

Opinion

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On the stump

Classy Jan Dolan persevered

SHE PROVED every vote really does count. For much of the night Aug. 2, Beverly Hills Village Council president Michael Bouchard held the inside track for the Republican nomination in the 69th state House district.

But as midnight neared, it became clearer Farmington Hills city councilwoman Jan Dolan would persevere. She won by 374 votes in a race that drew more than 15,000 voters.

"I feel like an expectant mother who was overdue a week," the community activist and former mayor told supporters early Aug. 3 in her downtown Farmington campaign headquarters. "Now it's over and I'm relieved."

Dolan, 59, provided a stunning look at how class and grit can earn precious votes, no matter how tough the obstacles.

She's too old and she lacks stamina, said some. Her health won't hold up in the strain of Lansing politics, said others. The House is a man's place, said still others.

HER SKEPTICS seemed to overlook the political savvy and popularity of this caring, decent woman. Her low-key style belied her bounce and vigor — and her will to campaign against three ambitious men about half her age.

Pre-primary polls put her second behind Bouchard, a classy guy himself who stumped in textbook fashion in search of votes in Dolan's heartland and who offered strong elective, civic and public service credentials. He would have carried the GOP banner with style and substance into November.

Post-primary campaign expense statements aren't yet due, but it's likely Dolan was no match at fund raising for young Mike Sarafa, who received 1,500 votes in a slicky run first bid for public office.

Unmistakably, Bouchard and Sarafa ran clean, upbeat campaigns. Both were honorable.

BUT THE day before election day, the other GOP hopeful, Farmington Hills planning com-

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missioner Paul Welday, resorted to attacking Dolan when he mailed a newsletter branding her "a proven tax raiser" and "a liberal Democrat in Republican clothing."

The newsletter was timed to prevent a rebuttal from Dolan. But once they got wind of it three days before the primary, her campaign staff managed to counter the charges in a flyer they distributed.

We can't help but think the newsletter hurt more than helped Welday, who finished third behind Dolan and Bouchard. A veteran worker in many conservative GOP campaigns, Welday — very accessible and outspoken — either got bad advice or showed bad judgment in his desperate lunge for votes.

Jan Dolan also overcame the rather unusual challenge of Democratic primary winner John Dolan offering a similar name. He definitely siphoned some votes from her because some elderly voters admitted they confused his name with hers.

As we wrote in endorsing her, Jan Dolan doesn't buckle to demands of the moment. She examines each issue on its merit. She has no hidden agenda and is tough enough to fend off lobbyists.

We look forward to a vigorous, "not taking anything for granted" campaign from Jan Dolan this fall against John Dolan. Scrupulous, she'll leave no stone unturned on the campaign trail, particularly in Southfield Township, which includes her rival's hometown of Bingham Farms.

That's just the kind of person she is. We think voters will see — as we do — that, in this case, a woman's place really is in the House.



Recall is improper tool when applied unjustly



Bob Sklar

pointment of four of the nine commissioners.

She charged that the two have favored developers over residents, implying they do not have the best interests of the community at heart.

And she charged that Marks drew special treatment in arranging late payment of a sewer tap-in fee for his office building.

"We envision a council devoid of cronyism, conflict of interest, capricious enforcement and special treatment," she said.

Calling America "a land of laws," Alkateeb said, "Whether it's a developer or a homeowner, I work very hard to apply our ordinances fairly and justly."

"You have the right to your property, to do with it whatever you

please, under the law," he added. Marks didn't mask his profession when he ran for the city council in 1995. He often has taken hard-line stands to assure developers don't run roughshod.

Penalty interest is accruing on the \$17,000 tap-in fee he owes. About to close on a mortgage for his building, Marks says he'll clear the 1 1/2-year-old debt within 30 days.

I don't consider the late-payment arrangement a coverup. But Marks should realize he's under scrutiny to keep his business dealings with the city squeaky clean. Wary of that, city manager William Costick rightly says if the debt is outstanding Dec. 1, it should go on Marks' property tax bill.

NEITHER MARKS nor Alkateeb has lied or committed an unlawful, corrupt or immoral act. Both truly care about their city.

Special recall elections leave slow-healing sores on the community psyche. And they seldom achieve the desired result.

Make it your business to pass judgment on city leadership at the every-other-year council elections. Don't waste taxpayer money on a baseless recall drive.

Day care

Reform must target real need

IT IS TRITE today to say you are in favor of day care reform. Everybody, it seems, recognizes the need for quality day care. And unlike the weather, some people seem ready to do something about it. But in the rush to under themselves to working women, politicians should forsake the rhetoric and deal with the needs. Otherwise the costs, both social and financial, could be harmful for years to come.

Both presidential candidates are ready to open the nation's pocketbooks for day care. George Bush has unveiled a plan based on a \$1,000 tax credits for low-income mothers that will cost \$2.2 billion. Michael Dukakis has already voiced support for the so-called ABC legislation, priced at \$2.5 billion to supply quality day care through grants to states and local governments. Ev Dirksen was right. These billions do add up.

Before getting submerged in the debate, it is wise to consider two critical distinctions:

● **Point One.** There is a difference between affordable day care and quality day care. Quality day care is the prime concern for working couples with decent incomes. These people can fit the cost of day care into their budgets, so their main concern is that the day care environment be not only safe, but also loving and educational. This, of course, is also a concern of lower-income families and especially of single parents, usually mothers. But these people also have to face the problem of affordable day care in a state where the average cost for day care is about \$3,000 a year and where \$5,000-a-year expenses are not unusual.

● **Point Two.** The day care question is often defined as a woman's problem. As long as this is the case, a truly fair and workable solution may be out of reach. Day care should be no more a woman's issue than health care or retirement benefits. But the fact remains that many people are quite comfortable with the idea of child care falling solely to mothers. Thus, when George Bush talks about his tax credit, it is to appease those who feel mothers should have the right to stay at home. He says nothing about fathers staying at home.

Look at one example to see how these distinctions come into play. Some people argue that government funding for day care centers rewards working mothers and penalizes families where the mother chooses to stay at home. These people make a good point for the wrong reasons. These people beg the question because they re-

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legate child care exclusively to the mother. Enter Point Two. If the world changed tomorrow and half the fathers were given child care duties, businesses would subsidize day care overnight. Or look at it this way: How many men would seriously consider George Bush's offer to quit work in exchange for a \$1,000 tax credit? The day care debate must get off its sexist center before meaningful reform is likely.

That said, it must also be emphasized that working couples with reasonable incomes should absorb day care costs themselves. Their interest lies more in convenience, flexible scheduling and, of course, quality. Enter Point One. When discussing the cost of day care, the issue should be less one of family and more one of income. Emphasis on subsidies must go to low-income families and single parents. It is difficult to improve yourself financially if the entry level job barely pays for the day care.

This is just the starting point for what needs to be a national debate and a national plan of action for day care. Government must ensure safe and nurturing environments in day care centers. Businesses must do what they can to help their employees with day care, especially by providing on-site day care such as is the case with Botsford Hospital in Farmington Hills.

Meeting the day care demand is necessary for both the care of our children and the efficient functioning of our business community. Right now, more than half the state's children under 12 have mothers who work. Failing to provide appropriate care for those children has chilling social implications. And mothers who stay home because they cannot find affordable or dependable day care represent a double financial loss: first, the economy loses the benefit of their talents; second, the lowered family income decreases the purchases made in that household.

The message should be clear to businesses and to politicians: More than lip service is needed to meet the day care crisis.

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.

Help carriers overcome heat

To the editor:
This heat must be very hard on our mail carriers. We could lighten their loads by offering a cool drink, even water.

A note on your mailbox, "Please ring bell if you would like a cool drink," or "Please sit on my steps if you need a second wind," would certainly be appreciated.

I'm thankful that I don't have to work outside, summer or winter. I feel for those who do, to serve us so well.

Anna Dillon,
Farmington Hills

Bouchard looks back

To the editor:
Recently our district went through a very tough primary election. As you all know, the votes were cast on Aug. 2. However, the story does not end with all involved have been properly thanked.

First, I would like to congratulate Jan Dolan on her victory and wish her the best in the future.

Second, I wish to proclaim my tremendous appreciation to all of the people who helped in my campaign. I feel as if I have let you down because you surely have not ever let me down. The words "thank you" do not even begin to express how I feel. I am honored to have you as friends.

Third, I would like to thank the

voters. I will be true to the trust you placed in me.

Last but definitely not least, I want to thank all of you who opened your homes and your hearts to me as I campaigned throughout the district. People who were strangers just a short time ago are now friends and that is very special. I am in your debt for the kindness you have shown.

Michael Bouchard,
69th state House district

Cats should be tethered

To the editor:

I am writing this because I am a lover of all animals, large and small. It seems our city does not have an ordinance regarding the tethering of cats. Cats are free to roam on my property at their leisure — at their pleasure. Why am I, a property owner and a taxpayer, forced to accept this trespassing?

During this drought, I put out water, along with feed, for the birds. I was rewarded with a spectacular view of a Baltimore oriole and a scarlet tanager; chipmunks, rabbits, etc. Yet every day, I package the remains of once beautiful animals. And what about the rights of families with children and sandboxes? Another cat privilege?

There is no law to protect private property from these trespassers. Why? Please pass an ordinance for the tethering of cats. Other cities have.

Vivian Jurosek,
Farmington Hills

Political signs are important

To the editor:

The recent primary election campaign placed an increased interest by citizens as revealed by the large number of campaign signs appearing in our city.

Unfortunately, some misguided citizens decided to steal, deface or destroy lawn signs appearing on my lawn and in other areas around the city. They failed to understand the importance of political campaign, supporting of political candidates and voting in our democratic society.

The right to support candidates of our choice and to vote in free elections is the greatest blessing of our freedoms. It is a right that is exercised by precious few in the world and it is a right that can easily be restricted if all citizens fail to encourage and participate in its exercise.

I also believe that the concern expressed by the city zoning department for "illegal" signs sends the wrong message to the community and fails to recognize the constitutional protection afforded the signs and our right to display them.

Hopefully, the candidates and their committees will be responsible enough to remove their signs shortly after the election. If they do not, the cost of removal by city employees or private citizens is a small price to pay. Many others have paid a much higher price in support and defense of democracy.

David L. Haron,
Farmington Hills

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