

LETTERS

Yes on millage

On March 16, Oakland County voters will vote on a 1-mill increase for Oakland Community College.

Despite some misgivings about the ballot's terminology, "and in perpetuity," and the Board of Trustees' lack of candor to publicize this fact, as well as revealing that this millage is in addition to the original one passed in 1964, it is all mitigated by the board's exemplary fiscal and administrative record. Consequently, OCC deserves our support. I will vote yes on March 16 to assure continued quality education for its students.

Albert Rosen, Farmington Hills

Yes for OCC

On Thursday, March 16, Oakland Community College will seek voter approval of a one-mill increase for operations — the first time the college has sought additional funding from the people of Oakland County since they voted to establish OCC 30 years ago.

The college's value to our community is reflected in a remarkable record of growth that has seen OCC become the largest of Michigan's 29 community colleges.

Opening with an enrollment of 4,000 students at two sites in the fall of 1965, OCC now registers 30,000 students at five campuses during a typical semester.

There are few families in Oakland County that have not had at least one member enrolled at OCC over the past 30 years.

For more than 300,000 people Oakland County Community College has meant a start on the road to personal and professional success — convenient, affordable access to advanced education, realization of personal goals, or the acquisition of new and marketable employment skills.

But the single mill that the college was authorized to collect in 1964 has been drastically eroded by the effects of inflation and tax limitation legislation. The college is now able to assess only 85 percent of its original mill; the 1994 mill is less than one fourth of what it was in 1964.

For three decades Oakland Community College has proven itself a major force in Oakland County's progress — I urge you to vote yes for the OCC millage on March 16 so the college's vital work can continue.

Your individual investment will be small — less than a dollar a week for the average household — but the returns will be great for this generation, and for generations to come.

Jody Soronen, president, Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce

Don't rap OCC

Nonsense, John E. Mayer of West Bloomfield.

Your letter to the editor published March 9 is an insult to Oakland Community College's distinguished students, faculty, staff, administration, board of trustees — and is sheer nonsense.

Walsh College, our outstanding partner in education in Oakland County, thrives because we prepare students to complete their degrees there, since it is a "senior" college (only offering the last two years of a four-year degree).

Walsh College's own data indicates its primary source of students is Oakland Community College and that they are also among Walsh's most outstanding graduates.

Furthermore, as a "private and growing rapidly without government/citizens' funds" institution, Walsh has grown so rapidly because it is a premier institution which relies on its partnership with community colleges to make costs affordable for students to be able to earn a four-year degree (one year at Walsh — \$4,894; one year at OCC — \$1,531).

Your comment that "Oakland Community College delivers a poor product" is also an insult to our student body and distinguished graduates and faculty.

As a member of the counseling faculty for 28 years, I have assisted thousands of students.

They include graduates of every college, university and professional school in Michigan as well as Harvard, Boston University, the University of Texas and UCLA.

Many tell me that they not only started their futures at Oakland Com-

munity College but also that the most caring and outstanding teaching they experienced was at OCC.

You are correct, however, in noting you "have never examined (OCC's) practices to see if they are sensible." All of the college's practices are matters of public record, available by calling the Chancellor's Office at (800) 540-1500.

If you had done so, you would have learned of the practices that have enabled OCC to be ranked among the top 20 community colleges in the nation.

Please do exercise your democratic right to vote on March 16, but do not insult hundreds of thousands of other taxpayers citizens whose lives were improved through hard effort at a distinguished community college.

Be assured that regardless of how the citizens of Oakland County decide to vote, we will continue to do our best to serve their needs for the same reason we have for 30 years — for the sheer joy of making a difference in people's lives.

Lawrence J. Gage, professor, Counseling Department Orchard Ridge Campus, OCC

She's voting no

There is a special election on Thursday, March 16, to determine if voters of all Oakland County school districts will approve the levy of an additional 1 mill for operation of Oakland Community College.

In trying to determine how to vote, I found the following. My comments are in parentheses.

1. The election is scheduled for a Thursday in the middle of March instead of the regular Monday election in June so voters can concentrate exclusively on OCC's merits. (West Bloomfield Schools also scheduled a millage election the same Thursday.)

2. The additional mill request is more than twice the amount of the present levy of .85 mill.

3. One mill will raise \$29.9 million, a 40-percent increase over the current \$73.6 million budget. (Who else receives such an increase? OCC says it's 30 percent.)

4. The millage, if approved, will be on the books forever; OCC says it will save the costs of future elections. (This special election costs extra money.)

6. In an election pamphlet, the increased cost to homeowners is based on the .85 mill (not on the 1 mill, an understated cost of 15 percent.)

6. OCC says 1 mill will equal \$26 million in the future. (It will be at least \$20 million plus inflation plus value of new construction.)

7. The board levied .7 mill for debt service in '79 plus 1 mill, so OCC says taxpayers will pay almost what they have in the past. (That is true for '79, '80; it was 1.5 for seven years; all others are lower; last four years range from 1.07 mills to .85 mill.)

9. Large ongoing sums are raised for one-time expenses.

10. The county's population and economic development are expected to increase. (The tax base will expand, giving OCC more dollars.)

11. The number and cost of new full-time, part-time personnel is not yet available. (Personnel is 80 percent of most school budgets.)

12. Interest on the Endowment Fund is lower than planned so OCC needs operating dollars to pay off '91, '93 bonds. (Did voters not suffer last interest income?)

13. The pamphlet says "inflation has so eroded OCC's tax base that it now provides less than a quarter of what it did 30 years ago" and "today's mill is worth less than one quarter of what it was 30 years ago." (Inflation increases rather than decreases tax base. One mill generated \$2,298,000 in '64; .85 mill generated \$25,401,028 in '94, an increase in worth of 1005 percent with a lower millage rate.)

OCC is a definite asset to our county, has an excellent reputation, and job training is essential. There is little doubt that some more money is needed to meet future programs, maintain the seven buildings and try to keep tuition down. The board debated whether to ask for a half-mill or a whole mill. I believe this request is excessive and should be reduced. My vote is "No."

Dorothy S. Elicker, Bloomfield Township

for an additional 1-mill tax.

Part of AAUW's mission statement promotes education for women and self-development over the life span. Oakland Community College is a place to continue self-development, retrain for new job opportunities, and provide our children and grandchildren a quality first two years of college experience.

We are fortunate to have such a fine community college in our county with five beautiful campuses serving 30,000 students.

As the state funding has eroded, the shortfall has been replaced by higher tuition for the students and cutbacks in many needed programs.

The new millage will be used for new equipment, expansion of technology and other programs, long-overdue maintenance of the facilities, scholarship funds, affordable tuition and fees for the students, and other needs of the college.

We recommend a "Yes" vote on March 16 to assure the future of Oakland Community College.

Margaret Bolf, Mary Lou Marsh co-presidents, Birmingham Branch, AAUW

What gives?

On Sunday morning, March 5, we lost all power at our home.

Since this happened to only a few neighborhoods, why did it take 12 hours to fix? No heat, lights, answering service, or refrigeration, no nothing. It makes for miserable conditions.

I thought Edison would send out their repair crew at midnight, like it did last time, so they could earn triple-over-time wages.

We pay our bills, and on time. What gives here?

Leon I. Scholchit, 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 Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River Ave., Farmington 48335.

Supports request

The Board of Directors of the Birmingham Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) is supporting the request of Oakland Community College

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MIXING FOOD & MEDICINE

Arthritis medication is notorious for side effects to the stomach, but taking an anti-inflammatory drug does not mean you must give up alcohol. A bottle of beer with friends or a glass of wine at night before bed is not only socially acceptable but is thought to have merit medically.

Moderation in alcohol is fine, but avoid hard drinks.

You can eat any type food. No studies on risk factors for arthritis medication have found that hot or spicy foods confer an increased chance of stomach ulcer or gastritis.

Smoking becomes an added hazard if you are on an arthritis regimen. Cigarettes alone cause an increase in peptic ulcer disease. When you both smoke and take arthritis medication you are doubling your risk for developing stomach trouble.

The advice to take milk and food with your arthritis drug is incorrect. Milk stimulates the stomach to produce acid and increases the risk of gastric irritation. Seltzer water or carbonated fluids are better and colds are worse as the way to swallow pills. Food with your medicine is unnecessary if you take enteric coated or a non-steroidal aspirin.

The above is current, but check with your doctor at intervals to see if further study confirms these guidelines.

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Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine

EXERCISE FOR ARTHRITIS SUFFERERS

The Arthritis Foundation recommends that arthritis sufferers engage in regular exercise to help keep joints flexible and reduce their exposure to trauma. The best results may be achieved by submitting to three separate types of exercise. Range-of-motion exercises to the normal range of motion of the joint are a given. Strengthening exercises to the joint are a given. Aerobic exercises to the whole body are a given. Strengthening exercises to the whole body are a given. Strengthening exercises to the whole body are a given.

If you have never exercised before, take heart in the fact that it is never too late to start. Let the physical therapist at MILDEN PHYSICAL THERAPY & SPORTS MEDICINE, P.C. help you design an individualized exercise program. Our focus is on improving muscle strength, function and coordination. You can start on the road to health today by scheduling an appointment with one of our therapists. Just call us at (810) 478-7330 or see us at 33560 East Lake Road, Suite A, Farmington Hills. Our hours are by appointment.

U.S. Regular exercise also promotes weight loss, which is a benefit to many arthritis sufferers who are between 10 and 40 pounds overweight.

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