

# U.S. House Give Knollenberg a 2nd term

In the race for the U.S. House 11th District we endorse Joe Knollenberg, R-Bloomfield Township.

The 11th Congressional District includes Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Incumbent Knollenberg was elected to the House two years ago as a somewhat untried entity. He had a strong background in the Republican Party and was an associate of former Congressman William Broomfield, but he had not held elected office.

Knollenberg was elected essentially because many voters saw him as a clone of Broomfield.

But Knollenberg has shown that he is individual with his own approach to the people of the district. He has held community meetings and made himself accessible to his constituents.

And he kept campaign promises to reduce Congressional staff costs and to oppose legislation that would mean any tax increases or more government control.

Knollenberg is a by-the-book conservative

who offers few surprises. He follows the party line and takes the standard Republican stance almost always in opposition to President Bill Clinton and the Democrats.

However, that's exactly the position of most of the people he represents in the Birmingham-Bloomfield area, a traditionally conservative Republican community.

At least Knollenberg is consistent, perhaps too consistent. His flat opposition to abortion is a simplistic approach to a complicated problem.

Yet, in balance, Knollenberg has provided a steady presence in Congress and has been a solid representative of the district.

He hasn't been in office long enough to be in a position to make a significant impact. But he hasn't lost sight of the goal shared by the wave of new members of Congress who were swept into office two years ago.

They vowed to reduce government and make it more accountable to the people.

We recommend Rep. Knollenberg with the understanding that he will remain committed to that promise.

# Say yes to city road millage

As just when some of you were starting to enjoy the tax cut that Proposal A provided, along comes the city of Farmington asking for a road millage.

Well, some requests for money are legitimate. We think this is one of them. Good schools make good communities; so, to a lesser extent, do good roads.

That's why we're asking Farmington voters to say yes to the 1.6-mill request they'll find on their ballots Nov. 8. Approval will provide funds for the upkeep for the 34 miles of city streets and roads over the next 20 years.

If passed, the plan will eliminate special assessments for homeowners - and they can be costly. City officials claim this will save taxpayers \$12 million over the 20 years.

Another good reason for approval: The additional 1.6 mills can be deducted on the federal income tax return; special assessments are not deductible.

According to city calculations, the proposed millage would add \$96 to 1995 property tax for the average (\$120,000) home, beginning in 1995. Michigan Homestead property tax credits would negate or lower that increase for some city residents.

# Prop B corrects bad situation

Proposal B on the Nov. 8 ballot deserves a "yes" vote because it corrects a bad situation in our jammed-up courts.

The situation is absurd: A defendant pleads guilty and is sentenced to prison. Then he protests to the Court of Appeals.

The situation costs taxpayers millions. Three appellate court justices, at more than \$100,000 a year, must look at each 35-page appeal brief. They have staffs to pay. The county prosecutor must take a senior staff lawyer off trial work to write a 35-page reply brief. Defense lawyers, usually paid for by the public, cost \$900 to \$1,000 per case. Each appeal requires a 20-page transcript at \$2.35 a page.

The situation is a waste of time. More than 99 percent of the appeals by those who plead guilty are found to be without merit.

And the situation occurs too often. About one-fourth of the Court of Appeals' caseload stems from guilty pleas. The 24 judges on Michigan's second highest court are so overburdened that the Supreme Court administrator is asking for dozens of additional judges. *Dozens!*

The situation is that convicts who plead guilty have the same right of automatic appeal as those who went to trial, and the guilty pleaders are abusing that right.

The situation can be corrected. Proposal B would remove the automatic right of appeal of defendants who plead guilty. They wouldn't

lose their rights because they still could request "leave to appeal" - the Court of Appeals' permission.

Critics of Proposal B are very few. They fear Proposal B would take away defendants' rights.

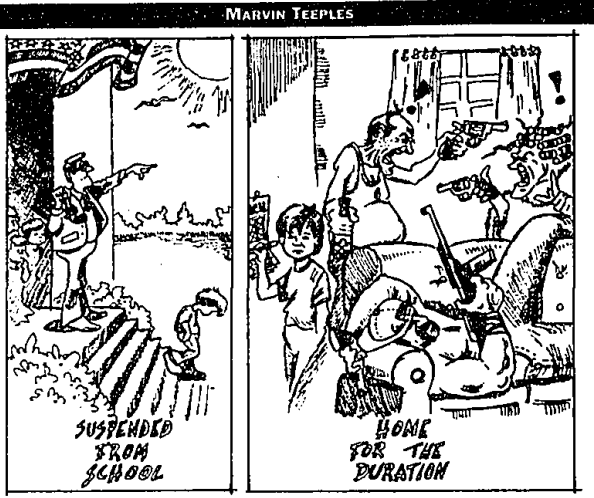
Not so. Remember, it applies only to those who plead guilty (or no contest). Most of their appeals allege harsh sentences. In the 1980s Michigan developed a set of sentencing guidelines based on the actual experiences of hundreds of judges. A judge may hand down a sentence that exceeds the guidelines but must justify the stiff sentence with reasons, in writing.

In 1990 the Michigan Supreme Court put teeth in the sentencing guidelines by remanding (sending back) more than a dozen such cases for re-sentencing. That famous case was *People vs. Milbourn*. If Proposal B is added to the state constitution, a convict would merely have to cite a judge's unjustified deviation from the sentencing guidelines and cite the *Milbourn* case, and his appeal would demand Court of Appeals' attention.

Thus, the Court of Appeals could concentrate on the one percent of meritorious appeals and be rid of the 99 percent that are time-wasters.

Prosecutors and politicians of both parties favor Proposal B.

We urge voters to say "yes" to Proposal B on Nov. 8.



## LETTERS

### Good story

I have just read Larry O'Connor's report of the community forum sponsored by the Farmington/Farmington Hills Multicultural/Multiracial Community Council. I found this article well-written. It accurately reported the talk by Rabbi Wine.

Thank you for your article and for the many other fine reportings of our activities.

Larry Maloney, vice chairman, Farmington/Farmington Hills Multicultural/Multiracial Council

Let's see, we have have "art" at the City Hall, a Tea Cozy that we can't get into unless we are "properly" dressed. What's next? A black tie to get into the Civic?

Give me the good old Farmington that we used to have. The hardware store on the corner, the old stores and just regular hometown folks. We are getting away from where we came from and where we are going. I'm not against progress, just "foolishness."

Oh, by the way, whatever you did pay for it you should find out about the misspelled word of "October" on the dedication date. Well the city has art, but we need a little work on spelling. Those of you who have to walk through those front doors each day have my sympathy. As for me, I will use the back door.

One, and only one, good thing: "It" arrived just in time for Halloween.

Sharon J. Lee, Farmington Hills

### A 'humble' opinion

Many we "humbly" express our dismay when we read in the Oct. 10 edition of the Observer that Sgt. Ray Cranston failed to issue a speeding citation to "humble" David Barman for traveling 27 miles per hour over the legal limit. What's right for one is right for all. Perhaps Mr. Barman would like to donate the monetary amount of the ticket he should have received to a family who lost a loved one through the fault of a speeding driver. Think twice, sergeant and David, before it's too late. Speed kills, usually the innocent.

Don and Irene Barth, Farmington Hills

### Fountain envy?

Well, Farmington, you've gone and done it. You have put us right up there with Farmington Hills and its foolish fountain. Where are you trying to go?

I didn't believe all the stories I was hearing about the "art" object that had been placed outside City Hall. I mean, how bad could it be? So I decided to go take a look for myself. The only words that came out of my mouth were, "Whose bright idea was this?"

Not wanting to jump to any more bad thoughts, I asked several people who were passing by. Not one person had anything nice to say about it. One little girl had the same impression I had. "It looks like a spider that is on its back," she said.

### Keep winds blowing

Michigan educators are the highest paid in the nation when the cost of living is factored in. Furthermore, teacher salaries increased 11.3 percent between school years 1991-93.

I wonder why MEAP scores didn't increase as dramatically as teachers' wages? I wonder why teachers in Michigan complain the loudest when in fact they earn the most?

I wonder why so many Michigan Education Association members, despite a benefits package second to none, can never be satisfied?

Teacher salaries should be based on performance and achievement rather than the degree of power and influence that a labor union can wield.

While many teachers do a fine job and should be fairly compensated, taxpayers spend billions of dollars on education and are entitled to receive what they pay for.

MEA policies and attitudes clearly convey the message that our children's education is secondary to the financial wellbeing of the union and its members.

I hope that parents and taxpayers who feel that the beneficiaries of education should be our children rather than the MEA will re-elect Gov. John Engler to keep the winds of change blowing.

Raymond Dubin, Farmington Hills

## COMMUNITY VOICE

### QUESTION:

Is there more violence in the world today than 10 years ago.



"I think so... kids are killing each other." Tom Rubin, Redford



"Yes. The papers and TV news tell me that." Dave Small, Canton



"Definitely. Look at all the killings." Albert Speelman, Livonia



"Yes. We're all more aware of crime and violence." Hejning Dong, Farmington Hills

We asked this question at Farm Hills Donuts in Farmington Hills.

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— Philip Powers