

Opinion

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Marks is best bet for council race

FARMINGTON HILLS residents have a singular chance this year to nudge their city council one step closer to a more progressive and secure future by voting for Ben Marks in the Aug. 7 primary.

The city is going through a transformation that was slowed only slightly by the recent economic recession. With growth once again a familiar part of the suburban landscape, many crucial decisions are going to be made that will affect the city for years to come.

Considering the inferior quality of recent city leadership, the recession was, in a strange sort of way, a blessing for Farmington Hills. While the economy was suspended, otherwise-necessary decisions were postponed.

But a new era has come to this fledgling city. A new city manager recently was named — one in whom residents can invest a great deal of hope. Council philosophy is lifting back, ever so slowly, to a more sensible and moderate course.

Marks, outspoken as he is, also possesses a more reflective side — one that cares about the city's future rather than just what is expedient.

Expediency is an attribute too common among some present and recent past city council members.

His record demonstrates real concern.

One of the city's founders, he worked actively to bring the area out of its antiquated township stupor. And for those who remember, that wasn't easy.

Besides serving as a charter commissioner, he demonstrated political courage by chairing the controversial housing commission that dealt with the bitter fight over senior citizen housing.

Marks put the importance of the housing issue before the future of his political career. He was defeated in a previous council race because of those beliefs. Many other persons would have given up in frustration, but despite aspersions cast his way by many persons, Marks continues to be active.

He has served on the building authority, the building board of appeals and, most importantly, on the very important planning commission for more than five years.

Marks understands the city's needs better than any other candidate. He will be an outspoken advocate on a city council that needs direction in its all-important public debate.

His decisions will be made on the basis of vast experience and regard for the future.

Marks has more than paid his dues and demonstrated his dedication. He is the best choice.



Study in contrast dawns on cable TV

THE FIVE things in life are the contrasts.

Sometimes it's enjoyable to drink a very dry wine. At others, sweet and fruity pleases our palates just fine.

The local-access cable-television station has come up with an interesting combination that not only should be informative but some really good entertainment. And talk about contrast. Watch out.

IN THIS CORNER we've got the one, the only Fred Lichtman, intellectual, rational, former mayor and councilmember as well as one of the founding fathers of Farmington Hills.

In the other corner we've got Sister Mary Ignatius, art teacher extraordinaire, witty of tongue and gracious of manner. A real charming lady.

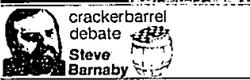
Each of these persons is going to have a chance at stardom on the local-access channel. For the uninitiated, that's channel 12 on your dial.

Lichtman, who without a doubt was one of this city's most outspoken leaders, will air a panel talk show on controversial social topics. Retired to Marshall, he has been lured back to talk about and with local powerbrokers.

Sure would be interesting to see what he thinks about the millage debate going on among his former council colleagues.

Truth is, you've got to see Fred to enjoy him. Not everybody does — enjoy him that is. The retired oil company executive was known for his sharp tongue and keen wit. Those who came up on the other side of an issue usually found themselves intellectually bruised and psychologically battered.

But those who knew him on a more personal basis, realized that he was a man of true compassion.



crackerbarrel debate Steve Barnaby

SISTER IGNATIUS IS one of the most fascinating persons you'll be fortunate to meet in a lifetime. Her specialty is teaching others how to become better than average artists. You've got to see the results of her work to believe it.

You'll get that chance at 1:30 and 7:30 p.m. Aug. 6. The second show will be on at 6 p.m. on Aug. 8. You'll be charmed by this woman, whose talent deserves more public attention than it has received. I fell in love with her years ago. I really did. You will, too.

Don't be kidded by the nun's garb. She is a gutsy, determined person — a match for Fred on any given day. Maybe we'll see that some day.

NOT SO coincidentally, these two are brought to you through the hard work and determination of Lark Samoullen, a person who deserves a lot of credit. Samoullen is the executive of the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission (SWOCC).

The commission is the combination of Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi. The cities launched their own consortium to deal with the Metro-Vision franchise.

Lark is your full-time cable watchdog. One of her main duties is to ensure that cable works for you. She has done a yeoman's job by making sure the local access channel is quality. Unlike other cities where the concept has failed miserably, local access is working here.

Programs with Lichtman and Ignatius aid in making local programming viable.

Nichols stands out for sheriff

SIX CANDIDATES are running, but it's a two-man race for Oakland County sheriff in the Aug. 6 primary. And the two both happen to be on the Republican ticket.

The best should go to John F. Nichols, who is best equipped to take over and restore morale in the department being vacated by Johannes Spreen.

Nichols has handled other big jobs. In Detroit, he worked his way up from rookie cop to police commissioner. Nichols made a 1973 race for mayor that, though unsuccessful, still reflected credit on him and his profession.

Spreen then brought Nichols on board as

undersheriff in Oakland County, boasting freely of his colleague's ability in managing the 450-member department. More recently, Nichols has been police chief in Farmington Hills.

Of late, Spreen seems to have had an uninterrupted series of conflicts with persons in his departments, suspicions of their loyalties, political clashes with other county office holders and a pronounced lack of respect for others in the law enforcement profession.

By all accounts, morale is at a low ebb. And by all accounts, Nichols has the respect of people in the department and can

restore it. The other major candidate is James Stewart, public safety director of Huntington Woods.

Stewart has been elected to positions of leadership in police associations and has the respect of other professionals. In Oakland County, of all counties, public officials must work together because no one unit of government dominates the county.

Compared to Nichols, Stewart has a disadvantage in that his experience is on one department, and a fairly small one at that. In any race that didn't include Nichols, Stewart would be outstanding.

A strong 'yes' for Oakland parks

EACH ELECTION that it's on the ballot, the 0.25-mill property tax for Oakland County parks seems to win stronger support. And each year, more and more residents find delightful recreation close to home at the nine county parks. The parks are expected to draw 1.5 million fans this year, up 50,000 from last year and 400,000 from nine years ago.

The tax, which brings in about 60 percent of the parks and recreation commis-

sion's \$6.2 million operating and capital budgets, has been in effect 18 years. For legal reasons, the ballot language will say "increase," but actually it's a five-year renewal.

We strongly recommend a yes vote on the county proposal Aug. 7.

To the owner of a house valued at \$80,000 and assessed at half that amount, the quarter-mill will cost \$10 a year. The revenue helps provide capital money and

holds down admissions fees to an affordable level.

Oakland parks are an intermediate-sized form of recreation between the community park and the larger, more distant state parks. County parks cater to a variety of interests for all members of the family. They are convincing evidence that government can do some things right.

Observer & Eccentric Newspapers

Oakland park fun, well run

WHERE DO YOU take a team of kid baseball players?

It's traditional for a coach to hold a season-ending party. Last year I had taken a group of 10-12-year-old boys to a Tiger baseball game. Other popular choices are cookouts or a visit to Chuck E. Cheese.

But I was looking for something different. I heard of another coach who had taken his players to the wave pool at Waterford Oaks, a park in the Oakland County Parks and Recreation system. It sounded like a good idea.

So on Saturday morning nine boys loaded into my station wagon and we took a 40-minute trip to Waterford Oaks.

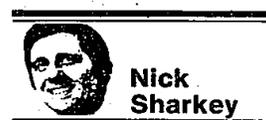
I was impressed by the wave pool. The locker room is clean and well-organized. The deck around the pool is carpeted. The pool has sparkling clean water.

But best of all, kids can have fun in the water without being accomplished swimmers. They can wade into the water and ride the waves without ever swimming.

Adjoining the wave pool is a double water slide. If you haven't gone down a water slide, you're missing something. You lie on a mat as the water swirls you down and around a funnel on an exciting trip. At the end you are dropped in a pool of water. It's refreshing and invigorating.

The wave pool is well-supervised. Four or five lifeguards are always on duty. An attendant waited in the locker room. The concession and rental offices are managed by courteous persons.

Much to my chagrin at the end of the day one boy told me he had left his clothes bag on a bench in the locker room, not



Nick Sharkey

inside a locker as I had instructed. I was sure the day would be ruined by a stolen clothes bag.

Not to worry. An attendant took me to the lost and found where his clothes bag was sitting on the floor.

OAKLAND COUNTY parks have an important day coming up. On Tuesday, Aug. 7, a one-quarter mill operating renewal is on the ballot. Every five years Oakland voters are asked to support their parks at the voting booth.

An owner of a house assessed at \$30,000 (\$50,000 market value) would pay \$7 per year for the park millage. As the reader can probably already figure out, I think that \$7 per year is a bargain.

It's predicted that about 1.5 million persons will use one of the nine Oakland County parks this year. That's up considerably from about 400,000 persons 15 years ago.

County parks complement local parks. They offer services such as golf, camping, nature centers and a wave pool which are not available at local parks. At the same time they are close-to-home.

For residents of south Oakland County, a wave pool may soon be even closer to home. If the one-quarter mill is renewed on Aug. 7 a new wave pool will be built

next year at Red Oaks in Royal Oak.

IT HAS LONG been my contention that county parks are great untapped resources. At a time when we are looking for inexpensive recreation close to home, county parks fill the bill.

One of the promises I made myself at the beginning of the summer was to visit more county parks. After my experience at Waterford Oaks I'm looking forward to using more parks in August.

I was even more impressed when at the end of the day one of the boys said, "This was more fun than going to the Tiger game last year."

In the year of the Tigers, that's saying something.

discover Michigan by Bill Stockwell

DID YOU know that in the past century a lay preacher lived out Woodward Avenue in what is now Berkley who firmly believed that the earth was flat? This man, James Hickey, often held church services in his home and thoroughly explained his theory. In fact, he even had a book printed to prove his ideas were sound. But it is not recorded as to how many copies were sold or how many Michiganians he converted.



Sister Mary Ignatius



Fred Lichtman