21898 FARMINGTON Rd., FARMINGTON, MI 48336

Spreading the word

Forums on cable aid voters

Tax plan gobbles up equity

nyone who fails to vote in the Nov. 2 city council elections had better start hunt-ing up a new excuse. The old "I-don't-know-these-people" line just won't

wash anymore.

Not only are the council hopefuls profiled and
their stands on the issues reported on the pages
of this newspaper, but the office seekers are also
in thousands of homes in living color thanks to
the profiferation of the meet-the-candidate forums, most of them cablecast for MotroVision
subscribers.

These days, dear voters of the Farmington area, if you haven't seen or heard the candi-dates, it's because you've decided literally to

tune them out.

"The civic groups and homeowner associations that sponsor these candidate forums work hand in glove with the local cable TV folks, who pepper their programming with live and rebroadcast candidate grillings.

Switch to MetroVision's local-access chan-

Switch to Metro Vision's local-access chan-nels just about any day or night during this campaign time and you're likely to catch a healthy dose of local politics. Residents who think they need to see the hopefuls one more time should mark Monday evening. Oct. 25, on their calendars. Rebroad-cast candidate forums will occupy the 6-10 p.m. time slot on cable Channel 12.

There have been at least four forums to show

case the six Farmington Hills candidates. To our knowledge, they've all been on cable. In Farmington, where there are four candi-dates, there is a problem this year, forum-wise, with just the one sponsored by the League of Women Voters. Of course, there should be more.

resto! Change-o! Just when Michigan homeowners thought they were getting rid of the enerous and inflationary school property tax, the idea is back.

GOV. John Engler is taking a lot of heat, descredly, for proposing a 4 percent real estate transfer tax. That's right—a 4 percent tax on the price you get when you sell your home. On a \$100,000 house, the tax would be a whopping \$4,000. If you as a seller have a mortgage of \$80,000 and equity of \$20,000, the real estate transfer tax gobbles up 20 percent of your equity.

It's odd that a Republican governor would

It's odd that a Republican governor would propose a tax that falls as heavily on people who are mobile. A Republican Secretary of Defense from this area once criticized "kennel dogs who at on their familes and howl for food" and praised bird dogs who go hunting for it. What Engler is proposing is a tax on bird dogs who move to where the jobs are or accept transfers to upgrade themselves.

The tax also would fall on those who must

sell their houses due to economic hardship, a death or a divorce. Those are not people on whom we should place a "must tax" priority. Engler, in an interview with this newspaper, noted that Realtors take commissions of 7 percent. That is no defense. The state won't help

the cause of home ownership by raising the to-What shows up in the text of his message, is an alternative to the 4 percent transfer tax.

You can choose to pay an alternative tax of 16 mills for three years — a total of 48 mills. It's a better deal than paying a 4 percent tax at the time of sale that's the equivalent of 80 mills —

Gov. John Engler is taking a lot of heat,

■ We appreciate all the hard work that goes into these productions, and we believe that anything that introduces residents to local poli-tics and politicians is a good

To show the importance of cable TV in local politics, consider the Hills council election of two years ago. Something went wrong with the video equipment at one of the forums, so anoth-

video equipment at one of the forums, so another meeting was quickly put together just a few days before the election. What's a forum worth without accompanying cable TV?

In the Farmington area, this cable TV/candidate forum alliance comes from the very successful run that the Hills council has had on live cable. The "Monday Night Fights" (as the meetings used to be known) are regular viewing five for a let of people around here. fare for a lot of people around here.

We'd like to think that there've been more

we a like to think that there we been more voters casting their ballots since government found its way on to cable TV.

We appreciate all the hard work that goes

We appreciate all the hard work that goes into these productions, and we believe that anything that introduces residents to local politics and politicians is a good thing.

Of course, the political scene could become overloaded on electronics. Savvy pols realize that elections aren't won on cable TV. We hope candidates won't discard door-knocking, handshaking, sign-waving and mailbox-stuffing. If they do, we'll all be losers. However, local politics on cable TV is a good show. Catch it if you can.

A Republican Secretary of Defense from this area once criticized "kennel dogs who sit on their fannies and howi for food" and praised bird dogs who go

hunting for it. What Gov. John En-gier is proposing is a tax on bird

dogs who move to where the Jobs are or accept transfers to up-

but it's still a bad deal.
Why tax real estate sales at all? Both the

mills for three years are bad ideas. We're getting a nearly \$7 billion cut in school property taxes. We know we're going to have to make up most or all of it. So let everybody pre-

percent transaction tax and the alternative 16

make up most or an of it. So let everyboody pra-pare to pay. A personal income tax increase-would nick earnings. A sales tax would nick consumption of everything but food and pre-scription drugs. A hike in the single business tax will fall on the value added of Michigan cor-

Even the little lamented school property tax

was fairer because it fell on virtually everyone.
We would rather see part of the property tax
restored outright than to focus only on those

who sell their homes and gimmicks like the 16who sell titler notices and grammers like the formills-for-three-years tax.

The Legislature should dump the real estate transfer tax as quickly as possible.

This editorial on a proposed real estate tax is the first in a series, "Target: Education", which will appear periodically in this newspaper.

grade themselves.

our paper is to be commended for the re-cent article (Oct. 14) on developments at the Library for the Blind and Physically

LETTERS

Fallen leaves: No two snowflakes are alike, they say. Neither are the patterns made as the leaves touch down on our towns. Here, they fall into wetlands alongside the new Rails-to-Trails hike and bikeway in West Bloomfield.

Autumn patterns

Story had insight

Handicapped. Staff writer Bill Coutant did an excellent job

Staff writer Bill Coutant did an excellent job of reporting on a complicated subject.

The move of the library from Farmington to Pontiace with the proposed removal of the current staff is of great concern to more than 2,500 blind and physically handicapped persons in Oakland County.

Bringing this problem to the attention of the general public was a great service on your part. Let us all hope that this problem can be resolved in a manner which will reward years of effort by an outstanding library staff and avoid disruption of this urgently-needed service.

Gorald T. Johnson, Beverly Hills

mature lodgepole pine attains a height of about 65-70 (set. These trees have been growing in Idaho's Targhee National Forest for almost 100 years.

Did you know that timber companies have been buying trees like this from the U.S. Forest Service for about a dollar a tree?

But, before it sells the trees to the timber companies, this is what the U.S. Forest Service has to do: build a logging road to reach these trees, then survey the tract that contains these trees and draw up the legal documents for the sale. And here's another jolt: The USFS is losing money to clear-cut a forest that protects Yellowstone National Park's western border that is home to the endangered peregrine falcon, bald eagle and grizzly bear.

Our national forests are a treasure of rare and precious resources: wilderness, pristine rivers, recreation, wildlife and scenic beauty.

But, the USFS is selling off this vast natural inheritance that lies within our national forests — and is losing millions of dollars of taxpayer money in the process.

This is outragious. Since 1989 losses like this in our national forests have averaged \$298 million a year. The timber companies benefit from these subsidies, and the U.S. taxpayers pick up the tab.

Our national forests were established to pro-

these subsidies, and the U.S. taxpayers pick up the tab.

Our national forests were established to protect public forest lands from destruction by the timber companies. Loggers have stripped bare much of the east and upper Midwest. They have polluted rivers and fishing streams with silt eroding from the clear cuts and logging roads. The USFS is bound by law to manage the national forests for all their values, to preserve wildlife habitat, to protect watersheds, to provide recreation, as well as furnish timber. But the forest service continues to focus its attention mostly on logging and ignores other

attention mostly on logging and ignores other

action mostly on logging and ignores other forest uses. Yet the USFS, defying the public trust, con-tinues to cut the forests faster than they can recover, As a result of this narrow-minded man-egement policy, the USFS is selling timber off

of our national forests so fast and so cheap, that the price doesn't even cover the cost of selling

the price doesn't even cover the cost of setting the trees.

The USFS's own studies show that in 1991 timber sales on more than two-thirds of our national forests lost money.

A rational, carefully managed timber program can harvest timber economically from the national forests while protecting the environment. That's what the USFS should be doing. But I don't think then are, Da vou?

Oh that USFS

Interest what the OSFS and to today, But I don't think they are. Do you?

If you wish to let our representatives in Washington know how you feel about the activities of the USFS, write to your senators and presentatives.

ties of the USFS, write to Joint representatives.

If you would like more information about our National Forests you can write to: The Wilderness Society, 900 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006-2596.

George R. Mell, Farmington Hills

Don't spoil her home

e: Tom Baer's Sept. 23 editorial.
Oh come on, Tom. Get real!
Of course the residents of Farmington
Road are upset about the proposed bicycle path
across their front lawns. And I, for one, don't
feel that an 8-foot concrete drive 50 feet up from
the road is as "harmless and unobtrusive as you
can get."

You are 100 percent correct in your comments about my home and property being "precious" to me. After putting in nine and 10 hour days at work, I look forward to returning to my suburban fiefdom.

work, I look forward to returning to my suburban fieldom.
And doggone it, you must have a crystal ball, because I am "mortgaged up to my oyechalls."
How right you are to insist we butt out of city affairs. I was very impressed with previous government ordinances to eliminate flying cats and bon unsightly basketball hoops. I guess I missed your editorial insights on those matters. Forget the fact that across the street from these "cantankerous ones" sits a 211-acre park, paid for with a special recreational tax that would be perfect for bicycle trails. Why waste city property.

would be perfect for bicycle trails. Why waste city property?

Sorry Tom, I care too much about this lovely established neighborhood to back away from trying to negotiate a compromise. Yes, I do feel an 8-foot-wide concrete path in the middle of my front yard is a "scar."

Maybe the next time you write an editorial on local issues you will interview both sides.

You have every right to be in favor of the bicycle path and to express your views in an opinion column. You have no right to belittle residents for voicing their concerns.

Shame on you!

Patricia Zacharias, 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 Farnington Observer, 21893 Farmington Roed, Farmington 48336.

COMMUNITY VOICE

OUESTION: What message will you take back to school and to vour friends about drug awareness?

We asked this auestion at the ecent studen breakfast that kicked off Drug Awareness Month in the Farmington



'Peer pressure can do a lot to you. Having the perfect image isn't everything.' Vince Mercarder North Forming-



'One-third of the people that use are going to sur-Jeff Kranitz North Farming-



'Basically, not to use cocaine or any other dru



'What can really happen to you if you did it. (Eric) gave his real life Holly Liewellyn Famington High

The Farmington Observer

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