

Mob scene

Hopefuls must face issues

Well gag us with a punch tool! There are nine (shall we break out the baseball bats and gloves?) candidates who've officially told the community they want a seat on the Farmington Board of Education.

Nine for two seats — and only one incumbent. The meet-the-candidates forums might be worth covering for a change. We're pleasantly surprised at the large turnout, especially after the snoozer school elections of 1991 and '92, when only three ran (maybe "strolled" would be the correct verb) in each election.

Some observers are saying that people do turn out when an incumbent chooses not to run for re-election. That's the case this year. Jack Cotton, a fixture in the district for 37 years and on the board of education the past eight, is up but not running. Helen Ditzhazy is the only incumbent in the '93 race.

Maybe that is the reason for the mob scene. But then explain 1992, when trustee James Abernethy bowed out. Only three answered the call, and a challenger was assured a seat.

Anyway, there'll be a hot race in the old district this spring. There'll be door-to-dooring, flesh-pressing, flier-mailing, appearing on cable TV forums (or not appearing — remember last year?) and other electioneering tactics that we can only guess at now.

Well, before the rhetoric gets too steamy and the politics too thick in this election stew, let's make one thing perfectly clear:

Any school board member, incumbent or challenger, who says, "I'm interested in quality

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education for our kids," or anything close to it, can just about kiss off our endorsement.

Sure you're interested in quality education for the precious kiddies. It's almost a given. Please, candidates, tell us how to make it happen within the constraints of the budget and labor contracts.

And, people, gird yourself for a tough question or two if you come up with that classic line: "We have to live up to our fiscal responsibility." Again, tell us *how* — and then show us how when it's time to bargain with the unions.

The Clarencville and Walled Lake school districts include chunks of the Farmington area. C'ville in the southeast, Walled Lake in the northwest.

It's too bad that Clarencville trustee Linda Ahnert won't be hitting the campaign trail this spring. She's running unopposed for the only open seat. No issues this year in Clarencville, eh?

Walled Lake has a *race-ette* with incumbent Thomas McConnell running against challenger Steven Kennelly for a one-year unexpired term. Incumbent Cynthia Camplin is unopposed for a four-year term.

So, election day is Monday, June 14. Let the campaigns begin.

Stop attack on abortion rights

Enough already. The Michigan Senate again is making an attempt to limit reproductive freedoms for women, an issue that has been argued, legislated, overruled and reconstituted to the point where all are tired of the ongoing machinations.

One court ruling isn't yet cold when the Senate tries another tack. Don't they get it? Not only does the U.S. Supreme Court see the issue as one of privacy — something so personal that it refuses any attempts to ban abortion. Last year the high court said that any law to limit abortions could not place an undue hardship on the patient.

"Undue hardship" all depends on whose point of view is being considered.

The Michigan Senate now is trying to pass an informed consent law, which would require physicians to provide detailed information to a woman prior to her abortion. The bill also includes a 24-hour waiting requirement. It's another attempt to manipulate women.

Informed consent is an idea that has been voted on before by the Legislature. A year ago — before the last Supreme Court ruling — the more conservative faction of the Legislature went after an all-out ban, chipping away at the rights, especially the rights of poor women to Medicaid-funded abortions. And those under 18 must submit to parental or court consent.

Now that a more drastic ban won't fly, the Michigan Senate wants to pass a bill that would make pregnant women who already have decided to terminate their pregnancies listen to a laundry-list of medical and social rhetoric and then wait 24 hours, which is especially a hardship for women in rural parts of the state who don't have easy access to abortion.

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Under this bill, a physician or another qualified medical person, not less than 24 hours before an abortion is performed, must tell the woman how old her embryo or fetus is, show a picture of an embryo/fetus near the same gestation period, specific health risks and possible complications, possible psychological effects and, of course, talk about options such as adoption or keeping the baby.

How many men would opt for vasectomies if they had to follow the same procedure? How many men could listen to details of the procedures, look at pictures and then return to the doctor's office 24 hours later? It's an interesting thought.

Again, the Michigan Senate should look for better things to do than to make taking away reproductive rights for women a perennial quest. It's obvious that the majority of people in the state don't want the Legislature to interfere with parts of their lives that are unquestionably private.

If the Legislature wants to do something about abortion, it instead should require sex education and counseling for teenagers. It seems that informed consent should be a part of a sexual encounter — when knowledge can stop an unwanted pregnancy — and not a punishment for women who become pregnant because they were ignorant or unable to obtain birth control.



LETTERS

On Counts' column

Re: Jeff Counts' March 29 column. I am a teacher with 19 years experience. I agree that the field of education does have its share of jargon.

At one time, I was not familiar with the four jargon-phrased concepts pointed out in Counts' column. These words/phrases were used by administration and by workshop presenters.

I inquired about their definitions and attended workshops to learn more about "outcome-based" education. I know the phrases used will become a part of your everyday "knowledge," just like "jargon" from other fields.

I am sorry to hear the function Counts attended was not meaningful to him. I am also sorry to hear he did not receive a message of how important it is for everyone to get involved in education.

If he would like to see outcome-based education in action, he is invited to my classroom to observe our future taxpayers at their best.

Anna Rado, Farmington Hills, Ann Arbor Public Schools

Principal praised

I appreciate Principal Deborah Clarke's stand on the distasteful performance of several girls at the recent North Farmington High School talent show.

As the article describing this exhibition made headlines, I was particularly proud of her response to their excuses and explanations, stating that "they knew exactly what they were doing."

While I realize that the motive behind her punishment was to deny these otherwise good kids certain freedoms, I was extremely disappointed to see the Farmington Observer imply that eating in the school cafeteria for two weeks should be considered a punishment.

Steve Kaplan, Farmington Hills

A great event

As a senior at Farmington High School who serves on the student council and the Blue and White newspaper staff, I am writing to you regarding a recent event. On Friday, April 2, the Farmington High Student Council hosted a "senior prom for seniors" at Grand River Village. Sue Koivula, activities director at the seniors' residence, contacted the Farmington Observer, the Detroit News and Free Press, and Channels 2, 4, 7 and 50 to cover this special event.

However, none of the media chose to recognize Koivula's request, not even our local newspaper, the Farmington Observer.

I am disappointed, to say the least, that the city's newspaper could not find time to acknowledge 33 teenagers showing 130 senior citizens the time of their lives. Your response that "Friday was a difficult time to cover a story" and "This kind of thing gets to be something various groups do every year. We can't always cover the little things" doesn't pacify us.

If you take the time to ask any of the Grand River Village residents, they will inform you that this dance was, by no means, a "little thing."

In fact, we had people out on the dance floor who hadn't danced for 30 years, according to Koivula. I, for one, have never been more proud of my peers than I was that night. At some point in the evening I saw each student council member either sitting down in conversation with a resident, or kicking up their heels on the dance floor with them. We all had a great time.

There is so much good that comes from our school, but, unfortunately, our community has not seen much of it lately.

It seems as though this paper jumps at the opportunity to print the bad things that occur at FHS and is reluctant to print the good. I know I speak for many fellow students when I say that my experiences at Farmington High School have been rewarding and fulfilling, and there is no other high school in Farmington from which I'd rather earn my diploma.

Cori McLaughlin, Class of '93, Farmington High School

School election alert

The League of Women Voters Oakland Area, in an effort to help inform voters regarding the June school board elections within its service area, invites all certified candidates to respond to its Voter Guide Questionnaire which will be sent after the filing date.

Copies of candidates responses (unedited except for length) will be placed in local public libraries, will be provided to each school district office, and will be available in this same format to newspapers for publication.

The league will give serious consideration to all written proposals from community organizations who wish to co-sponsor School Board Candidates Forum. Please send these requests to the League of Women Voters, 6255 Telegraph Road, Bloomfield Hills, Mich. 48301, (313) 647-1350.

Sue Montgomery, president
The League of Women Voters,
Oakland Area
Bloomfield 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.

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION: Are your taxes fair?

We asked this question at the Farmington Branch Library.



'No. They're much too high.' State taxes should stay where they are. I'm against this sales tax.
Carol Hansen
Green Oak Township



'No. Property taxes are way too high for what I get for my money.'
Chris Boufford
Brownstown Township



'I think they are (fair), I'm satisfied.'
Peggy Dierff
Farmington



'No. Other people are being treated differently than we are.'
Jeff White
Livonia

The Farmington Observer

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