

# Farmington Observer

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## Farmington voters face lackluster primary

By LYNN ORR

Farmington area voters have few choices facing them in local primaries next Tuesday, as the hotly contested bids for slots on the November ballot are concentrated at the state senate and Congressional level.

Lack of opposition in the primaries may be one of the keys to the thus-far low-key elections for state representative in the 64th district and county commissioners in the 15th, 24th, 25th and 27th districts — local officials elected by Farmington voters.

In a bid for his third term in office, State Rep. Wilbur Brotherton (R-Farmington) lacks party opposition in the primary, while he will face unop-

posed Democratic nominee Robert Green in November.

In the four county commission districts in which Farmington and Farmington Hills are represented, most party races are unopposed.

IN THE largest district including Farmington, county Commissioner John McDonald (R-25th) lacks competition for his bid for a second term in office. McDonald will face unopposed Democratic candidate John Campbell. Both men are Farmington residents.

Incumbent county Commissioner Robert McConnell (R-27th) in the northern commissioner's district will have to wait until the November elec-

tion to face an opponent, Democratic candidate George Montgomery of Union Lake.

In the 24th district, which includes the western half of Farmington Hills, incumbent Republican Dennis Murphy of Novi faces a challenge from Martha Hoyer, also of Novi. The winner of Tuesday's primary will face Democrat Lou Koy of Wixom in the November election.

In the 15th district, which includes a small portion of eastern Farmington Hills, incumbent Republican Lillian Moffitt of Birmingham will face the winner of the Democratic primary — either Anthony Tedesco of Farmington Hills or Albert A. Keenan of Birmingham.

POST-WATERGATE political disenchantment, historical disinterest in local elections and the complexity of issues are some of the reasons candidates believe voter apathy at the local level is at its peak.

Brotherton, 56, of 23622 Beacon Drive, Farmington, boasts strong political roots in Farmington as a 14-year member of the city council and a one-year term as county commissioner in the 27th district. He believes the general public is better informed about issues, but younger voters are apathetic.

"The younger voters just aren't getting involved in the political process,"

he says, citing delay in starting families as one possible reason for lack of interest. He also believes the general public is disillusioned about politics because they expect quick action.

"They don't understand that politics is the art of compromise," he says.

His opponent, Green, 33, is a Harrison High School graduate and student at the Orchard Ridge campus of Oakland Community College. He could not be reached for comment by the Observer.

THE DEMOCRATIC candidate for the 27th county commissioner seat, Campbell, 42, of 23701 Cass, Farmington, agrees that the post-Watergate public lacks faith in politics. He's also convinced that the plethora of candidates at the state level diffuses interest in local primaries. As chairman of the Farmington Democratic Club, he has held numerous positions in the local and state groups.

His opponent, incumbent McDonald, 38, of 29912 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington, believes there's a precedent of non-interest in local primaries. The county commissioner seats traditionally have failed to spark voter interest, he says.

In the 24th district, incumbent McConnell, 49, of 3008 Valley Side Drive, Farmington Hills, is seeking his second term at the county level. He was the last person to serve as township supervisor before the Hills incorporated, served as chairman of the charter commission and was elected the first mayor of Farmington Hills.

Lack of opposition is his answer to the question about the election at the local level thus far. He believes the local races will heat up before November.

His opponent in November, Montgomery, 44, of 8690 Buffalo Drive, Union Lake, served three terms in the Michigan House of Representatives before moving from Detroit in 1971.

A political science teacher at the Highland Lakes campus of Oakland Community College, Montgomery is seeking his first seat in Oakland County. He ran for Congress twice in the 19th district and was the Democratic nominee defeated by State Rep. Richard Fessler (R-West Bloomfield) in 1976.

Montgomery blames lack of election coverage by the media for the lack of interest in local campaigns. The media turn off viewers and readers with negative coverage and concentrate

only on issues such as the tax limitation proposals, Montgomery says.

Asked what they see as key issues in the November election, the candidates replied as follows:

• "Tax limitation will be the major issue — I don't think there's any question about that." — Sandy Brotherton.

• "Government inefficiency will be the top issue." — Robert Green in his questionnaire written for the League of Women Voters.

• "McDonald's voting and attendance records and the Southeast Michigan Transport Authority (SEMTA)." — John Campbell.

• "The transportation situation, SEMTA and low income housing and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HUD) requirements." — John McDonald.

• "M-23 and the need for a major north-south artery in western Oakland County, and the SEMTA Dial-A-Ride funding, particularly in Commerce and Wolverine Lake." — Robert McConnell.

• "The rubber-stamping by the Republicans of Executive (Daniel) Murphy's budgets, the malapportionment of districts, and what officials are going to do if tax limitation is adopted." — George Montgomery.

## Day in park ends Festival

Overcast skies and chill breezes failed to dim the spirits of about 300 persons who turned out at City Park last Sunday as the nearly week-long Farmington Founders Festival rolled to a close.

A bike-a-thon to the park, 10-cent hot dogs, family picnics and a variety of games filled the afternoon hours for those recuperating from elephant rides, disco dances, antiquing and other festival activities.

The highlight of the day for about 100 observers was a festival first—a highly competitive softball game in which the Farmington City Council downed the Hills council 10-8. Judges Michael Hand and Margaret Schaeffer of the 47th District Court umpired the hotly contested match. Councilman Ralph Yoder led the city team to victory from the pitcher's mound, while Mayor Jan Dolan hurled for the Hills.

City Mayor Richard Tupper, respondent in an engineer's cap, accepted the milk can trophy for the hard-fought win. Immediately following the game, a water balloon fight threatened bemused bystanders, but most of the action took place between among members.

City players included Tupper and his wife, Donna; Councilman Bill Hartsock and wife, Joan; Councilman Warren Buckler and friend Virgie Cabaud; Public Safety Direc-

tor Dan Byrnes and wife Judy; Councilman Alton Bennett; and City Mgr. Bob Deadman.

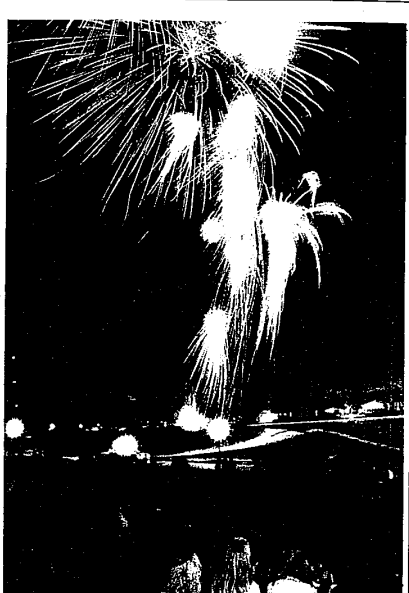
Accusations concerning the use of "ringers" were leveled at the Hills team, which included non-city officials other than spouses. Players for the Hills were Mayor Dolan and husband Walt; Councilwoman Joanne Smith and husband Bill; Councilman Keith Deacon and wife Lois; Councilwoman Cathy Jones; Councilman Joe Alkateeb; and two friends of the council members, Ernie Hoffman and Jeff Beal.

While the men batted lefthanded for the event, the female players made a good showing, although one city partisan accused the teams of "putzie-wutzieing" the game.

Fatigue was blamed for the end-of-the game slowdown. Asked by one bystander what the winning team would receive, Bennett replied: "A free trip to the nearest hospital."

After the 1 p.m. game, the softball darts were devoted to games for children, teenagers and adults, including Frisbee throws, wheelbarrow and sack races and treasure hunts.

Names in the crowd included the newly crowned Miss Farmington, Pamela Pritchard, and her court; State Rep. Sandy Brotherton; and Doug Ross, challenger for the state senate seat held by Daniel Cooper.



The fireworks display at Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge campus drew a crowd Saturday night. (Staff photos by Allen Schlossberg)

## Caution: Don't split your ticket

Farmington Hills City Clerk Floyd Cairns is warning voters in next Tuesday's election to follow printed instructions carefully before punching a ballot.

Unlike machine voting, which locked in a voter to one ticket when the first lever was pulled, the ticket-splitter will find that the computer spits out invalid ballots.

"If you want your vote to count, you must vote either Democrat, Republican or Party Qualification," Cairns says. "If you vote for a candidate in one party, you must stick to that party to have your vote counted."

The only non-partisan category includes candidates for the Circuit Court judgeship on the ballot. Farmington area voters will be casting ballots in the primary for governor, congressional senator, state senator, state representative, county commissioner, district court judge, circuit court judge and a county tax question.

## Bensek to stand trial for arson

By LYNN ORR

A Farmington restaurant owner will stand trial in Oakland County Circuit Court on an arson charge stemming from a blaze which closed the Danish Inn one year ago today.

An arraignment before Circuit Court Judge Frederick Ziem is scheduled for Aug. 13 for Richard Bensek, 47, of 21534 Landy, Farmington Hills. Bensek is charged with the burning of real property, a felony carrying a 10-year maximum prison sentence upon conviction.

Seventeen witnesses testified before Judge Margaret Schaeffer of the 47th District Court in Farmington Hills during the eight-month preliminary exam which began last November. Bensek, who was arraigned Oct. 20, on the charge, did not take the witness stand. Last Friday, Schaeffer bound over Bensek for trial in circuit court.

Personal bond of \$1,000 was continued.

Det. Ray Lardie of the Farmington Public Safety Department headed up the eight-week investigation of the fire which closed the downtown Farmington restaurant located at 32035 Grand River. The fire resulted in an estimated \$132,000 worth of damage to building and contents, according to officials.

Farmington Public Safety officers extinguished the late-night blaze after a passing motorist reported seeing smoke coming from the restaurant.

Bensek leased the building from Fred Hamlin, owner of the Farmington Bowling Alley next door to the Danish Inn. Bensek was employed at the restaurant for about 12 years before he acquired full ownership three years ago, according to his attorney John Kiefer.

Insurance on the property included \$168,000 on the building, \$154,000 on the contents, and \$100,000 business interruption insurance, according to police records.



These sleepers in City Park found a comfortable spot to recover from Sunday in the Park festivities.

## Youngsters create art from junk

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Give a child Styrofoam packing, an oatmeal box, plastic vials and a bottle of glue, and in one afternoon he'll create a whatchamacallit.

At least that's what Jerry Mills, 11, came up with during his afternoon at the children's Art-In during the Farmington Founders Festival, last week.

Jerry's creation looked like a space-age fort or the lair of a mad scientist. But it's true identity was unknown, even to its creator.

"I don't know whatchamacallit. I just made it up," said the young artist who attends Westland Elementary School in Redford.

Other youngsters who helped Jerry take over the lawn of the old Farmington Junior High School building for the festival brought to life images seen only by them in their minds.

FELT-TIPPED PENS, paint, crayons and boxes helped the young artists along in bringing their ideas to fruition.

Chelsea Harrington, 9, of Farmington had a picture of a country scene in mind. The blue clouds floated across a clear sky, and giant trees helped to shade the ground against a brightly burning sun.

Next to Chelsea, Kathy Cullen, 13, of Canton was painting a country scene, also. Green grass was intersected by even greener trees with broad brown trunks. A serene pond quietly filled the center of the picture.

For those who liked colors but were

uninterested in spending their afternoon filling a blank page balanced against an easel, there was an alternative in tie-dyeing.

Mark Lansing, 8, of Farmington Hills opted to color a cloth in different hues of gold, yellow, orange and green.

"I think they're neat," the Wooddale Elementary School student said of his color scheme.

A clown face was what Patty Turton had in mind. The 14-year-old artist saw other advantages to the Art-In as well.

"It was better than staying at the Masonic Temple," said the East Junior High School student.

"Down there you have to go around and do what they say and here there are other kids," she said.



Mark Lansing of Farmington Hills discovers the artistic possibilities in an egg carton. (Photo by Allen Schlossberg)

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