

# Opinion

33203 Grand River/Farmington, MI 48024 Robert Sklar editor/477-5450

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## Vote nears Re-elect Prutow, Abernethy

"It is only the ignorant who despise education."

— Publius Syrus

AT AN educational crossroads, Farmington Public Schools is facing one tough decision after another.

In the past year, the school board has wrestled with such newsmakers as a common campus at the elementary level, limited open enrollment at the secondary level and an expanded curriculum at all levels.

Trustees also are considering a \$74 million operating budget for 1988-89, a \$27 million bond issue for a new school and capital improvements, and a \$1 million media center at Farmington High. Other hot topics have included student computer literacy, future funding projections, staff development, substance abuse education, community relations and Boys Republic.

More than ever, leadership must be the key-stone.

The seven trustees were within an hour of burning the midnight oil on many occasions this past school year. Brickbats came as readily as laurels.

On Monday, June 13, voters will fill two opening school board seats from among incumbents Helen Prutow and James Abernethy and political newcomer Bruce Jacob.

All seem to have a genuine concern about educational quality in the 10,700-student district. But we have no qualms about endorsing the reelection of Helen Prutow and James Abernethy.

PRUTOW'S DEDICATION to the district is borne out by her commitment as the longest-serving school board member.

She's caring yet demanding. She's not afraid to challenge the administration.

We wish she'd speak up more and share the knowledge that three terms on the school board has brought. But she's nonetheless insightful when she does speak.

## Good work Rape bill gets prompt action

LEGISLATION making it illegal for a man to rape his wife in Michigan is one significant away from becoming law.

That is good news and good law. The governor should hasten to sign the bill that passed the legislature rapidly and resoundingly.

Clearly, our senators and representatives deserve credit for their speedy action and unqualified support of the bill. Not a single lawmaker voted against it.

The legislation, sponsored by Rep. Shirley Johnson, R-Royal Oak, eliminates a ridiculous legal loophole limiting a woman's right to file rape charges against her husband. Under current law, only a woman who has filed for divorce and is living apart from her husband can claim to have been sexually assaulted by him.

## Veto needed House bill clouds sunshine law

GOV. BLANCHARD showed he can stand up to the legislature by vetoing a popular prescription drug bill for which there was no funding.

Blanchard needs to summon up his courage again by vetoing House Bill 5415, another crippling amendment to the Open Meetings Act.

This bill was part of the annual attempt to "cover the sunshine law" with clouds. Last year the Parole Board was exempted, and this year it is the Public Service Commission that is to be allowed to operate in the shade.

LAST WEEK'S state Senate vote was 29 to 6 in favor of gloom.

We are less than proud of our area's own senators in this matter. It was supported by Doug Cruce, R-Troy, Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, Robert Geake, R-Northville, George Hart, D-Deerborn, and Rudy Nichols, R-Waterford. Sens. William Faust, D-Westland, and Richard Fessler, R-Commerce, had excused absences that day.

If he vetoes this measure, Blanchard shouldn't fear political consequences because the bill was backed and opposed by both Republicans and Democrats.

The Public Service Commission's excuses for wanting to meet secretly are lame ones. The three members must communicate by circulating written memos because if they discussed our electric and natural gas rates publicly, somebody

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Since her election in 1976, Prutow has served the board in almost every leadership capacity. Since 1985, she also has served on the Oakland Schools Board of Education, providing Farmington with an invaluable link to the county.

Considering the improved working relationship between the school board and the Farmington Hills City Council, she holds a key assignment as a liaison between the one-time adversaries. She also chairs the Michigan Association of School Boards Legal Trust Fund.

IN HIS first term as a trustee, Abernethy has built a reputation for being upfront, probing and a stickler for detail.

A professor of architecture at Lawrence Institute of Technology and a former Farmington planning commissioner, he takes the business of running a school district with a \$66 million budget and 1,900 employees very seriously.

He never loses sight of his responsibility to the district's students, even though he strives to keep a vigilant eye on how taxpayer dollars are spent.

We like the way he digs and probes, although it's disheartening when he takes a tough stand, then votes with the majority anyway.

Both Prutow and Abernethy are among the majority of trustees who have a seeming penchant for presenting a unified front. We suggest there's nothing wrong with taking a minority position on a board vote. Unanimous votes certainly aren't mandatory!

Still, on Monday, June 13, Farmington Public Schools can best be served by re-electing Helen Prutow and James Abernethy.

*Our senators and representatives deserve credit for their speedy action and unqualified support of the bill. Not a single lawmaker voted against it.*

Johnson said tragic tales of sexual assault and violence told by witnesses during committee hearings carried great weight. Several county prosecutors pushed for passage of the bill.

Lawmakers proved they can work quickly and effectively when the issue requires.

Now about that school finance reform package

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might want to address them in the "public comment" portion of the agenda. What sad logic.

Instead the PSC members should try holding open meetings rather than asking to be exempted from something they can't prove is bad.

THE PEOPLE of Michigan deserve to be able to see and hear their policy-making officials out in the open because:

- The public has a right to know what government intends to do before government does it to them.

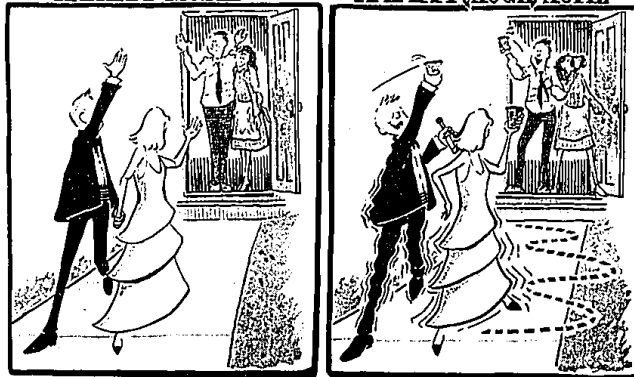
- The public has a right to know who else is influencing our policy makers.

- The public has a right to its own contribution to the process.

- The public has a right to know how members of a board tried to amend or change a plan, not just their final yes and no votes.

The public, after all, is paying the utility bills and the taxes that support the PSC.

## 88 PROM/GRADUATION A HAPPY HOME A HAPPY(HOUR) HOME



## All-night parties help fight rejection, alcohol

LISTEN UP, graduating seniors at Farmington, North Farmington and Harrison.

The high probability of a snapped neck, a mangled body or instant death when a speeding car rams a tree underscores why drinking and driving don't mix.

It's great you're part of Channel 4's "Project Graduation." But don't overlook the meaning of the "Don't Drink and Drive, Together We Can Make a World of Difference" public service message you're delivering.

Don't get so caught up sharing the thrill of graduation, you turn your hard-earned diploma into a death certificate. The sobering reality is that a drunken person is 100 times more likely to die in a car crash.

That's why the community should rally behind the all-night graduation parties hosted by your parents. Farewell, Cruise Ship, Beach Bash — simple themes, but potential lifesavers.

SURE The parties have grown to be a traditional graduation send-off. Safety isn't the only motivation. But you can't discount the protective net they offer.

If plans for this year's fourth annual party at Farmington live up to their billing, there should be as many good times as there would be at any



Bob Sklar

drinking party.

Festivities will include a millionaires party, swimming, a hypnotist, a caricature artist, a disc jockey, a recording studio and dancing.

"Attendance has increased each year," says Farmington High senior Drew McDougall, Student Round Table president and whose mother, Pat, is co-chairing this year's party. "The kids look forward to the fun things they can do. They look forward to seeing everyone in more of a relaxed setting than graduation. They want to go to the party."

ONE SCHOOL party is certainly more practical than dozens of house parties. Why not have a gathering point where alcohol is taboo?

The all-night parties eliminate peer pressure to drink. They show you can enjoy graduation night, you can have that one final fling, and not be tempted by booze.

The admission price, which covers food, entertainment, party favors and casino credit, is no more than the cost of a bottle of potentially deadly liquor — \$8 to \$10.

Farmington-area merchants are doing their part, donating an array of gift prizes and auction items, everything from clock radios and stereo headphones to dormitory refrigerators and gift certificates.

The all-night party gives senior class members — whether bound for college or a trade school — one last opportunity to share laughs and memories. It saps any feeling of rejection or loneliness — at least for a night.

MANY OF Farmington Public Schools' 945 graduates won't see their classmates again. But chances are good they'll remember that last link to their high school years, the all-night party.

It's as much a memory mill as the senior class yearbook.

Whether you're a parent, merchant or simply a resident, your support of the all-night parties, via money or merchandise, is needed. To make a donation, call the high school of your choice.

Do your part to help assure no senior becomes a gruesome highway statistic this graduation season.

## Farmington readers' forum

Letters must be signed, original copies and include the address and telephone number of the writer. None can be returned. Names will be withheld from publication only for sufficient reason. Letters should be limited to 300 words in most cases. We reserve the right to edit them. Send letters to Readers' Forum, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River Ave., Farmington 48024.

## Roads aren't health clubs

To the editor:

Spring is here, and once again they're out — those physical fitness enthusiasts.

I'm all for keeping in good shape, but something must be done to get these people off the main thoroughfares. They tie up traffic and pose a threat to the safety of others as well as themselves.

Although bicyclists and joggers are entitled to their space, the main roads in this area certainly aren't health clubs.

Sally D. Landan,  
Redford Township

regarding our public officials.

Brooks Patterson has dedicated 16 years of his life to making Oakland County a safer place in which to live. He is the best prosecutor that Oakland County has ever had or ever will have. He is one of the most sincere, conscientious people I know. It's a real shame that you are not able to appreciate his efforts.

Next November we will be electing a new prosecutor in Oakland County. It would be great if we could replace Brooks with someone of the same caliber. Unfortunately, we can never "replace" L. Brooks Patterson.

There must be a law (or maybe we should enact one) against writers of "fiction" portraying themselves as newspaper reporters. I'll have to talk to Brooks about that.

Carmen V. Talbot,  
Highland

## Prosecutor on right side

To the editor:

I found your editorial opinion regarding L. Brooks Patterson extremely insensitive, disrespectful and in very poor taste.

The observations made in that article are irresponsible and untrue. They demonstrate that you obviously have some sort of personal vendetta against Mr. Patterson, which, in my opinion, any professional news writer would not see the need to thrust upon the general public.

Hopefully, in the future you will enlighten your readers (of which there are now several less) with more accurate, positive information

## Censorship: a serious matter

To the editor:

How would you feel if you worked hard on a project you thought turned out pretty good, but then someone came along and said it wasn't fit for public view because it was the wrong color or size? Most likely, you would feel frustrated or angry. Wouldn't you?

Music is an art form. Censorship is a very serious subject. When you mix the two, it could be very serious. When you talk about censoring things, you must determine how far the censoring would go. If you start

censoring albums, how far would the censoring go? Or would it just keep on going until no music could be heard? You might think that is far-fetched, but it isn't.

If you censor one thing, it might lead to another and another.

If censorship becomes mandatory for music, who would be the one to judge the ratings? One person's ideas on censorship are going to be different from another's.

Censorship would cost money, too. Where would the money to put the ratings on the albums come from? The cost of the albums would increase. The music industry might lose money because it might not be able to afford the increase.

Adrianne Calderwood,  
Farmington Hills

## Learn about hearing better

About 22 million Americans suffer from some form of hearing, language or speech disorder.

For Detroit-area residents, help for a hearing problem is as close as the telephone.

"Dial A Hearing Screening Test" is a brief recording, which introduces four tones for each ear. The caller is given full instructions, a list of medical problems associated with hearing loss and local medical audiological referral information.

To take this free hearing screening test, simply call 476-1430 from a quiet room.

Michigan Ear Institute,  
Farmington Hills

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