

# Farmington Observer

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## Open primary spurs debate in Lansing

By KARRE SLAFKIN

Michigan lawmakers have split along party lines in the debate over whether to maintain the August presidential primary.

Local legislators state Sen. Doug Ross (D-Oak Park) and state Rep. Sandy Brotherton, R-Farmington, exemplify the partisan battle.

Presently a bill is being debated in Lansing which, if passed would abolish the presidential primary.

The bill arose as a result of Michigan Democratic Chairman Morley Winograd's request that changes occur in the primary's running. Those changes are meant to be in line with the national Democratic party platform.

Under reform rules adopted by the National Committee last year, delegates chosen as a result of "open" primaries, such as Michigan's, would be refused seats at the national Democratic convention.

If the Michigan legislature and Republican Gov. William Milliken haven't acted by Oct. 1 to amend the state primary, the state Democratic party has threatened to implement a caucus system for delegate selection.

"We have two alternatives for sending Democrats to the national convention," says Ross.

"We can eliminate the primary and select delegates through a convention system, or we can maintain the primary and merely ask people which primary they intend to vote in."

Ross says the process is informal, the responses go unrecorded and the voter can change his mind or tell the inquirer that "it's none of your business."

State Democrats, according to the national party rules, must at least make an inquiry into a voter's preference.

The inquiry is an attempt to avoid the crossover voter, who votes the opposing party's weakest candidate to ensure his own party's candidate a shoe-in win.

But Brotherton sees this inquiry as an invasion of privacy. Some persons may resent being asked whom they intend to vote, he says.

"I'm speaking of the independent voter especially, who cherishes his role. He may not want to declare himself, or may want no one to know his party affiliation."

This sort of inquiry process would keep persons from voting in the primary, the independent voter especially, says Brotherton.

"A high percentage of voters already stay away from the primaries," he says. "It would be a mistake to make even more stay away."

Ross disagrees.

"First of all, in the first primary we had a 45 percent voter turnout, and in the second presidential primary, one third of Michigan's voters voted."

"Perhaps, they (Republicans) feel that is a small turnout. It isn't," he says.

"As for the independent voter, you have to keep in mind the purpose for the presidential primary. The primary is for voters who identify with a political party and can play a hand in determining who the party candidate will be," says Ross.

He sees the independent voter as at least leaning toward one party or the other, or as wanting to choose the best candidate possible.

"So, the primary exists to choose their party's candidate. The primary isn't for the person who is uninterested in that selection."

"It is for the voter who has a party affiliation and wants to participate in the party process. The primary took the candidate decision-making process out of the back rooms and gave it to the voter."

Yet, the primary's cost to the taxpayer causes concern for the local Republican.

"It's a waste of money because of such voter turnout. I wonder if it's worth the money spent," says Brotherton.

He suggests that a special presidential primary is unnecessary since a party's candidate could be chosen at another primary.

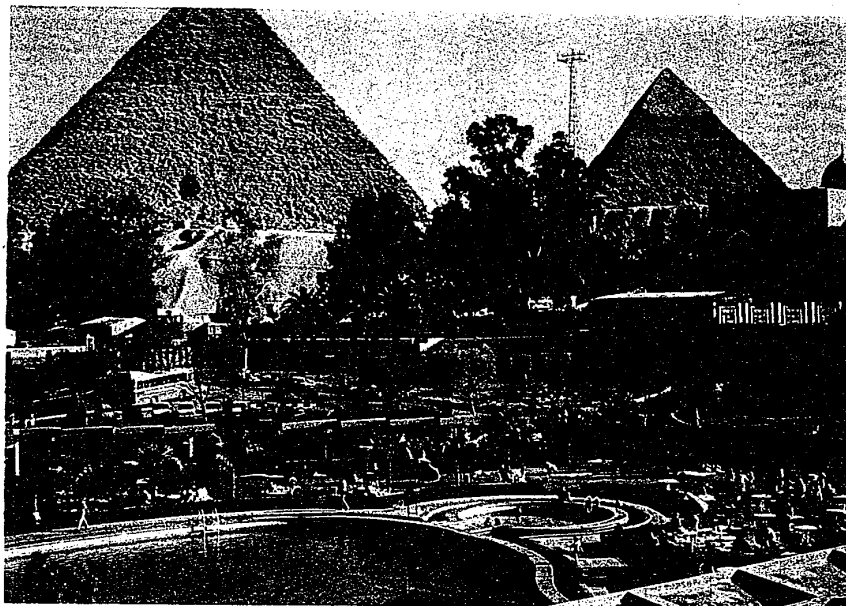
Ross points to local elections to counter that argument.

"Local elections have fewer voters, yet, are necessary. How is any election a waste of money?" asks Ross.

"I strongly support continuation of the presidential primary and making participation as open as possible."

"It would be no solution to abolish the primary. Once again, a presidential candidate would be chosen in the back rooms," he says.

Brotherton, on the other hand, sees little loss in abolishing the primary. "I don't think it will make any difference to the Michigan voter. The primary, initially, sought to bring presidential candidates to campaign in Michigan to increase voter interest. It didn't work," he says.



### Peace at the pyramids

With peace a reality in the midwest, the land of pharaohs may be all the more enticing. Let Iris Sanderson Jones take you on a trip today to the splendors

of the Nile and the mysteries of ancient tombs in the land of the sphinx. See today's Observer & Eccentric travel section. (Staff photo by Art Emanuel)

## Little red school house gains attention as historical site

In its heyday, as a 19th century one-room school house, it made up part of Rural Fractional District 2.

Today, Nichols School is a decaying relic of the days when eight grades were taught under one roof. Unlike the German School on Middlebelt near 13 Mile which is still used by Hill Day School, Nichols' windows are boarded up and its bell tower rots.

The dilapidated building on 13 Mile and Farmington Road is made up part of the fledgling Farmington Hills Historical Commission's dream of a historic park which would include the cemetery on 14 Mile and Farmington Road.

Now under private ownership, the school was sold by the district about eight years ago after its usefulness had passed.

Nichols School replaced a frame school house which burned on that spot in 1883. The brick structure was built by John Graham for \$600.

In the 1920s the district retired the building from active service after Bond School was opened. For many years, the building was used for storage and offices. Gradually it fell into disuse.

MOST OF THE SCHOOL'S history before the fire of 1883 remains cloudy.

"It was there for many years before people began to take an interest in its history. And when people began to be interested, the people who knew about the school were gone," explained Bob Cook of the historical commission.

Eventually the school board sold the building under closed bid. At the time of the sale the Farmington Historical Commission was interested in the building for use as a museum. But funds for the purchase of the school weren't available, according to one commissioner.

Instead, five years later the local history buffs with the cooperation of

Farmington Hills began to negotiate to buy back the building.

The Bernard Sherry family, who purchased the building from the school board, recently sold it to a Dearborn Heights businessman, Mark Tucker.

The Sherry family had hopes of turning the old school house into a residence but those plans never saw fruition. Instead the school was sold to Tucker, who is now in negotiations with the city over the sale of the building.

If the city buys the building, the historical commission is planning to make it part of a historical district along with about 70 other old homes in the area.

## Judges, social workers displeased

### State eyes juvenile justice reforms

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

State Rep. Mark Clodfelter is confident that his bill to reform the juvenile justice system will pass the legislature this time around.

The bill, which would force juvenile courts to continue monitoring the progress of troubled children and their families, is expected to meet resistance from juvenile court judges and social workers when it is introduced in the next few weeks.

It approached the issue of abused children in more specific language, according to Clodfelter. He condemns the present laws for being "incredibly vague."

Clodfelter's proposal gives a description of abuse and leans heavily on social service agencies to remedy the situation.

It doesn't deal with the failings of the agencies but with the legal structure surrounding children, according to Clodfelter.

Children who are picked up for status offenses wouldn't be allowed into a jail cell unless they run away from a minimum security facility, according to the bill.

MINIMUM SECURITY centers for children who have run away or skipped school would be places of last resort, according to Clodfelter.

Troubled children with records of running away from home or school wouldn't be automatically sent to a detention center. Under Clodfelter's bill the foster homes, counseling and a statewide network of centers for run-

ways would investigate the reasons behind the child's problems.

If the social services can't help the child and his family, then the courts would be called into the situation.

Under present law, juvenile courts are part of the situation from the first formal complaint.

One provision of Clodfelter's proposal would allow children and parents to obtain a divorce from each other. A court proceeding would allow parent and child to part ways if the family finds it impossible to solve their problems in any other way.

Once the child is separated from the family either through choice, an abusive situation or other problems, the

courts are obliged to follow the family's progress.

"One of the major problems in foster care is if the child is removed from home for any length of time, chances are slim they'll return soon," Clodfelter said.

"They languish in foster homes."

TO CIRCUMVENT this situation, Clodfelter would like to see juvenile court judges make efforts to reunite the separated family.

The court is expected to work with the family to lay out a program to alleviate its problems. Failing that, after 18 months of separation, the court could move to sever parental rights so

the child could be put up for adoption.

This would happen after the court reviewed the case on a regular basis. Parents, child, the child's lawyer and social worker would be involved in these reviews.

Under Clodfelter's proposal there would be more of an emphasis on obtaining a lawyer for the child.

If the parents' rights are terminated, the child would become a ward of the court. The court would be required to continue reviewing the child's case and progress until adoption.

Clodfelter sees this as a safeguard against a child's files being lost in bureaucratic red tape.



Nichols school, once a part of the Farmington area's educational system, has fallen on hard times in recent years. Historical buffs are hoping to turn it into a museum. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

## Trustees ask change in rules for free school breakfast plan

By MARY GNIEWIEK

The Farmington Board of Education will ask state legislators and the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) to change criteria which regulates a state-mandated free breakfast program in the schools.

The board voted 5 to 2 last week to request the change in the law so that requirements to provide a breakfast program would be based on total school enrollment rather than the num-

ber of free or reduced-price lunches served.

Trustees Emma Makinen and Michael Spiece voted against the resolution.

According to the current law passed in 1977, a school district must operate a breakfast program at every school in the district where 50 percent or more in 1978-1980, 30 percent or more in 1980-1981, or 20 percent or more thereafter of lunches served the previous year were free or reduced price lunches.

Under that formula, no Farmington school would be eligible for the breakfast program in the coming school year. Cloverdale Elementary and the Farmington Training Center would be required to have the breakfast program in 1980-1981.

House Bill 4556, introduced by State Rep. David Campbell, R-Clawson, would amend the law so that the percentages of free lunches that trigger the mandatory breakfast program

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### HOLIDAY DEADLINES

Because of the July 4 holiday, all deadlines for the Eccentric will be moved up 24 hours. This applies to both the Monday, July 2, and Thursday, July 5, issues. Please take this into account when dealing with either the advertising or editorial departments of the Eccentric. Material normally needed by 5 p.m. Monday must be received by 5 p.m. Friday. Material normally needed by 5 p.m. Thursday must be received by 5 p.m. Wednesday.

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