

Incumbents win Clarenceville race

By Marla Chesney
staff writer

Twenty-year-old Dale Weighill, a political science student who admits he has "politics in his veins," tied with Gary Gasser as the top vote getter in Monday's school board election in the Clarenceville School District.

Weighill and Gasser, both incumbents, collected 271 votes in the election in which only 344 votes were cast.

Also winning re-election was board president Vernice Dunklee, who garnered 219 votes.

WEIGHILL AND Dunklee both withstood Lisa Burr's challenge to unseat one of the two incumbents for four-year terms on the board.

Burr received 112 votes.

Gasser, running unopposed, won a two-year term on the board.

With the election dust now settled the three incumbents who were re-elected can help tackle one of the most important tasks facing the Clarenceville board in the weeks ahead — hiring a superintendent to replace Jerry Montecillo, whose resignation from the district is effective June 30.

"Hiring a superintendent is our number one priority," Weighill said. "We have two main options. We can choose someone in-house or start a search and appoint an interim superintendent. We should know by the end of the week which way we'll go. We're looking at people we're familiar with."

David Kamah, principal of Grandview Elementary, is one "in-house" educator the board is considering for the district's top job. The district also is considering an employee of another district who once worked for Clarenceville.

Once the new superintendent is chosen, Dunklee said, the board will then sit down and put together a list of goals to guide the district in the years ahead.

"We must prepare the school district and its curriculum for the 21st Century," Gasser said.

IN THE months ahead, the trustees also will be debating whether to seek a bond issue to renovate school buildings.

Gasser was elated Monday that he had been elected — not appointed, — to a board seat.

"I've been running around appointed twice. I was running unopposed, but I look at this as a vote of confidence in myself."

Gasser was appointed to the board in February to fill the seat vacated by Michael Manore, who resigned because of illness.

School officials Monday said Manore's leukemia was in remission.

The incumbents considered the voter turnout to be good, considering the fact that there was no financial question on the ballot.

They praised Burr for joining the race and for running a "friendly" campaign.

Weighill's home on Maplewood election night was surrounded by "Weighill for School Board" signs, a testimony to the fact that he campaigned in his neighborhood.

"I went door-to-door, and a teachers' unit went out for me this weekend. I ran a textbook campaign."

Weighill, a Clarenceville High grad who ran for office about the same time he started undergraduate studies at University of Michigan-Dearborn, admits he loves politics and the political process.

He said he may run for a seat on the Livonia City Council if a vacancy occurs sometime in the future.

WL voters favor Ruetenik, McInnis

By Marilyn Yaquinto
staff writer

REGARDING THE UPCOMING budget, McInnis said, "We could be headed for rocky times. I'm concerned with the (proposed) tax freeze — we'll be prepared to make the cuts we're anticipating if Lansing doesn't come up with another solution."

McInnis' concern over next year's budget and the effects of several state funding issues is shared by Ruetenik, who also was elected to her second four-year term with 386 votes.

"We stand to lose quite a bit of money," said Ruetenik, who is the president of the Bloomfield Hills Education Association as well as vice president of the Walled Lake Board of Education.

"I would like to see through a number of programs that are dear to my heart — take the plans that are hammered out into some kind of action," said McInnis, who has been the office manager at the Novi Police Department for 21 years.

As expected, Esther McInnis and Samantha Ruetenik were re-elected Monday to the Walled Lake School Board, having run unopposed.

McInnis, who won her second four-year term with 409 votes, is the board's president.

School voting precinct changes coming this summer

By Casey Hans
staff writer

As promised, Farmington school officials studying the best way to make their polling places more efficient, especially in light of a 21 percent voter turnout during February's special election which kept some voters waiting up to an hour to cast their ballots.

The turnout in Monday's annual school election was lighter, but officials still believe the change needs to be made before another election is held.

"Some of the comments I have coming to me . . . have to do with the distance people have to travel to get to precincts, and the cramped quarters and parking problems" said

Betsy Rothrock, business support services director. "We hope to make it more accessible to our voters."

Rothrock said she plans to coordinate any school precinct changes with the city of Farmington Hills, as they realize their precincts after reapportionment information comes from the state. That way, new voter registration cards could be coordinated with new information.

The turnout was studying the problem before the Feb. 5 election, but long lines and complaints during that special millage election helped to move things along.

AT A recent school board meeting, Rothrock said she was considering putting a voting precinct at each of the district's elementary schools —

the most desirable plan when considering proximity to voters. But there are several drawbacks to that, she said, including: not being able to align voting precincts with school boundaries, having to use school gyms which could disrupt students, more difficult election supervision and increased costs.

Several school board members are concerned about those possible expanded costs with more precincts. "You are more than tripling the number of precincts — are you tripling our costs?" asked Helen Prutow.

"I hope you would look at making the four centers more efficient," added James Abernethy. "Forty-five minute lines are certainly not acceptable."

Hoops will come down

Continued from Page 1

"It's drawing the wrong crowd," said one of the park's neighbors.

OTHER RESIDENTS say they are certain the teens are "doing drugs" in the park and want it stopped.

"We suspect that the young adults that hang around the basketball court are into dealing, when the cars they drive and block our driveways are worth more than some houses in the area," Wanda Schicker wrote in her letter to the council.

"Also, after talking to a few neighbors, they have told us that these

kids are carrying beepers, which we have all heard that kids with beepers are into dealing (drugs)," she continued.

When city officials received Schicker's letter, police patrols were beefed up at the park as of June 4 and police were directed to make sure the park is vacant at dusk.

"I have a little girl. I'm worried about my little girl going to that park," said a resident, who spoke of the older youths kicking out the smaller kids who also want to play in the park and at the basketball court.

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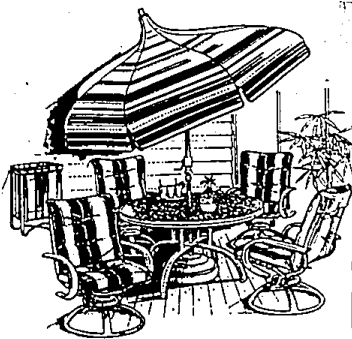
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