonic Temple Association and is conducted on the front lawn of the building at Farmington Road and Grand River.

For information and reservation forms, call Mary Turton, 477-9133.

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YOUNG SCIENTIST

Andrew Papp surprised everyone recently when he manufactured an electron microscope for just a little money while professionals are spending big bucks. To see how he accomplished this and the prize that he won for his endeavor, turn to Page 2A.