

# Farmington Observer OPINION

21898 FARMINGTON RD., FARMINGTON, MI 48336

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1992

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## Over at last Some post-election thoughts

Is it over yet? Ah yes, if this is Thursday, Nov. 5, then Election '92 must finally be history. And, we must admit, we feel as though we're peeking outside after the passing of a great blizzard. It's just been a different kind of snow job.

A paraphrased "Mikado" might say it this way: "... for the campaigns have been long, clitto-ditto the politicians' song, and thank goodness they're both of them over."

Anyway, today we're dishing up some odds and ends and aftermath from the election just past.

Good show... way to go... tip of the old fedora.

There are some people at the city halls who deserve lots of credit. This year, for the first time, they agreed to make public the results of the mock elections in the Farmington-area high schools before the real election took place.

The mock election was Page 1 news in last Monday's Farmington Observer. The students, by the way, went for Bill Clinton for president. Someone should also get credit for including Mercy High, the all-girl parochial school, in the mock elections for the first time this year. The last time we checked, Mercy was in Farmington Hills.

We don't really know why the results of the student vote was withheld in years past. Maybe the kids didn't want the kids influencing their parents. Well, at least now they're doing it right.

As long as we're in our "atta-boy" mode, the Oakland Press deserves a kind word or two for the endorsement chart it published last Sunday.

The chart listed how (and who) several newspapers — including ours — endorsed in most of the national, state, county and local races. It was an interesting wrapup for those who wondered who got what endorsement.

The daily is to be thanked for showing that other papers also participate in the process.

There seems to be a new campaign tactic — taking your opponent to court.

It was tried by two local folks. Jack McDonald went to court to try to stop opponent Marla Parker's cable TV ads, but a judge shot down his request. Hills resident Richard DeVries did the same with the local school board to stop what he saw as an official effort to beat Proposal C, the "Cut and Cap." There was a settlement.

Let's hope that when people go "courting" an office, they stick to speeches and lawn signs. Please leave the lawyers and judges out of it.

## Obscenity rules not state's job

Another awkward attempt to censor reading material and movies will be taken up in Michigan's House of Representatives when it reconvenes.

This time, self-appointed moralists are hiding behind Senate Bill 1044, which they hope will accomplish what they themselves have found impossible: the regulation of sexually explicit material.

The Legislature needs to be reminded again that it is not the state's job to determine what children should or should not see — that is the job of a mother and father. When the child attains the age of majority, it's the child's own responsibility — and right.

Senate Bill 1044 already has passed the Senate. The bill, seemingly written to be purposely obtuse and confusing, basically would prohibit the distribution of any sexually explicit book, magazine, newspaper, movie or video within 1,000 feet of an area frequented by minors.

That doesn't sound too bad, on its surface. What could be wrong with prohibiting adult bookstores from popping up next to elementary schools and pinball arcades?

Simple. The bill doesn't define "sexually explicit." Local communities would be given the authority to make that decision.

That means each community could have different standards for what is and is not "obscene," a word that has defied definition for several decades by the best minds in our country.

If this bill is allowed to become law, it would

be possible to rent a video that passes standards in Birmingham, drive home to Troy and be found in violation of Troy's obscenity statute.

The bill also doesn't define "areas frequented by minors." That, too, is left to local communities.

Multiplex movie theaters would become war zones. "The Care Bears go to Venus" might be showing in Cinema One, but "Fatal Attraction" could be showing in Cinema Six, right across the hall. That could mean you're frequenting an adult movie house if you bought tickets for "Fatal Attraction."

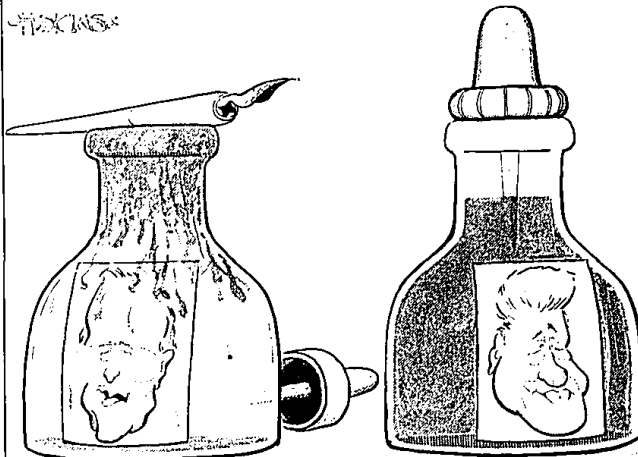
The Little Professor bookstore in downtown Plymouth, which sells comic books and magazines such as Vanity Fair (which recently did an in-depth report on Madonna's new book), could be defined as an area frequented by minors as well. That could force the bookstore either to go underground or pull its copies of anything deemed "obscene" by local standards.

The bill could scramble signals on television programming. You could be able to watch a steamy miniseries on CBS based on a national bestseller if you live in Garden City, but not in Redford, if community standards wouldn't allow that sort of material inside the township.

The lesson once again is simple: One cannot legislate morality, and one should not ask the Legislature to step in and do the job of a parent.

In this trendy age of getting government off the backs of citizens, it seems only in keeping to ask parents to step in and shoulder their responsibility, instead of hoping politicians will do their jobs for them.

ARKIE HUDKINS



From this cartoonist's viewpoint...nice timing, Bill!

## LETTERS

### Edit 'offensive'

This revised letter is written in response to your editorial of Thursday, Sept. 17, regarding Red Ribbon Month, which we found highly offensive.

The breakfast planned for Sept. 24 was a "Student" breakfast, not a "Kids" breakfast as you called it.

It was held in September so students would have time to go back to their respective schools and generate activity for October.

The process of selection and criteria of students was determined by the principals.

The breakfast took a great deal of thought, time and organization and we hoped it would be a positive experience for those attending.

You referred to Eric Worley as the "mystery man." We felt any additional information to what was given you would be an intrusion to his privacy.

FFIA may be "grass roots," but we feel we are well-organized and have always tried to be professional.

For the past nine years, we have strived to promote positive approaches to the problem through education and awareness to both adults and adolescents.

The problem is hardly any adults show up.

As a matter of fact, we are the only volunteer group in our community consistently addressing this problem.

We wonder why you have such a negative attitude regarding our efforts.

Betty Nicolay, board chairperson, FFIA

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.

## Voters unable to change system

It's tempting to sit back, now that the election is over, secure in the assumption that the angry voters once and for all have fixed what ails our politics.

Not! Our political system is still very deeply flawed regardless of the outcome of Tuesday's voting.

We still suffer in Michigan from a political system which sustains a class of careerist politicians who consider their life's work to seek and hold office. That system is still infested by political action committees and lobbyists who dominate contributions to obscenely expensive campaigns, mostly on behalf of incumbents.

This combination — careerist politicians and rich single interests — has created a politics of corruption (through vote buying, thinly disguised as "access") and of gridlock (through the blocking veto power held by any one single interest).

What this election proves, if anything, is that we still need to create in Michigan a serious political reform movement.

Such a movement would have a short but far-reaching agenda:

We have too many careerist politicians. Term limitation might cure by amputation some of the worst abuses. But we have done nothing about making most legislative jobs part-time. And we have done little to encourage citizen politicians who consider running for office an important, but secondary, civic obligation.

Our campaigns are becoming ludicrously expensive, thereby inviting campaign contribution abuses. We did nothing on Tuesday to consider public financing for political campaigns. Nor did we do anything to explore whether the companies which own radio and television stations should be required to donate some air time in equal amounts to incumbent and challenger.

Our lawmaking, particularly in Lansing, is



PHILIP POWER

infested with lobbyists who represent single interests wielding the business end of a checkbook. Tuesday's results did nothing to put teeth in our campaign finance disclosure law or on the officeholder expense accounts which offer such a convenient receptacle for lobbyist generosity.

Our government is ineffective, concerned mainly with top-down regulatory micromanagement and blocked by the veto power of interest groups from serious, coherent policy making. Tuesday's vote did nothing to force a serious rethinking of the ways in which government operates.

Voters were justifiably angry during this campaign season. But very little that was decided on Tuesday will address the root causes of that anger.

Here lies a great opening for a coalition of serious people in Michigan — Republicans, Democrats, independents, Libertarians, Penitents — to come together to remake our politics.

Write me your thoughts, care of this newspaper. We'll print your letters and, just maybe, get going a dialogue that can put the control of our politics back in the hands of the people.

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

## COMMUNITY VOICE

**QUESTION:**  
Will you be happy when the election is finally over?

We asked this question on election eve at the Farm Hills doughnut shop.



'Yes. It's been dirty politics... too much backbiting.'  
Marie Clark  
Westland



'Definitely. I'm just tired of it. You know it's all lies.'  
Larry Rogers  
Farmington Hills



'I sure will be. I'm sick and tired of all the bull.'  
Fred Barnes  
Livonia



'Of course. It goes on too long. It should go no longer than six months.'  
Ann Shiller  
Northville

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