

# Opinion

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## Vote Renew school millage



Bob Sklar

**P**SSST. There's an election coming up Tuesday. Voters will consider renewing 4 mills of Farmington Public Schools' 32.5-mill property tax levy for operations. That tax rate is 10 percent below the average for Oakland County's 28 school districts.

Four mills represent \$5.6 million — 10 percent of the district's \$56 million operating budget. Deep, across-the-board cuts — touching every facet of programming and staffing — undoubtedly would accompany a negative vote.

Don't be misled. The renewal would not be a new tax. But the school taxes you pay won't necessarily stay the same. You may pay more if the value of your property has gone up — a likely prospect in a thriving district ranking among the top five in the county in state equalized value.

**BUT FARMINGTON** Public Schools voters have never defeated a school tax renewal. And there's no good reason to start now. Vote yes Tuesday.

The \$5.6 million that's at stake is needed just to meet basic cost increases for energy, supplies and salaries, says Michael Flanagan, assistant superintendent for finance.

Even though the inflation rate is the lowest in years, it's still a factor to be reckoned with. Over the past two years, energy costs climbed 14 percent to \$1.7 million. Insurance costs shot up 300 percent, to more than \$2 million.

Wages for 1,500 employees represent the single biggest component of the district's budget — 80-plus percent. Trustees have tried to keep wages competitive without breaking the budget. This year, for example, most employee groups received a 5 percent pay increase.

## Presidential hopeful is well worth a listen

**ONE OF** the most interesting personalities on the international stage these past two decades has been Gen. Alexander Meigs Haig Jr., with whom some in our area will rub elbows Saturday.

When I asked one of his disciples whether to salute or genuflect upon introduction, it was suggested that a firm, old-fashioned American handshake might still be acceptable to this native Philadelphian.

The general turned 62 on Dec. 2 and among those close to the Washington scene there seems little doubt but that he hopes to be the Republican candidate for the office of president of the United States in 1988.

As a columnist and commentator George Will, writing in the Washington Post last week, reported that Haig's political-action committee already "has disbursed \$800,000 since July" on behalf of his unannounced candidacy.

Although his most recent governmental role was as secretary of state under President Reagan, Haig cannot be labeled a politician. He has never held elected office. However, he is coming here as guest of a political group, the Republican Committee of Oakland County, to deliver the principal speech Saturday at the 98th anniversary banquet of the Oakland Lincoln Republican Club.

**HAIG IS** a military man through and through. His face, chiseled from granite, is familiar to television viewers throughout the land. His manner bespeaks the discipline in which he was trained at West Point. It will be fascinating to see whether anyone so serious can deliver the type of hip, hip hooray speech that so often typifies political party pep rallies such as Saturday's.

Oakland County Republican Chairman Larry Dickinson of Farmington Hills expects the upbeat approach and says he hopes the 800 or more people who will be dining with the general at the "oma's of Bloomfield" go away somewhat energized.

Incidentally, tickets for the banquet are still available by calling 338-1133. They are \$20 each and will not be sold



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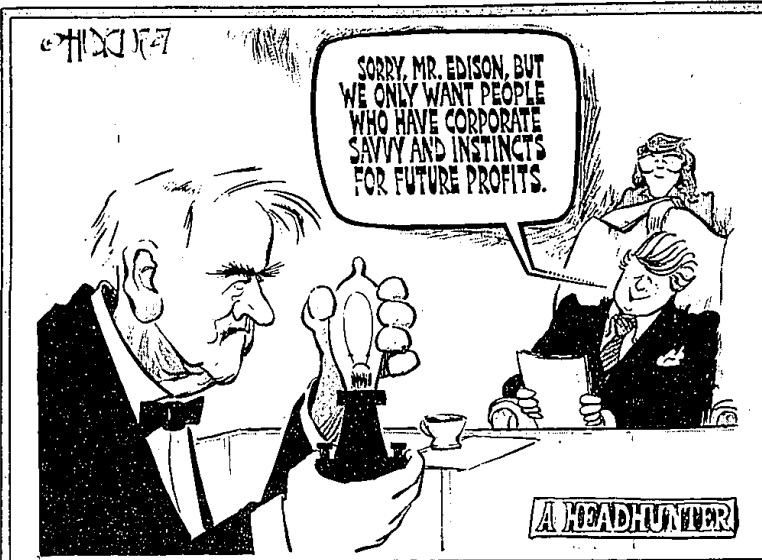
at the door. Mess call will be at 7, preceded by a cash bar at 6 p.m. Haig will be introduced by his longtime friend, U.S. Rep. William S. Broomfield of the 16th District who has served in Congress since 1956 and is now the ranking Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Even if Haig were not a longshot presidential nominee in a field that includes Vice President George Bush, Rep. Jack Kemp of New York State, Sen. Robert Dole, who is Republican leader in the Senate, and even evangelist Pat Robertson, his comments at this moment in history would be eagerly awaited.

Here is a man who literally bled for his country in Vietnam, the Purple Heart being among his carload of lifetime decorations. Few can match a career that has included service at Gen. MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo, the NATO staff, combat in Vietnam, chief of staff under presidents Nixon and Ford, five years as supreme allied commander in Europe, the office of secretary of state, and most recently important roles in the private sector.

**THIS IS A SERIOUS**, scholarly man with a marvelous command of the English language, not a stand-up comic. I have to believe that he understands the contradictions between secrecy and democracy and that the one place the twin have to meet is in the oval office.

Quoting George Will once more, "Haig goes further than any prospective Republican presidential candidate in criticizing the president... However, he faces another other problems the fact that his expertise is in foreign policy. Elections almost never turn on that, and it is hard to imagine Haig waxing eloquent about soybeans."



## A hard lesson to learn

**MEMO TO:** Personnel director, AXD Laboratories.  
**FROM:** Cora Porate, personnel interviewer.

**RE:** Research scientist position, Candidate 02/11/1847.

**Credentia:** Candidate has only three months of formal schooling. We usually require graduate work at a major university for this post unless there are other qualifications. Candidate says he is well read but cannot demonstrate same with verified lists of books borrowed from libraries.

**Work habits:** He has a "drudge" work style, insisting, "Genius is 2 percent inspiration, 98 percent perspiration." While self-employed in his own laboratory, he performed 4,999 experiments, unsuccessfully seeking viable part for an electric light. He sets no time limits for ending experiments. Candidate would want to want our firm to fund endless, dull, repetitive experiments with little assurance of a feasible product for the marketplace at the end.

**Past accomplishments:** Candidate holds patent on electric voting machine, to tally in a minute the votes of Congress and eliminate hour-long roll calls. He failed to do market research, however, and congressional leaders rejected the product — a wasted investment for his lab.

**Press relations:** He employs no PR firm or staff. The last time he sought media contact, he called newsmen to the office of the Scientific American and told "the boys" his findings. When I informed him that media contacts in our firm are to be made only by the department manager through the public affairs director, he said nothing but assumed a defensive "body language" position in the chair.

**Insurance investigation:** This candidate is rated "accident prone" by our insurance management division. He has started a baggage car fire on a train, burned down a barn, fallen into a canal in his native Milan, Ohio, almost smothered in wheat while "exploring" a grain elevator and was nearly shot accidentally by police because he is too deaf to hear a warning to stop.

**Handicaps:** Candidate, as noted above, is nearly deaf. N.B.: We have met our quota this year for handicapped hiring. Other health factors OK.

**Appearance:** He admits his suits are inexpensive because once, during an experiment, he burned a hole in a new \$50 suit. He replaces each suit with one in the same style. During conversation, he revealed he had never read "Dress for Success" because he prefers chemistry,



Tim Richard

mechanics, mathematics, engineering and biology books.

**Market orientation:** Candidate 02/11/1847 wants to develop products for the lower segment of the market — talking machines, electric/powered appliances, dynamos for citywide production of electricity, non-flaming lights, an "electric pen" dictating machines. Our market niche is the upscale, stylish professional who isn't price conscious.

**Recommendation:** Candidate's application be placed on file.

The above parody was concocted after visits to Thomas A. Edison's Menlo Park laboratory now housed in Greenfield Village, and to his winter home in Fort Myers, Fla. The 140th anniversary of Edison's birth is Feb. 11. Government offices are open, however, because it is not a political holiday.

## Fight AIDS with ad dollars

**FINALLY, SOMEONE** has the courage to stand up and holler, "pay attention."

That's what Southfield-based Channel 7 did last week when general manager Jeanne Findlater gave the station go-ahead to run condom ads. And we all should be thankful that this media general was brave enough to brush aside the meek and to withstand the criticism.

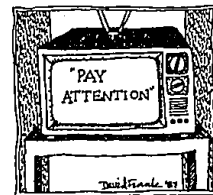
Her pioneering spirit could save the life of someone you love.

Other media outlets along with millions of Americans are slow to realize that AIDS, a sexually transmitted disease, is spreading like wildfire and soon will kill hundreds of thousands of us.

Regular Observer & Eccentric readers will recall that months ago we did several stories on the dangers of AIDS and its potential to reach epidemic proportions. Since that time other newspapers have tuned in to the dangers of this always-fatal disease.

Unfortunately, the word just isn't getting out fast enough. Every day thousands more become infected. That's right, I said thousands — every day.

**AND BECAUSE** the public believed it was only a disease which haunted the homosexual community, it turned its back on the disease. But now, the heterosexual community is being struck. And every scientific authority agrees



that a cure, a magic serum, doesn't exist and won't exist for the next five to 10 years. By that time, hundreds of thousands will have died in this country. No telling how many will die around the world.

And although the disease can be transmitted by intravenous blood transfusions or through use of infected needles used primarily by drug addicts, the primary mode of transmission is through sexual contact.

Within five years, 50,000 Detroit-area residents could be dying from AIDS.

But that doesn't have to happen if we are willing to be educated. And the first lesson is that transmission of AIDS can be prevented through use of condoms.

Now many will say this is some kind of moral issue to be debated. But that is shortsighted. AIDS is a life and death issue.



crackerbarrel  
debate  
Steve Barnaby

If your child has unprotected sexual relations with someone infected with AIDS, they stand a high risk of contracting this fatal disease. We have to stop being so naive as to believe that abstinence is a way to prevent AIDS from spreading.

Our children must know that no cure is in sight, that heterosexuals can contract the disease and that they can protect themselves from death by using condoms.

But we must first reach them with the message. That's why schools should open their curriculums to AIDS education. That's why newspapers and magazines should join in this effort.

And that's why more television stations should advertise condoms. Young people use television as their primary source of information gathering. They often know more about the advertisements that are broadcast than the shows.

Before you protest the move, think about it. It's a matter of life and death for your children.