

Murray wants basics returned to politics

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Murray, a Farmington resident, faces Democrat John Dolan, a Bingham Farms resident, in the Tuesday, Aug. 2, primary. Four Republicans will also have their own run-off election.

The 89th District includes Farmington and Farmington Hills and the villages of Franklin, Bingham Farms and Beverly Hills.

MURRAY IS active in the Democratic Party and is a member of the Farmington Democratic Club. He is seeking a post that has been held by state Rep. Wilbur "Sandy" Brotherton, R-Farmington, who has announced he will not run for an eighth term.

But Murray said with the national election this November, there is a chance to convert the local seat from Republican to Democratic.

"I know it's going to be an uphill battle," he said. "But if there is even an opportunity for a Democratic win, this is it."

He also said the area has independent "swing" voters who are "self-thinking people," who will support his bid.

Someone new is needed, he said, to rid the state government of a "tend the store, as usual" attitude.

THE 14-YEAR Farmington resident said although he moved to this

area because of the school system, "I saw the quality slowly deteriorating from the point I got here. We're turning out kids that cannot read and write."

"The respect level has gone down. There needs to be pressure applied to get that respect back."

Murray's first priority in Lansing would be to evaluate the education system, and verify how and where money is being spent.

"I don't really know if that funding is going where it should. Let's see what we've got now. I want to make sure Farmington (schools) gets their fair share of the money."

Murray's activities with emergency services, police reserves and Civil Air Patrol also bring him to take a special view of youth and young people's problems.

He is also concerned, he said, for the plight of older citizens who are being hurt by continued property tax increases.

A construction electrician by trade, Murray is handling his campaign door-to-door and with personal mailings. He considers himself a working person's candidate, and was recently endorsed by the AFL-CIO.

"I hope it never reaches the point where they say, 'He's a pro, he's been hurt by continued property tax increases,'" Murray said.

"Let's just do something to stimulate it — something to stimulate the people. That's what we're after."



RANDY BIRST/Staff Photographer

Farmington resident Russell Hines recently received a POW Medal nearly 43 years after his release from a German prison camp.

WWII vet receives POW medal at last

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Hines remembers the Nazis trying to demoralize him and crack his resolve during his months at Stalag IV-B.

"They more or less threatened you all the time," he said. "They told you that you weren't going to get home. They applied mental pressure to break your spirit and your nerves."

BY THE end of the war, older troops replaced the young bucks who'd been assigned to the prison camp — and treatment improved. "They knew the war was almost over and didn't want retaliation taken out on them," Hines said. "So they treated us decent and the pressure to break your spirit and your nerves."

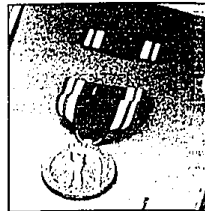
"Thank God I wasn't imprisoned four or five years like some of our men in Vietnam," Hines added. "I'm not sure I would've made it."

The POW medal is issued at no cost to veterans taken prisoner of war and held captive after April 5, 1917. Defense records show that 142,000 veterans qualify through honorable service in captivity during World War I, World War II, Korea or Vietnam.

The front of the circular medal features a golden eagle standing with wings outspread against a lighter gold background ringed by barbed wire and bayonet points. Although symbolically imprisoned, the American eagle is alert to regain freedom — the hope that upholds the prisoner's spirit.

The back of the medal has room for recipients to engrave their name. It carries the inscription: "For Honorable Service While a Prisoner of War." The shield portrayed is from the U.S. Coat of Arms.

The ribbon accompanying the medal is tricolor with a black bar running vertically through the center, bordered by alternating vertical white, dark blue, white and red stripes.



The prisoner of war medal honored Hines for his seven months in a Nazi camp, before it was liberated by the Russians.

HINES, WHO earned a Purple Heart, a Bronze Star Medal and other service decorations, says the POW medal is special because not even Generals Dwight Eisenhower or Douglas MacArthur got it.

He keeps the medal in the velvet-lined case it came in. But he'll wear it proudly amid his other medals on Memorial Day, Veterans Day and similar occasions.

The public law authorizing the POW medal requires that it be worn after decorations for heroism, achievement or service but before other service or campaign decorations.

Former POWs, or their next of kin, may apply for the POW medal by writing to the military records center of the appropriate service branch. The medal can be awarded posthumously.

The next of kin of those listed as missing in action, but for whom there is no evidence of captivity as a POW, are eligible.

To request an application form, call this toll-free number, 1-800-873-3768.

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Hills may request higher tax credit cap from state

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ty tax that exceeds a certain percentage of household income for the year. Senior adults, 65 and older, are among those eligible for the credit.

Under the homestead act, senior citizens can be granted a credit when property taxes exceed 3.5 percent (if household income exceeds \$5,001) of their household income with a maximum rebate of \$1,200.

FOR EXAMPLE, the senior citizen with a household income of \$10,000 and a \$100,000 house assessed at \$45,000 would have an av-

erage tax bill in Farmington Hills of \$2,300. Even with the \$1,200 rebate, the senior citizen must still pay \$1,100 in property taxes.

"It impacts the senior citizens most because their incomes generally are lower, and their tax bills take a greater portion of their income," Babb said.

Vagnozzi's resolution also requests the state Legislature consider legislation providing for "front-loading," or deducting, the anticipated property tax rebate when summer tax bills are issued.

Though the city offers a tax-defer-

ral program, Vagnozzi said, "I'm afraid some people are being missed in this process."

Councilman Joe Alkateeb suggested sending the resolution as a letter because of concern about the lack of hard facts and dollar figures for the maximum rebate. Some council members wanted to know how much it would cost the state if an increased rebate was given.

But with other council members' help, Vagnozzi stuck to his intention that the request remain in resolution form.

"They'll pay a lot more attention to a resolution coming out of your elected officials," councilwoman Jean Fox said.

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