

# Farmington Observer OPINION

21898 FARMINGTON RD., FARMINGTON, MI 48336

THURSDAY, MAY 19, 1994

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## What's it come to? Phones ringing and no photos

Paging Richard Dailey... has anyone seen Richard Dailey, Democratic candidate for the 37th State House seat? If anyone should happen to run into Mr. Dailey, please ask him to confirm his existence and intentions with the Farmington Observer.

Now then, will Yvonne Dereshanian, the Libertarian Party's lone hope in the race for the 37th House, please show himself. Where is that Yvonne?

Where the heck is Sally Osann? We're talking about Sally Osann, the Farmington Hills resident who'd like to unseat incumbent (and fellow Republican) David Moffitt in the August primary in the 18th District Oakland County Commission.

Is there a Kurt Lopez somewhere in the city of Farmington Hills... you know, Kurt Lopez, the Democrat who says he'd like to knock Republican Donn Wolf off his throne in the 19th County Commission District? If there is, someone should inform America's information service.

**S**o you want to run for public office... puzzle at the public trough... graze in the people's pasture. Well, fine. But first, let's have a look at you.

Sounds simple enough. John (or Jane) Q. Citizen is running for office in the August primary (or the November general election if there's no primary opposition), perhaps against some entrenched incumbent.

You'd think old John (or Jane) Q. would be beating down the doors to the local newspaper office to get some positive coverage. You'd think these would-be pols would show up with a fistful of photos, a neatly printed biography and a smooth line of talk on the issues.

Yeah, you'd think. But it never seems to happen that way, not in

this election, not in any election, really. So many of these candidates - challengers like the guys and gal mentioned at the top of this missive - insist on playing hide-and-seek come election time. Why is it that every filing deadline we find ourselves playing "Mr. Keene, Tracer of Lost Persons"?

Of course, we don't expect the hopefuls to come to us. We're happy to go to them. But we do wish some of them would be a bit more... available. We would have appreciated some personal information after filing deadline. Later, we'd like a piece of their time for an interview and a photograph.

We'd like to talk about the issues and why they're running... sort of get to know them and where they're coming from - even if they'll probably end up as the Democratic sacrificial lamb or some Republican also-ran.

And then we'll do our best to transmit this information to the readers. That's how the process is supposed to work.

But, try as we might, we're always thwarted to some extent by unlisted phone numbers (or no listing at all), answering machines and telephones that ring and ring. Imagine, a politician who lets the home phone ring, no machine, no nothing.

That call might be somebody wanting to add a few bucks to the old war chest. Or maybe distribute literature door to door. Or just fire off a few opinions about the issues of the day.

Gosh, what's electioneering come to? We just can't conceive of politicians without at least a dozen good shots of themselves. If they were smart, they'd go around giving them out to anybody who'd take one. When those pictures were gone, they'd get some more printed.

Oh well, the primary is 2½ months away. Maybe they'll learn.

## This 'rescue' depends on you

**I**n 1985 Michigan Water Resources Commission chairman Jim Murray wrote the following about sewage being dumped into the Rouge River:

"Spending money on eliminating polluted discharges is not going to gain public support if the river remains unsightly and full of log jams, supermarket baskets, car batteries and car bodies."

Murray, now Wayne County's environment department director, was right. Less than a year after he made that statement, a group called Friends of the Rouge was formed and began annual cleanups that have increased in scope every year.

Tremendous progress has been made. In 1988 "even the carp were dying," said Jim Graham, the executive director of Friends of the Rouge. "It used to be almost a cliché that you'd find a car somewhere."

Now there are at least 20 different kinds of fish in the Rouge and volunteers are removing less debris every year. Last year they took out 1,000 cubic yards less rubbish than they did in 1992. They haven't found a car in two years.

That's not to say, however, that the job begun eight years ago is over. Rouge Rescue organizers have added three cleanup sites this year, bringing the total to 28. And efforts have expanded to include heretofore neglected aspects of river maintenance. Volunteers are needed to stencil storm drains to warn against dumping toxic stuff in the river, to build nesting boxes for birds and ducks, and to plant trees along the riverbank.

A Friends of the Rouge education program in

the public schools, begun in 1987 with 16 high schools, has grown to include 66 schools from elementary to high schools. Science and biology teachers are encouraged to use the Rouge to supplement textbooks and laboratories.

An adopt-a-stream project called "Rouge RiverWatch" begins this year. The Friends of the Rouge is signing up groups who wish to "adopt" segments of the river. These groups will conduct quarterly litter cleanups and surveys to spot potential problems.

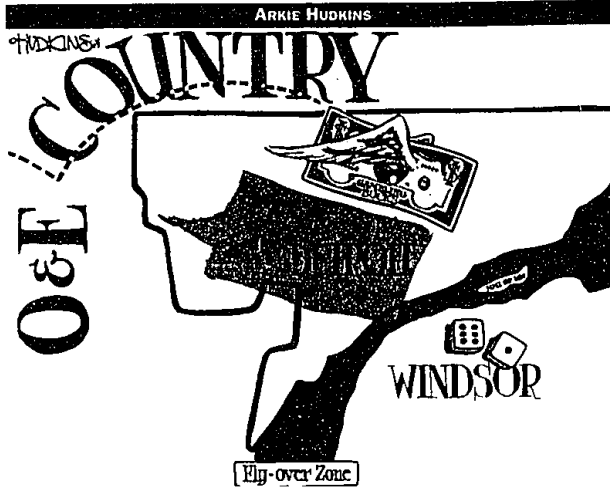
However, truly cleansing the Rouge takes a lot longer than eight years. In 1985 there were 180 combined sewer output pipes emptying raw sewage into the Rouge and its tributaries in the 467-square-mile basin. Today there are 168 CSO pipes.

This is the pollution Jim Murray referred to in 1985. And finally, something is being done about it.

The federal government has chosen the Rouge basin for an experimental "Wet Weather Demonstration Project" whereby a river is cleansed by applying the cleanup effort to the entire ecosystem surrounding it. Part of the project will drastically reduce the amount of sewage pouring into the Rouge.

Jim Murray was right. This 20-year, \$1-billion cleanup project would not have been possible had not the low-tech, no-pay, strong-back cleanup preceded it. Popular support made it possible. Popular support will sustain it.

So get out there on Saturday, June 4, and help Graham and Co. rub the dirt off this beautiful natural asset. Call Friends of the Rouge at 961-4050 to volunteer.



### LETTERS

#### They were there for us

To the people of Farmington Hills:

My husband, Sgt. Bertis Cook, passed away recently after a four-month fight with cancer. The purpose of this letter is to let the people of Farmington Hills know of the high caliber of men and women who serve us in the Farmington Hills Police Department, our Farmington Hills city officials and other city personnel.

The police department and city personnel supported Bert, our family and me throughout Bert's illness and death with assistance, love and compassion.

There was, and still is, an outpouring of help with everyday needs, emotional support, including many visits and phone calls. So many did so much, I can't begin to mention each wonderful person.

I want to express my thanks to Chief Bill Dwyer for his sincerity in handling this situation with true compassion, kindness and empathy.

We can be proud to live in this city knowing these fine men and women are there for us.

With sincere gratitude to the men and women of the Farmington Hills Police Department, city officials and other city personnel.

Donna, Lindsey and Bryan Cook  
Farmington Hills

#### They're anti-teacher

**T**his is in response to Lawrence Niblett's letter in your paper May 9: "Now what, teachers?"

He is correct in saying that teachers must now accept a return to the status of 50 years ago. To enlightened individuals this means returning to a yearly salary of \$7,000 or less. Could Niblett get along on such a poverty-salary? And a reduction or elimination of all medical benefits (the only thing left in the teaching profession today).

My wife teaches in Detroit. She has 35 children in class. Her weekends are spent in doing homework, marking report cards, calling parents, preparing bulletin boards and posters and preparing for future (daily) lessons.

She also spends money out of her own salary for school supplies, so that the children will have the proper materials with which to learn and be inspired.

In order to teach today, one must use discipline and keep the kids interested in progressing and learning. It's very difficult to give individual attention to each child and this is what they all need when there are 35 or more kids in class.

Many children come from broken homes

and one-parent homes. Dedicated teachers like my wife are parents, teachers and counselors for the kids.

Now that the teachers union has virtually no power, the board of education can and will do the following: cut teacher salaries in half, remove all medical benefits, implement 12-hour work days and put 100 students in each classroom.

We can thank Gov. Engler for this outrageous condition. He has no feeling, empathy, sympathy, compassion or understanding for any human being. His final solution will be to close the schools altogether. Look what happened to Lafayette Clinic.

I put Engler and Niblett in the same category. Oh, I forgot to say that the board of Education will also cut out the one pencil and one pad that they allow for each pupil per year.

I also believe our priorities are wrong in allowing sports figures to earn outrageous salaries, while we begrudge teachers a decent living. After all, teachers shape children's lives. But this is another letter.

Leon I. Scholchit, Farmington Hills

#### He's thinking

**A** number of years ago, a Mr. Cedric Adams wrote a column for the Minneapolis Star called Thoughts While Shaving. My column would be called, Thoughts While Mowing My Lawn.

My heart goes out to Dr. Alan Breden ("Suit: Dentist negligent"). . . is it any wonder why there is a proliferation of bad jokes about attorneys? . . . the attorney says he is only protecting his client, Ashley Ponke, the daughter of Jackie Ponke. . . I guess I might believe that, if the attorney promised to work for no fee, but somehow I can't see that happening. . . the uncle says that there is nothing personal about the suit, they are just using his insurance company, uh huh. . . wonder why they don't sue the parents of Raymond Ponke for raising such a person. . . better yet, they could have sued the manufacturer of the hammer because it wasn't properly labeled as a lethal weapon.

Anyone who is physically able should mow their own lawn - the benefits are many. No one will disturb your thoughts because the mower is too loud. It is good aerobic exercise. Like the old Chinese proverb: "Man who chop his own wood is twice warmed."

There is great satisfaction in seeing the result - it is immediate. You get to resolve all the world's problems because you are mayor, governor, president and king of all you survey - all 80 by 100 feet of it.

As a result, you can dispose of idiotic law suits with one pass of the mower. I hope one of our good judges will give this case the proper burial it deserves.

James E. Pogue, Farmington

### COMMUNITY VOICE

#### QUESTION:

What are your plans for the summer?



"I'm going to Europe later this month."  
Carol Hand  
Farmington



"Well, I'm retired. I have no special plans."  
Charles Dunlop  
Farmington Hills



"My plan is to study for my doctoral thesis in vocal performance."  
Robert Mireksh  
Farmington Hills



"Working and traveling in Florida and California."  
Anita Baldwin  
Southfield

We asked this question at the Farmington Branch of the Community Library.

## The Farmington Observer

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