

from our readers

Disappointed in Christmas lights here

To the editor:
Christmas is for kids, but one would never know it driving through downtown Farmington.
What child can read those stupid banners? What child understands all the trees decorated in all white lights, rather than pretty colored lights. Surely it wouldn't cost any more to use colored lights.
There is a beautiful tree at the city hall — white lights. How much more attractive to the children in color.
V.M. Bierman, Farmington

Postal rate hike won't help service

To the editor:
One fact that seems quite certain vis-a-vis the latest hike in postage rates is this: The increases won't improve the service.
None of the previous increases have. The latest simply means more of the same.
Several questions relative to the postal service in Farmington come to mind:
• Why is mail delivered in Farmington so late in the day? From my inquiries, late afternoon delivery pervades most of Farmington city's residential areas.
• Why does it take four days for a letter to get from downtown Detroit NBD? The most recent occurrence was a letter, postmarked Dec. 31 which arrived at my door on Jan. 7.
• Or why does a letter from Farmington make it to Flint overnight, whereas a letter from Flint to Farmington take four days? This has happened four times to me since last September.
• Consumers (the utility) now asks area customers to allow five days for checks to get to Lansing a few years ago Consumers suggested three. Does that tell you something?
If there is a mess and mess-ups in the sorting center in Royal Oak — and sources suggest that — then why can't someone in authority solve the problem?
On Jan. 7 at 10 a.m. there were 26

postal trucks or cars with U.S. Postal licenses all neatly lined up in the parking lot at the downtown Farmington Post Office branch. Interestingly, not a single postal worker was in sight? Why?
Ralph Nader is right in his statement immediately following the recent rate increase: announcement. He said (and I paraphrase in part) "No amount of money in the past has cleared up the postal service's inefficiency. Another rate increase certainly won't."
Mark his words.

Voter says yes to millage

To the editor:
I am one taxpayer who is planning to vote for both proposals in the upcoming Farmington school election Feb. 5.
If we want quality education in the Farmington School District, we must be willing to pay for it. I feel that the administration and the school board, being people of intelligence and integrity, understand the seriousness of a request for a tax increase and would only do so if no other choice remained.
Our district has been unfairly hurt by the state recapture of \$5.8 million, but that was not the fault of the administration, the school board and certainly not the students.
We need to pass the proposals in order to continue to provide the education we have come to expect in Farmington.
Joyce M. Regan, Farmington Hills

He's voting no on millage

To the editor:
I recall attending Livonia Franklin High in the midst of a millage debate.
We students begged our parents to vote for the millage so our school would continue to exist as we knew it. The millage was voted down.
The next Monday, it was business as usual. Students could not figure out what all the worry was about. With this memory, it becomes hard to be awayed with the threats of 35 teacher layoffs without the millage increase as suggested by Michael Flanagan.

The Feb. 5 school millage in Farmington becomes a matter of economics for me. My property tax will increase in 1991 because of a 6-7 percent assessed value increase. It is wonderful to have chosen a community that increases in value each year, but the millage would add \$500 additional tax. I simply cannot justify it.
Both Michael Flanagan and Richard Headlee have presented seemingly valid positions regarding the need, or lack thereof, for a millage increase.
But what sways me the most is this thought, to paraphrase Headlee, "I'll hath no fury than a social cause backed by a vested interest."
My vote? No.

Voters need 'fact-based' discussion

To the editor:
Several weeks ago the Observer had an editorial encouraging debate on the school board's tax increase.
This taxpayer, and parent of two children in the Farmington schools, is still waiting to see the Observer take some leadership in providing its readers with some rational, fact-based debate.
One letter to the editor asked for data that compared key variables in the Farmington budget with other schools (both public and private), variables such as: cost per student, average classroom, teacher salary, ratio of administrators to classroom teachers, vis-a-vis student performance on the MEAP and other standardized tests, the percent of students who graduate, the percent of graduates who get a full-time job after graduation or enroll in a college.
But this taxpayer and parent has not seen those comparisons to date.
One paid advertisement in the Observer gave a clean, simple, direct comparison of the trend in spending after inflation vs enrollment vs a few other variables, demonstrating the need for more efficiency and effectiveness rather than more money.
But the one rebuttable was to attack the assumptions behind the data in the ad, with no effort to show the "correct" data in the same simple format.
Has anybody ever been able to prove a correlation between spend-

ing per pupil and pupil performance? If so, then our students should be doing better since we are spending more.
Has anybody ever been able to prove a correlation between the quality/quantity of facilities and equipment vs student performance? If so, our students should be doing better because we have better/more facilities/equipment than we had 10 years ago.
Can anybody show a relationship between the formal education (degrees) of teachers and student success? If so, our students should be doing better because more of our teachers have advanced degrees than 10 years ago.
Do any of these who are advocating this tax increase have any facts that show more taxes (more spending) relate to the single most salient issue: student performance? If so, we should increase our taxes. If not, then vote no.
John Miller, Farmington Hills

Voting no on millage

To the editor:
We have lived in the Farmington School District for 31 years. We chose to put our four children through parochial school at considerable personal expense and sacrifice.
We had no outside subsidy and we still paid property taxes while being periodically begged for more millage so the public schools could offer all the extras.
We did this in spite of not being able to deduct our tuition payments from our income tax.
We bought our last new car in 1954, after that we bought them when they were at least three years old and drove them three or four years until they were junked.
Our youngest graduated in 1977 and we are still paying exorbitant taxes for schools we will never benefit from. And they still want more.
Some communities are starting to charge \$1 a bag for garbage pick-up. Maybe we should start a "pay your own way" plan for the schools. Some children have to walk over a mile to school while others ride the school bus. Is that fair? Why can't the chil-

dren riding the bus pay a nominal fare to cover the expense?
Can't parents pay tuition for each child in school like we did? If they want to educate their children, that's great, but why should senior citizens and childless couples have to pay for it in taxes?
If children want to participate in sports, band or other extracurricular activities, fine. Let them pay a fee for purchase or rental of uniforms, equipment and supplies.
If you want your children to have more than an adequate education, seniors have to pay for the frivolous benefits for your children that we couldn't even afford to give our own?
Seniors unite. Vote down this millage Feb. 5.
Mr. and Mrs. R.F. Mutschall, Farmington Hills

Headlee stands by county exec

To the editor:
Like most Oakland County residents, I've been concerned about protecting the constitutionally guaranteed right of citizens to vote on General Obligation Bonds. During the recent controversy over these types of bonds in Oakland County, we supported those commissioners who insisted that the citizens had a right to vote before they were issued.
Even though we did not prevail entirely on this issue, we recognize that the Oakland County Board of Commissioners and Dan Murphy have done a good job for many years in managing the affairs of the county. County Executive Dan Murphy, in particular, has shown a great deal of courage on behalf of the taxpayers in suing the state for violations of the Headlee Amendment. Commissioner (Donald) Jensen had supported us in our contention that General Obligation Bonds must always be voted on by the citizens.

Therefore, I do not support efforts to recall either Commissioner Jensen or County Executive Dan Murphy. I count Dan Murphy and Don Jensen as personal friends of mine and I am thankful for their efforts on behalf of taxpayers and protecting the Headlee Amendment.
As a fellow battler against high taxes, I share the concern of the Oakland County Taxpayers Association about proper management of our resources by the state and local governments. However, a recall is not the proper instrument to use against two individuals who have generally been on the side of the taxpayers. While we may differ on a few points, the citizens of this county are fortunate to have the leadership of Dan Murphy. I, for one, hope that he will continue to serve us, along with the full complement of duly elected commissioners, through the completion of their current terms.
Richard H. Headlee, Farmington Hills

Opinions are to be shared

Opinions and ideas are best when shared with others.
That's why the Farmington Observer encourages its readers to share their views with others in the From Our Readers column.
Submitting a letter to the editor for publication is easy. Letters should be typewritten or printed legibly and kept to 300 words. Letters must be signed and include the address of the sender.
Names will be withheld only to the best of reasons, and the decision to do so will be made by the editor.
Letters should be mailed to the editor, The Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48136

Attention Senior Citizens!

Election - February 5, 1991

Farmington Schools propose to increase property taxes by an additional 10%

Absentee Voting . . .

City officials automatically send absentee ballots to all senior citizens (60 years and older) for general elections. Unfortunately, the school board does not embrace this well-intentioned philosophy for school millage ballot proposals.

Here's what to do to vote absentee:

1. Mail a request to the school board for a ballot to be mailed to your home.
2. Better yet, go to the school board office and vote absentee on the spot.
3. Board office location:
Farmington School Board
Absentee Ballots
32500 Shilawassee (near Farmington Rd.)
Farmington Hills 48336
Ph: 489-3300

VOTE FEBRUARY 5th!

Thomas H. Ritter, Vice President
Public Affairs and Industry Relations

A public service announcement from
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