

## Judicial picks

### Keep McDonald, Parker

Interesting people, those seven Farmington Hills attorneys who want to sit in judgment on the bench of Farmington's 47th District Court.

We enjoyed listening to their life stories, hearing their ideas on how a local court should operate and examining their qualifications to be a district judge. Our assessment: Fortunate is the community that has so many caring and qualified candidates for a judgeship.

However, two hopefuls — John J. (Jack) McDonald and Maria Parker — seem to stand a bit taller than the rest. We endorse McDonald and Parker in Tuesday's primary and we hope they survive to face each other in the November general election.

Both Parker, a magistrate in the 47th District Court and an attorney in sole practice, and McDonald, a longtime attorney and former Oakland County commissioner, seem to understand one very important thing about being a judge on any level: You have to be a good listener.

"It's the ability to sit in a courtroom and listen to screaming attorneys and angry clients, keep your cool and be able to rule on the case," said McDonald in a recent Farmington Observer interview.

And Parker's experience as a magistrate is

certain to help her understand the role of a judge.

"I've handled nearly every kind of case to come before a district court," said Parker. "Being in solo practice, I think I have a better feel for what the litigants and lawyers face."

Both are realistic about any scheme to expand the Courthouse on 10 Mile Road — a hot issue not so long ago.

Said McDonald, "I wouldn't be leading the bandwagon to build a new courtroom." Added Parker, "Whoever is elected will have to deal with the court as it is."

Both have said that court officials should make better use of time and technology to operate the court, and McDonald is an advocate of creative sentencing, including, for example, making a young person who has damaged a lawn repair that one and 20 others.

Both seem to have the requisite memberships in the civic and legal groups, indicating a concern for the community.

We believe McDonald and Parker would work hard to make the public feel comfortable with the judicial branch of government — and that includes trying to change any perception of "Judges as God."

In conclusion, McDonald and Parker are the best of a very good primary lot. They deserve to pass Tuesday's test.

## More primary endorsements

Endorsements for other primary races appeared in the July 23 edition of the Farmington Observer. To reiterate:

**U.S. HOUSE** — Both Walter Briggs IV, the Democrat, and Dave Honigman, the Republican, deserve a chance to fight it out for the 11th District Congressional seat this fall.

Voters in the 11th District — which includes Farmington and Farmington Hills — have been subjected to a heated and dirty campaign between the big GOP guns, state Sen. Honigman and former judge Alice Gilbert.

Honigman brings to the job legislative experience and communication skills. He's proven his mettle in working out solutions on tough issues. He is an effective, well-respected legislator.

However, we've had problems with Honigman's campaign. He's pledged "No PACs and No Perks" — essentially a gimmick since his PAC money has been replaced by corporate donors and his pockets are deep enough to forgo the perks.

His position on abortion, though, is the biggest stumbling block. He would keep "choice" legal through the fifth month — but he goes no further, preferring to set up as many hurdles as possible to the right to choose an abortion.

Briggs, who co-chaired Paul Tsongas' campaign in Michigan, is far and away the top Democratic candidate.

He's confident, well-versed on the issues and cuts through the rhetoric. He supports choices

in social issues, especially abortion, but his economic position is certainly moderate.

**COUNTY EXECUTIVE** — Betty Howe is the Democratic candidate best suited to challenge Republican L. Brooke Patterson for the office of Oakland County Executive, the No. 1 position in the county.

Aggressive, energetic and savvy, Howe — who has held major positions in the Blanchard administration, including director of the Labor Department — prides herself and considers it an asset to voters that she is not "one of the boys."

**COUNTY SHERIFF** — John Nichols, the incumbent and a Republican, combines the attributes of a street-smart cop with those of a first-rate administrator.

One of his accomplishments has been starting a boot camp in place of jail for non-violent criminals. Of 112 graduates so far, just six have returned to crime, records show.

**DRAIN COMMISSIONER** — George Kuhn, a Republican, has held the job for 20 years. He should continue, although we believe it's time for county officials to take a long look at streamlining operations in this area. Perhaps the drain commission should be merged with the county department of public works with the office placed under the county executive.

ARKIE HUDKINS

HUDKINS



Making his list, checking it twice. Gonna find out who's naughty or nice.

## LETTERS

### Thanks for the honesty

I want to thank publicly the gentleman who found and returned my daughter's wallet last Saturday. We don't know his name, but he deserves recognition for his honesty.

The wallet, with her driver's license and \$50 in cash, was left at the Farmington Auto Wash on Grand River. It was gone when we went back to look for it.

The man who found it works for the self-service car wash, stopping by several times a day. When his son and daughter-in-law couldn't reach us by phone, they brought the wallet to our house at 9 that night.

We didn't get their names and they refused any reward, so we would like to thank them through this letter.

We're grateful for the returned license and money, which mean a lot to a high school senior working two jobs. But what we appreciate even more is the knowledge that there are decent people in our area who respect another person's right to his property, and who would go out of their way to return it.

Some people might feel "entitled" to found money. We were fortunate that this man and his family are not like that.

With all the crimes listed each week in the

police/fire section, it's important to let others know when something good happens.

Our sincerest thanks to this man and his family: You really did "make our day."

Bonnie Schommel, Farmington Hills

### Expense is tax exempt

We have enough trouble in the world without the type of "disinformation" from people of (Phil Power's) position. (He) certainly knows that a business expense is deducted from gross income and is exempt from taxes. Unless your tax rate is 100 percent, the taxpayer does not "pay for the write-off," as (he) clearly stated they do.

Jeri Van Houten, Farmington Hills

Opinions are to be shared: We welcome your ideas, as do your neighbors. That's why we offer this space on a weekly basis for opinions in your own words. We will help by editing for clarity. To assure authenticity, we ask that you sign your letter and provide a contact telephone number.

Letters should be mailed to: Editor, The Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336.

## Suburbs linked to city's decline

I was distracted, so I missed the turn onto I-94 from the Jeffries. We were on the way to dinner in Grosse Pointe, so I said to my wife, "Let's carry on and go out on Jefferson Avenue."

I hadn't driven out Jefferson in a long time. Superficially, the wide avenue was unchanged. ("It's still bumpy; why can't they ever pave it properly?" I thought to myself.)

But the persistent deterioration was obvious. The old Cadillac dealership was vacant, signs flapping in the dirty windows. The graceful brick lines of Little Harry's restaurant had come down, replaced by a barren excuse for a park.

There was the same old sense of squalor and decay in the rundown apartment buildings and shops. Bank buildings had been converted to social service agencies. And the streets were effectively deserted, even at 6 p.m. on a nice Saturday evening.

It wasn't all bad. Chrysler's new Jefferson Avenue plant, what I could see of it, looked new and efficient. And the entry to Belle Isle had been spruced up.

Which is why the new study caught my eye. A survey of 59 center cities (including Detroit) and their suburbs between 1979 and 1987 showed that suburbanites fare better economically where central cities are financially strong. Indeed, some Detroit suburbs have been overtaken by other suburbs around thriving central cities.

"Today, suburbs continue to profit from vibrant cities and are hurt by declining ones," says study director Hank Savitch of the University of Louisville. "The mark of a healthy suburb is not self-sufficiency, but interaction with a prosperous urban core. Hope for the suburbs lies in developing ties with central cities."

The big piece of statistical evidence was that metro areas which had the biggest suburban income gains were those where central city incomes improved or remained solid.



PHILIP POWER

For example, income in the Baltimore suburbs surpassed Detroit's from 1979-87, while the Baltimore urban core moved from sixth worst — behind Detroit — to ahead. The Boston area showed a similar pattern.

The data are interesting. If not entirely compelling.

They may indicate coincidence, for example, rather than direct cause linking suburban prosperity with that of the urban core. During this same period, the auto industry in southeastern Michigan has taken a terrible pounding. Our suburban economic decline may well have come more directly from the troubles of our leading industry than from lack of links with downtown Detroit.

But the connection is undeniable. Just ask, for example, the personnel office of any large corporation trying to recruit people to live in this area. Universally, recruits are repelled at the idea of living in the Detroit area.

Which is why the political situation in Detroit is so tragic. Coleman Young may have been an able and energetic mayor once. But he is not any longer. And the longer the passivity and torpor of the city continues, the deeper the decay cuts into the fabric of the city, and the more irreversible comes the decline.

Phil Power is chairman of the company that owns this newspaper.

## COMMUNITY VOICE

### QUESTION:

Any big plans for the rest of the summer?

We asked this question at the Farmington Hills City Hall.



"No, I didn't have any big plans to begin the summer with."  
Sheri Smartt  
Farmington



"No big plans. No big trips or anything like that."  
Sue Ross  
Farmington Hills



"I'm going to Florida with a friend, and I'm really looking forward to it... 17 more days."  
Cyndi Nowak  
Farmington



"Yes, I'm going to Canada. I'm going to renew my spirit and refresh my soul."  
Marge Smith  
Farmington Hills

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