

POINTS OF VIEW

Yea Levin

Congratulations to the Farmington Observer for its astuteness in endorsing Jennifer Levin for the board of the Farmington School District. A fresh perspective from a concerned and able resident of the district will prove to be very beneficial.

Ira and Brenda Jaffe, Farmington Hills

Yea Enberg

In your June 1 editorial supporting Jennifer Levin for school board, you have listed as your reasons precisely why I and many others support her opponent, Linda Enberg.

Levin is not, as you point out, experienced in the workings of the Farmington school system. In fact, her lack of experience as a school parent, school volunteer, or even as a student in the system is a matter of record.

Furthermore, when you state that only "two came running" for the position, it should be pointed out that Levin waited until the very last day to file.

To me, this seems like an afterthought and may indicate a lack of interest and commitment. The last thing we need on the school board is a rookie.

Linda Enberg, on the other hand, has experienced our system first hand for 15 years. She has made the most of this opportunity as both a parent volunteer and concerned citizen.

Enberg is very bright and extremely well-informed on issues affecting the community as a whole, as well as the educational system itself.

Her effective leadership which has already been demonstrated in community involvement, makes me confident that she will be a positive force on the board.

Therefore, I feel Linda Enberg is the clear choice and urge others to join me in her support.

Dr. Robert E. Branton, Farmington Hills

Enberg is best

You exhibited a rare lack of personal insight in your editorial of June 1 when you slighted Linda

Enberg in favor of Jennifer Levin.

It is clear to me that you believe that Enberg is merely some type of stereotypical "good-doer" who would be a rubber stamp to the school establishment.

I beg to differ. If you had ever had the opportunity to sit on a committee with Enberg and observe her insightful and challenging questioning of the status quo you would not have assumed that she was merely a "schoolie."

What a nasty and derogatory term you have coined to apply to individuals who put their time and energy where their mouths are.

As an attorney who has served with Enberg on several committees over the past several years, I can assure you that she possesses a quick intellect, an inquiring mind and a personality which allows her to make an impact by working with people rather than yelling at them.

I regret that Enberg's strengths were lost on you. But rest assured that those of us who have spent time working with her know that her election to the Farmington School Board would be in the best interests of this community.

Charles Owen, Farmington Hills

She's no stooge

I applaud you for your June 1 editorial endorsing Jennifer Levin for the Farmington School Board.

She is not in the pocket of the unions, nor is she one of the administration's stooges. We need some new ideas. I also like Jennifer Levin's ideas on saving money and demanding accountability. She talks very sensibly.

The addition of Jennifer Levin to the board will enhance the district's credibility with the citizens of our community.

Deborah Digla, Farmington Hills

No rubber stamp

Having lived in Farmington since 1947 and attended Farmington schools kindergarten through graduation, I have witnessed many changes of personnel in the school system.

Seldom have truly special people

come along as qualified as Linda Enberg for a position on the school board. She values the commitments to family and community which have always been hallmarks of the people of Farmington.

Her involvement in numerous school and civic groups has made her an influential factor in the community for several years.

The Linda Enberg I know is not one to "rubber stamp" any issue. She is definitely a leader, never a follower. Her enlightened and wholesome perspective of the community is just what this school board needs to prepare for the next century.

Don M. Chamberlin, Farmington Hills

Yes to Enberg

I have no children in the Farmington Public Schools, and I am writing in support of Linda Enberg for Farmington School Board. I support Linda for both what she is and what she is not.

Linda is an active citizen-parent who has willingly and ably assumed leadership in community-based groups to support quality education for students in the district.

She is already known and respected in the community and comes as a candidate who is seasoned in working constructively with parents, teachers and administrators.

Through these activities she consistently and responsibly speaks up, asks questions, seeks alternatives, and stands firm when necessary.

Linda endorses ideas when she is convinced they are for the common educational good of students.

Linda fortunately is not a glittery, glossy politician. But she is a person whose distinctive, thoughtful, rational approach to problem solving shines through her work.

I urge other citizens who do and do not have children in the district to vote for Linda Enberg on June 12. The Farmington Schools will not just survive with Linda's election to the board — they will grow.

Billie J. Hayward, Farmington Hills

For Levin

Let me take this opportunity to applaud the Farmington Observer for its excellent choice of candidate Jennifer Levin for the Farmington Board of Education.

Our family have had the pleasure of knowing Jennifer for many years as she was a classmate of our daughter during her high school years in Southfield.

No only has Jennifer been interested in the welfare of others, but has pursued her interests in various activities, both civic and charitable in nature.

We are sure, if elected, that she will be an asset, not only to the school board and school system, but also to the community of Farmington.

Sheldon and Shari Satovsky, Farmington Hills

Enberg again

Your editorial endorsement of Jennifer Levin for Farmington School Board brought a unique perspective to the question of who would best serve our community.

I am hoping that you realize that one can be a "schoolie" and still possess a questioning mind and attitude. At parent forum meetings at all school levels, discussions between administration and "schoolies" can get very heated and "fresh perspectives" are presented constantly.

Those who are "tight with the education establishment" are regularly locked in debates regarding all aspects of education in our school buildings.

It is from years of attendance at such meetings that Linda Enberg has come forward as a candidate for School Board. Not just to carry on the "same old . . ." but to maintain what is good (and there is a lot of good), while changing or improving (and there is great need for both) what is needed to change or improve.

Regarding the needs of the students in our district, our school board has included students on the Mission 2007 Committee. Actually, any member of the community was encouraged to attend and contribute, and many outside of the "schoolies" did just that.

Information regarding Mission 2007

was included in the Observer as well as the Update, the FPS newsletter that goes to every resident. Students are included in the decision-making process through the Student Round-Table which draws from each high school.

I respect the educational backgrounds of both candidates. I applaud Ms. Levin for taking this initiative.

There are many areas where her desire to assist the FPS can be used.

However, in these complicated and competitive times, my vote will go with Linda Enberg, who committed to serving this community years ago, and who has obtained the background necessary for a seat on the Farmington School Board.

Cynthia Helisek, Farmington Hills

An Enberg backer

Linda Enberg is a candidate for the Farmington Board of Education. I will vote for her, and am writing to encourage my fellow citizens to do likewise.

Most voters do not personally know the candidates in elections, and therefore look to endorsements, or other sources of information, to make voting decisions.

Since I have known Linda for more than 10 years, I am confident that she is capable and will prove to be an effective member of the school board.

My purpose is to share my enthusiasm for Linda's candidacy with other citizens who may be looking for a basis on which to make their choice.

Linda is richly experienced in the community and school system by virtue of her active participation in many school and community groups.

She is concerned about the system that is educating our children, and is looking for ways to generate continuous improvement.

With her demonstrated organization and leadership skills, I believe she will be an effective, responsible trustee who will deliver thoughtful decisions and value for the benefit of children, parents and taxpayers in our community.

Please share my confidence in Linda's qualifications and capability, and with me, vote for Linda Enberg on June 12.

Al Darold, Farmington Hills

'Buffy's' book revives age of state's political heroes

It was quite a gathering last week down at Wayne State University's Walter Reuther Library.

Former Gov. G. Mennen Williams' family — his widow Nancy and his children, Gary and Wendy — was there. So, too, was the family of former U.S. Sen. Blair Moody. And the retired chair of the Michigan NAACP, Arthur Jefferson.

There was a whole slew of old pals, mostly Democrats from the Williams Era. And, rehashing the stories they wrote, were some media tigers of yore: Frank Angelo, who used to be editor of the Detroit Free Press, and columnist Judd Amett.

How come? The publication by Wayne State University Press of a fine new book, *Win Some, Lose Some*, written by Helen Berthelot, an essential guide to a remarkable period in Michigan's political history.

The cast of characters alone is fascinating. There was Gerhard Mennen Williams, the six-foot-four ace of an old Grrosse Pointe family with impeccable Republican credentials, who was only 37 when he astonished everybody in 1948 by winning the governorship. I watched him campaigning when I was much, much younger. The style reminded you of a vacuum cleaner: He literally swept people into his handshakes.

And there were Hicks and Martha Griffiths, he a lawyer, she a congresswoman-in-the-making, and Neil Staeber. Together, they broke the back of the corrupt old guard that had run the Democratic Party for decades and set in motion the citizen-based political movement that came to dominate Michigan politics for the next 20 years.

And finally the author, Helen Berthelot — "Buffy" to her friends, for the way she was a buffer between the organizations she ran and the chaos that so often threatened to envelop them. Now retired and living in Westland, she was the Democratic secret weapon in the countless campaigns she managed, making things hum efficiently behind the scenes.

She started out with the phone company and became an organizer for the Communications Workers of America when she met Williams in 1948 and volunteered. The rest became history. When first I met her as a young man in the early 1960s, she was legend: formidable and quick, with snapping eyes and an efficient manner, barely concealing her warmth and maternal feelings toward her young volunteer corps.

Buffy Berthelot had a good sense of propor-



PHILIP POWER

tion and utility. "My most valuable contribution," she wrote, "was telling him (Williams) when I saw going on, whether it was good or bad." Campaigns in those days relied on volunteers who made things work, not on brilliant issues wonks or expensive media mongers: "It wasn't that I didn't understand the issues and voice my opinions frequently. It was simply that my delight was making the wheels of the campaign go smoothly."

The air at the reception was, literally, thick with old memories. They got me to musing about the contrast between the politics of an era gone by and that of today.

In that age before television, campaigning was retail, person-to-person, where a firm handshake and a direct look in the eye counted for much. By contrast, today's wholesale politics are infested with images of firmness and directness, created too often out of whole cloth by gifted media consultants and image makers.

Idea counted then, in the days before polling converted a party's principles into the arithmetic sum of the demands of single-interest constituency groups. And leadership consisted in the capability to set out ideas with conviction and passion and decency so as to motivate people to do their best for a cause in which they believed.

As I walked to my car, I had a thought: Although I despise the easy cynicism that holds that all those who practice politics are knaves or fools, it does seem to me that the folks of the Williams Era were larger than life heroes for their times. I'm glad I was lucky enough to know them.

(Helen Berthelot's book, *Win Some, Lose Some*, is available at local bookstores or from Wayne State University Press, (313) 577-6120 or toll-free at 1-800-978-7323. Prices are \$34.95 for cloth cover and \$19.95 for paperback.)

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