

Opinion

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(B&F)

O&E Thursday, October 31, 1991

Council keepers

Our picks for election day

THE FARMINGTON Observer staff has reviewed the qualifications of those running for office in Tuesday's city council elections. Our endorsements:

FARMINGTON HILLS CITY COUNCIL

Joanne Smith — That's right, we're asking voters to return her to the council. She's chairwoman of the planning commission and we're impressed with her showing there. She's tough (and sometimes mouthy), but fair. Having been a pol since the '70s, she's seen the mistakes politicians make — like not buying enough park land. Hopefully, she'll help see that they're not repeated.

One reservation: We know of her close association with councilman Ben Marks. We urge Smith to stand as an individual on council. She shouldn't be known as anyone's crony.

Paul Sowerby — He's another former council member who should be back on. He has a strong independent streak and he always seems to be asking questions about the city and how it's run. City officials had better be on their toes if he's elected.

Terry Sever — This incumbent has proved his worth, while maturing politically, over the past few years. He's a hard worker who seems to care about helping little people who come to him with big problems.

Nancy Bates — She's another incumbent who deserves to be re-elected. The quiet one on a sometimes noisy council, Bates is into resolving conflicts, not participating in them. She's also an idea woman who pushed early on for cablecasting the meetings.

FARMINGTON CITY COUNCIL

Ralph Yoder — Mr. Farmington (after more than a quarter century of service, he deserves the title) isn't running as hard this time, and it shows. He admits he's running on his record.

We still urge his re-election because of the

historical perspective he brings to the council and because he's never reluctant to challenge other council members and ideas. Every council needs a Ralph Yoder.

JoAnne McShane — She's won her spurs during her first term, providing some fresh ideas. If re-elected, we hope she keeps it up and doesn't become one of the boys, so to speak.

We especially like the way she took on Kroger over the closing of a supermarket on Grand River that was used by area senior citizens. Thanks to her efforts, there's now van service for seniors, and Kroger officials are aware that some folks out Farmington way are not happy with the store.

Bill Hartstock — He's another council veteran (18 years) and the diplomat (they need one at times) of the bunch. He's talked many an angry resident through a problem.

We appreciate his calling for more citizen involvement and hope the call is heeded. We can't agree with the stand he seems to take on cablecasting the meetings, but we know his heart is with the city.

'COURTHOUSE BOND ISSUE'

Voters in both cities will be asked to decide a \$1.8 million bond issue for the expansion and renovation of the 47th District Courthouse in Farmington.

We're asking voters to say YES to the proposals. There are separate questions in each community with different dollar amounts. The judicial establishment, we think, has established the need — albeit late in the game — for the work. It's a busy court (the case load has increased by 15,000 over the past seven years, they say) and quarters have become cramped.

And the project will cost residents little or nothing. A Farmington Hills taxpayer who owns a house that would sell for \$100,000 would pay \$3.72 more in taxes.

DON'T FORGET to vote on Tuesday, Nov. 5.

Vote yes

It's time to face waste problem

THE COUNTY needs your vote Tuesday to go ahead with its solid waste management plan.

It also needs your help, first, by committing to recycling; second, by telling your township or city officials that your community should participate in the county program which includes incineration.

Many Oakland communities are not willing to face the waste problem. County officials say two-thirds of Oakland's 61 communities do not have any municipal solid waste program. Some rely on private haulers.

As of late October, only 18 have said they will fully participate in the county plan.

The county plan offers a chance to coordinate municipal efforts. It requires single-family households, multi-family units and commercial and industrial interests to reuse, reduce and recycle — with the bulk of the rest being incinerated.

Full participation also will allocate money for teaching the need to recycle and for facilities to recover recyclable materials. It will make sure business and industry recycle and seek markets for those materials.

OAKLAND COUNTY'S \$500 million solid waste management plan is the most controversial and most costly project in Oakland County history.

Designed for the next 20 years, county officials hope 50 percent of the trash would be reduced, reused and recycled. Another 45 percent would

be incinerated, with Edison buying the energy; about 5 percent would go to a single landfill.

Few of us are scientists. More of us are environmentalists. Probably the majority of us just want to be rid of our trash.

But the world is changing, and there is no longer room to safely dispose of the amount of trash we have been accustomed to trekking out to the curb. About a third of our waste is trucked to landfills in Washtenaw County, which may be closed to us. Our own landfills are nearly filled or closed because they have been deemed environmentally unsafe.

A FEW communities — including members of consortiums in the southeast and southwest parts of the county — already offer recycling and require composting yard waste. Their systems also rely, to some degree, on incineration.

The incinerator is a concern to the entire county as well as residents in those communities adjacent to it. County officials promise a state-of-the-art facility. But residents want — and deserve — assurance the incinerator is working as well as promised.

Nobody likes having an incinerator. In a perfect world we could recycle 100 percent of our waste, eliminating the need for any incinerator or landfill. But our world is far from perfect. We've got to make a choice.

Our best bet is to band together to make sure Oakland's solid waste plan — with its incinerator — works to the highest degree of efficiency possible.

Vote YES on Tuesday.

Orator convinced Lincoln to recruit black regiments

ONE NIGHT in 1841, at a meeting of the predominantly white Anti-Slavery Society, an escaped slave in attendance spoke impromptu about his experiences in bondage.

The young man so impressed the audience with his intellect and oratory that William Lloyd Garrison, the prominent abolitionist, hired him to speak throughout the country for the abolition of slavery. The young man was Frederick Bailey, who later changed his surname to Douglass to throw off the bounty hunters on his trail.

As Douglass traveled, his fame spread, but his worries about being forced back into slavery increased. He fled to England until he was able to pay the price for his legal freedom.

Back in the United States, Douglass did not

limit his activities to the abolitionist struggle. He wrote in his newspaper, *North Star*, "I am for any movement whenever and wherever there is a good cause to promote, right to assert . . . or a wrong to be redressed."

Douglass went on to play a prominent role in the Civil War. A close friend of Abraham Lincoln, he convinced the president to recruit black soldiers and to pay and rank them equally with other Union troops. After the war, Douglass served in several government positions, culminating in this appointment as ambassador to Haiti in 1889.

This is another in a continuing series of articles marking the anniversary of the Bill of Rights.



The county must face up to the need for solid waste disposal management and vote for solutions to this growing problem. See editorial below.

German vo-tech program puts its students to work

HERE'S THE right way to train kids for good jobs in rewarding careers when they leave school:

- Give them solid vocational-technical training from the time they turn 10 to at least 16.

- Organize much of this training around real work in real shops in real businesses, not just in artificial labs in school. Kids spend three days a week in a business setting. Businesses pay them salaries and cover health care, provide tools and instructors.

- Integrate business into the education process. The skills needed for various careers — metalworking or banking or construction — are identified jointly by businesses, labor union and educator representatives.

- Maintain high standards. Kids who don't measure up repeat the course. At graduation, many kids are hired by the same employers where they trained.

HERE'S THE wrong way to train kids for good jobs:

- Treat vo-tech training as something for dummies; stress going to college.

- Confine job-related training to schools, where equipment is outdated and teachers have no idea what business is about.

- Divorce the needs of employers or unions from the decision-making process, leave curriculum design and standard setting entirely to educators.

- Pass the kids who don't learn from grade to grade until they are dumped on the street.

SURPRISE! The first system is used in Baden Württemberg, a state in Germany much like Michigan, with lots of auto making and high-tech industry. The second is what we do here in Michigan.

American critics of the German system in very interesting — and revealing — ways.

They say Germans "track" their kids — that is, steer them toward college or trades. In fact, there's lots of switching between tracks in Germany. And we in Michigan track kids right now: We have one track (college prep) and throw away the other 50-70 percent.

The American fascination with college as the only legitimate outcome for school expresses itself in two other significant contrasts.

Germans have a national consensus that high skills are important to individual and national economic success. We don't.

Germans run their educational system to respond to the needs of employers and of the broader economy. Our school governance is geared to "What do parents want?" When did you see a candidate for school board campaigning as a representative of employers' needs?

THE MICHIGAN House Education Committee held hearings last week on the German system, thanks



Philip Power

to chairman William Keith who has been pushing this issue for some years now.

After registering astonishment at the sense and completeness of the German system, House members naturally fell to questioning the costs. The German system is more expensive than the American, and most lawmakers couldn't get the "T word" out of their craw.

In fact, the state Senate last week scuttled an attempt to put in place a serious job training program to cushion the loss of Michigan's safety net. Too expensive.

My own view? We're systematically short-changing our kids, building an elitist system focused on going to college and putting our economic future at risk by our reluctance to get serious about training for jobs.

No matter how much the politicians want it, there's no silver bullet. At the end of the day, you get just about what you pay for.

Phil Power is chairman of the company that owns this newspaper. His award-winning column will appear periodically.

from our readers

Top citizen says thanks

To the editor:

Now that the complete surprise and wonderment of receiving the Citizen of the Year Award has had time to settle, I would like to thank all of these wonderful well-wishers who have been so kind in their congratulations verbally and by phone, cards and letters.

I have always been very interested each year as the award has been made, both because of the nature of the award and the people receiving it. Never did I expect to be numbered among them.

I have learned three basic things from this wonderful experience. One is that the award is highly regarded by residents of the Farmington area, far and wide.

Two is that the award is highly regarded in other communities near and far.

The third thing that has become very real to me is the tremendous spirit of community togetherness that is demonstrated to me by the response of so many of our Farmington area citizens.

I would especially like to thank my former student of the class of 1946, Bill Conroy, for entering my name, my wife, Dorothy, for giving the committee facts and the chairmanship of Bob Van Every, and certainly the chamber of commerce, Linda Lynch president, and Jody Soronen, executive secretary.

Among the most gratifying experiences were the enthusiasm and responses of the school students and staff over the award.

Again, my thanks, and best wishes to all the wonderful people of our community for your actions and enthusiasm in making our area an proud to live.

Lloyd Smith,
Farmington

Here are his council picks

To the editor:

The time is coming for voters to decide on who they will pick to fill four seats on the Farmington Hills City Council. I plan on voting and supporting Terry Sever, Larry Litchman, Nancy Bates and Ron Oliverio.

The candidates I have listed have continually demonstrated in remarks, comments and/or votes that they support youth sports in Farmington Hills.

I strongly believe that they have made every effort to see that Farmington Hills provides an adequate amount of active recreational sites for our youngsters.

I am confident that they will continue to support the needs of the kids.

The recent Parks & Recreation millage passed because the voters believed that the kids needed "more ball fields and soccer fields."

I realize that some people are

tired of hearing that type of statement. But, it's a reality. Whether you chose to believe that or not, the kids need more fields. As an active coach and board member of the Farmington Soccer Club, I know the difficulty we have in trying to place 25 teams on three fields for games and practices.

It's a nightmare come true. I'm praying we get a couple more fields soon. Our program keeps growing and growing.

We need council members who will address the shortages of fields now rather than continually putting the issue on the back burner.

Thomas Fero,
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.

Names will be withheld only for 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 48336.

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