

from our readers

She urges a yes vote

To the editor:

I am writing in regard to the upcoming millage election and your recent articles and letters concerning same.

My husband and I moved to this area in 1985 before our daughter Katie started school. What was our main attraction to Farmington Hills? The fine reputation of its public school system. She is now a fourth grader at Forest and we have been thrilled with the education she has received. The high quality of teachers and staff is something I would not want to lose.

I have seen the breakdown of what it would cost the "average" taxpayer if both Proposition I and II should pass. On an average, something like 51 cents a day.

We as parents think nothing of reaching into our pockets and giving our children \$10 or \$12 for an afternoon at the movies or the mall. Let's get our priorities straight.

Fifty-one cents a day? My child's worth it. I urge everyone to vote yes on Feb. 5. A child's education is in your hands.

Bonnie Murphy,
Farmington Hills

As their leader, you apparently ignored the serious financial difficulties of the district, state and nation, and agreed to a settlement that is certainly fiscally irresponsible and under the conditions reprehensible.

Now you place before the taxpayers of Farmington and Farmington Hills a request for a millage increase to make up for the board's lack of foresight and planning.

It should further be noted that previous to the ill advised increase that you and the board authorized for the Farmington School District, they were among the highest paid teachers in southeast Michigan, and I suspect all of Michigan. They may now well be at the top of the list, if that is any satisfaction to the board.

I strongly suggest that you assign the best of your administrative analysts to the task of "wringing the water" out of the current budget to make up for your ill advised largesse. We are all taxed too much now. Any increase at this time is certainly unwarranted.

Bernard F. Priebe,
Farmington Hills

to me during high school.

I don't want this happening to our children. Why should I or anyone, pay the money we do for a home in Farmington/Farmington Hills and get the same level of education of surrounding districts whose homes are less expensive and school programs are not as good?

Good schools are the backbone of resale value in our homes. I will vote yes, Headlee, for the millage. I will not allow you to persuade me to vote no, when it is for your own selfish reasons.

One hundred and thirty five dollars extra a year in taxes, is a small price to pay to ensure solid educational programs for the future.

If we don't support education, what are we saying to our children and our future, the children who are going to be running this country?

Bonnie McLaren,
Farmington Hills

Here's a no on millage

To the editor:

My wife and I are 29-year residents of the Farmington School District, and for the first time will vote an emphatic no on the proposed millage increase.

Because of increased assessments, using 1986 as a base year, our school taxes have increased 41.5 percent versus an inflation rate of 13.5 percent.

We do not want to move out of Farmington, but neither can we continue to afford the ever higher property taxes we are subjected to.

The increased assessed value of our property certainly does the school system and city good because of the increased taxes, but what good does it do us unless we sell.

Something is definitely not right in our school system if such a huge increase in this five year period still requires a millage increase in 1991.

In our opinion the school system must learn to live with the higher taxes provided by increased assessments without resorting to increased millage.

This just places an additional burden on hard-pressed taxpayers. Taxpayers who do not see increasing incomes, and indeed see a lower, due to a depressed economy and increased taxes.

Floyd H. Miller,
Farmington

Another yes for millage

To the editor:

My husband and I moved to Farmington just recently. We are really upset with Richard Headlee's full-page ads and remarks about Farmington schools.

I moved here, and paid the price for my house mainly because of the school program. I know that Farmington schools offer more programs than many other school districts in the area.

Frankly, I don't think Headlee understands the overall implications if the millage doesn't pass besides keeping Alexander Hamiltons tax liability status quo.

First, not only will more than 100 people lose their jobs (which our economy can't handle at this time), but many wonderful programs will be cut. Programs that the community and school worked hard to develop and implement for our children.

As a student, I came from a school district where the taxpayers didn't support the schools and hence we lost many programs due to our millage not passing.

As a student, I was set back during my first years of college because these programs were not available

Wring water from budget

To the editor:

An open letter to Farmington Superintendent Michael Flanagan.

Last fall when you engaged in wage adjustment discussions with the Farmington School District teachers union, it was already amply clear that we were entering into a period of recession.

Financial analysts were predicting anything from a mild recession to a full blown depression.

Both the Detroit News and the Wall Street Journal had indicated their forecast of an increase of between 12 percent and 15 percent in the average compensation of all employed Americans for the year of 1990. All of the economically unsettling factors of the Persian Gulf confrontation were already on the table.

Even though all of these world and domestic economic and political conditions were available to you and the rest of the board, you shook hands on an agreement for a 6 1/4 percent increase for this year and another 6 1/4 percent for next year.

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points of view

Ah, what a situation in 'fabled' SNOWPLA

By Mark Davis
special writer

A fable:

Once upon a time, the rulers of a town called SNOWPLA were facing a predicament.

The children of SNOWPLA loved to slide down snow-covered hills in little saucers.

Sliding down hills had become so popular that SNOWPLA's hills were overcrowded each winter. One day, the government of SNOWPLA provided them some property, and asked for very little money in return.

"Hokey," cried SNOWPLA's rulers. "We have solved our problem."

LATER, the rulers sent experts to look at the property. The experts returned with very bad news.

"There are only a few small hills, and those are at the very farthest reaches of your land. To use this land for your children, you must build a long road and spend much money to make the hills large."

"Also, you will never be able to build all of the hills your children need on this one piece of property," said the experts.

"Oh no," the rulers cried. "What are we to do?"

THEY HELD many meetings for months on end. Finally, they decided:

"We can ask our taxpayers for money to buy more land — land with bigger hills."

Some of the taxpayers asked, "What will you do with the land granted to you by the government?"

The rulers thought for a while and replied, "Gosh, we promised the children they would have hills on that land, so we must build those hills."

— Wouldn't that cost a lot of mon-

guest column

ey?" asked the taxpayers.

"Yes," replied the rulers. "However, we would look silly if we admitted to buying the wrong land. Remember, our town is called SNOWPLA and we promised to provide many hills for our children."

"Hmmm," thought the taxpayers. "Now we know what SNOWPLA really stands for — SPEND NOW, PLAN LATER."

FABLES WERE written to give us insight into human nature and provide lessons. This fable is not about sledding hills, nor a town called SNOWPLA.

The fable reflects what is happening today in Farmington Hills.

The city acquired the Peltz-MDOT property, a hilly, wooded parcel south of I-696 between Farmington and Drake roads. The Parks and Recreation Commission was promised they could build a youth sports park on Peltz-MDOT. There has been a shortage of fields.

It was soon discovered that a maximum of four baseball and three soccer fields could be constructed at the west end of the property, 1/4 mile from the nearest road. Peltz-MDOT is at the headwaters of the Rouge River. A majority of the land is heavily wooded ravines.

COST ESTIMATES for constructing a 3,700-foot road to the rear of Peltz-MDOT and bulldozing land for athletic fields have ranged from \$800,000 to \$1.2 million.

Normal construction costs for fields are \$10,000 to \$25,000 per field. On Peltz-MDOT, it would set

the taxpayers back more than \$100,000 per field.

Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation is recommending a millage that would fund the purchase of up to 50 acres of additional land. We trust this additional property will be more suitable and less costly for ballfield construction.

At the same time, the millage proposal persists in building ballfields on Peltz-MDOT. In the fable of SNOWPLA, the taxpayers asked, "Wouldn't that cost a lot of money?"

THE FARMINGTON Hills City Council is meeting Jan. 28 to discuss the issue. It is in a predicament. Perhaps it should consider several alternatives:

- Approve the millage as it now reads. It may not be financially prudent, but what the heck. Spend Now, Plan Later.

- Separate the Peltz-MDOT construction budget into a second millage request. Let the voters decide how tax dollars should be spent.

- Remove Peltz-MDOT from the millage request as a construction item. The city could then acquire the additional needed park property. Realistic estimates for building ballfields at several locations could be obtained. Planning, decision making and spending for construction could proceed in an orderly, financially prudent manner.

On Monday, Jan. 28, the city council will meet at 7:30 p.m. It does listen to citizens. Plan to attend and voice your opinions if you are concerned about how your taxes are spent.

Mark Davis is the president of Quaker Valley Farms Homeowners Association near the Peltz-MDOT property in Farmington Hills.

If you want to know what's going on in your community, read The Observer & Eccentric

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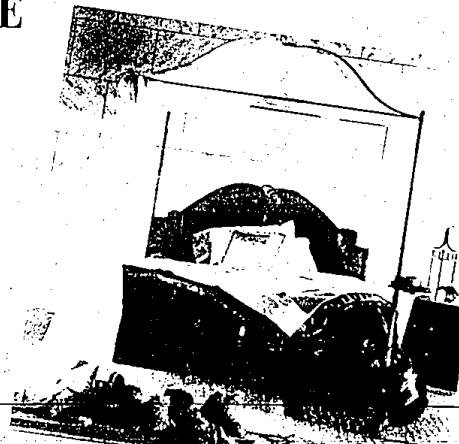
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