

Opinion

21898 Farmington Road/Farmington, MI 48024

Bob Sklar editor /477-5450

GA(F)

O&E Monday, June 4, 1990

Headlee

OK override in Walled Lake

THE HEADLEE tax limitation override sought by Walled Lake Consolidated Schools, which serves students in 11 communities, including far northwest Farmington Hills, should be approved in the Monday, June 11 district election.

It is hard to give any Headlee override attempt an overwhelmingly enthusiastic endorsement, but Superintendent James Geisler seems to have gone out of his way to prove actual need for the \$196-student credit.

He deserves credit for trying to rise above the pack on this issue.

The pack — other school districts in the tri-county area — follows a formula of howling about need and backing it up with threats of teacher cuts, program reductions and other anti-education ideas that pretty soon have parents believing that if they don't approve the override,

their children will be shoehorned into a one-room schoolhouse and spend their lunch hours cleaning chalkboard erasers instead of going to phys-ed class.

Geisler didn't come across that way, because he backed up his concerns with facts. He has gained what appears to be widespread trust among school district residents and has opened communication lines.

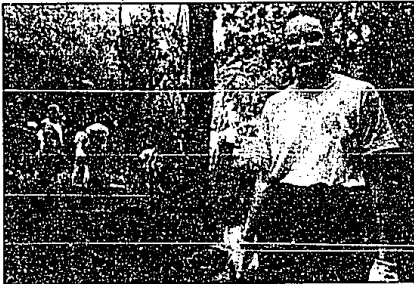
The district twice has turned down overrides, in '87 and '88. This time, though, the need is proven.

Budget cuts of \$3.5 million are too much for a growing area that slowly is gaining a reputation for having a good school program.

Years from now, voters might look at an override and shrug. This time, though, it's needed to help the district and voters should support it.

Community spirit flows

During Rouge Rescue '90 on Saturday, people like Jean Barrett, local rescue coordinator and assistant to Farmington Hills public service director Tom Biasell, did their part to help improve the water quality of the Rouge where it cuts across Middlebelt, south of Grand River. Volunteers recruited by the Friends of the Rouge worked at many sites along the 125-mile watercourse during the cleanup effort. Clearing logjams and debris frees the river flow, improving the Rouge's ability to cleanse itself of pollutants produced by people.



SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

Profs playing hooky implies a bad image

Q: I read your article about teachers using their sick days for vacation days and, as a teacher, I take exception. This gives us a bad image and I don't appreciate it.

A: You obviously didn't read the entire article, which stated that the majority of teachers will go to work when they are not feeling well to be with their children.

You have been in education for 22 years and haven't heard of hooky by students and some teachers? Shame on you.

Frankly, I have received comments from several teachers and administrators in different districts who say those who complained the most about the articles are the greatest abusers of sick days and personal business days.

Obviously, you have never played hooky.

Q: Your article about a young 5-



year-old who it seems was not ready for school and should be held back a year was interesting. What do you mean by a young 5-year-old kindergarten child? How young is young? I don't understand.

A: Children are eligible for kindergarten if they are 5 on or before Dec. 1 of the school year in which they are enrolled. Therefore, a child could be 4 years old and eligible for school if the child's birthday is in November of the year he/she is enrolled.

That 4-year-old child could be in a

class with children who become 5 a year earlier. All things being equal, it is tough for 4-year-old children entering kindergarten and competing with 5-year-olds who could turn 6 after a few months in school.

The bottom line is some 4-year-olds are very ready for school, some are not and each has to be considered as the unique individual he/she is.

Use the advice of the building principal, kindergarten teacher, speech therapist, school psychologist, all who are involved in cases which take a closer look. They really want the best for your child.

Dr. James Doyle is a former assistant superintendent in the Troy School District. Questions for this column should be sent to Doc Doyle, c/o Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

from our readers

MSU column inflammatory

To the editor:
Having read and reread the May 7 column of Tim Richard, we are constrained to protest his insidious and inflammatory undertones.

The column begins ostensibly with an endorsement of the formation of a "Green and White PAC" to "improve" the process by which MSU's Trustees are selected. But later in the column, Mr. Richard's central (and negative) thesis surfaces as follows:

"The process by which political parties nominate candidates for the MSU board, the State Board of Education and the boards of the University and Wayne State is amazingly casual.

"Democrats pick four men and four women. Interest groups rather than abilities are emphasized — blacks, Hispanics, Jews, the Upper Peninsula, the Michigan Education

Association and, of course, 'The Union' — the United Auto Workers.

"Republicans casually pick nice gentlemen and ladies but use no solid criteria."

The public acts and judgments of our elected officials are, of course, fair game for editorial comment.

This is so even when, as here, the commentator appears badly to have misunderstood and/or oversimplified an ongoing dispute between the public officials involved.

But, in times when our society is already deeply polarized by racial, ethnic, regional and class prejudices, impliedly blaming the troubles at MSU on an apparent overemphasis by Democrats on nominating "blacks, Hispanics, Jews," residents of the Upper Peninsula and union members for the office of MSU trustee is both far-fetched and irresponsible.

We urge the Observer & Eccentric to review carefully its editorial policies before it again unleashes Mr. Richard and his noxious views on the community.

Marilyn Raymond,
Bradley Raymond,
Farmington Hills

'Caregivers' — well done

To the editor:
On behalf of OWL of Michigan and the Farmington Chapter, I would like to thank Suburban Life editor Loraine McClish for the beautiful May 10 "Caregivers" coverage.

It was excellent, timely coverage, and it provided much practical information for those faced with the caregiving dilemma.

Support for caregivers is one of the seven agenda items of the Older Women's League, and we are always grateful for the media coverage.

Virginia Nicoll, president,
OWL of Michigan
Farmington

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