

LETTERS

Why he withdrew

To the citizens of Farmington Hills:

First I would like to express my appreciation to all those that have supported me in the past and to those of you that were behind me in my bid for mayor in the upcoming election. I would also like to apologize to my supporters that were caught off guard by my announcement that I was withdrawing from the mayor's race. I regret that I was not able to personally speak to all of you prior to making a public announcement, however, that would have been a lengthy process and I felt strongly that it was important for me to make the announcement as soon as possible.

Please be confident that I greatly appreciate all of you and all the support you have shown me over the years, and I regret that I may have disappointed any of my supporters by my decision.

With regard to my decision to withdraw from the race, I appreciate the coverage the Observer gave to my announcement, however, I did have a specific point I was attempting to convey to the community and I fear it was not expressed in the coverage.

Although no newspapers chose to run the anonymous letter attacking my integrity, I chose to reveal it only to make one point.

Look at the commitment I have shown to this community over the past 12 years. I am but one volunteer in this community made up of many hundreds, even thousands of good people that have made these same kinds of contributions to this city, without any self-serving purpose.

Over the past few weeks, I have given very serious consideration to my commitment to Farmington Hills, myself, my family and my business. Quite honestly, on more than one occasion during the past weeks I have asked

myself, "What are you, a masochist? why would you expose yourself to these types of attacks?"

The answer became simple. I am not, and I won't. I will not expose myself to this type of dirty politics, nor after spending 12 years showing my children what good things I have been able to do for our community, will I expose them to the chance of picking up a newspaper and seeing their father's name impugned.

It is for that reason that I decided to withdraw from this race. I won't do that anymore for Farmington Hills and I believe the city has lost an excellent candidate for mayor.

So please, hear my message . . . I understand that there exists a mistrust of government and elected officials, and in my opinion some of it is very rightly so, but it is not here, folks. It's a not in your own city hall that you need to look.

I'm not telling you not to watch, and

not to question and not to disagree. I'm telling you we have honest, hard-working people leading this city and that when you disagree, do so with respect and don't question their integrity, for their integrity is intact.

If you have these types of energies to expend, expend them where they are needed and don't continue to attack good hard-working volunteers at the grass roots level that are only trying to make Farmington Hills a better place for all of us to live.

No amount of searching and no assault of words will ever be able to diminish the fact that I have never had any agenda but to serve this community with truth and honor. I believe most of you know that.

The risk here then is perhaps others who would consider public service are discouraged from doing so. They will see no reason to subject themselves or their families to mistreatment.

If this kind of politics continues, it is

possible that some day the only ones left willing to assume the responsibility will be those who do have a self-serving agenda. That would be a very sad day in our community's history.

Councilman Jon Grant, Farmington Hills

Respects Grant

I regret that Jon Grant has resigned from the race for Farmington Hills mayor, but I respect his reasons for pulling out.

Decent people have a hard time tolerating slime ball campaign tactics. They prefer not to subject themselves to slanderous abuse from cowards who write "anonymous" letters.

That's why I think Paul Sowerby is perfect for the campaign trail, if not the job of mayor. He has the stomach for dirty politics.

Joyce Sterling, Farmington Hills

POINTS OF VIEW

Single mother would set example with education

QUESTION: I am a divorced, 28-year-old, single mother who has been trying to get up enough courage to go back to school. I have an 8-year-old son who is doing extremely well in school. He wants to be a doctor. I don't want to take too much time away from him. I am in a dead-end job but do have two years of college. There is a certain fear I have that keeps me from looking into it. Money is also an issue. What do you think I should do?

ANSWER: Over the years I have talked with numerous young adults who agonize about this issue . . . the fear of inadequacy . . . the feeling of neglecting your child . . . the money problem.

The answer I respond with and share with you is, "Three years from now if you don't go back to school, you will be saying, 'I wish I had' . . . or a few years down the road you will look in the mirror and say, 'I did it . . . how time flies'."

Let's look at the issues. First you indicate you are too old — you are already 28 years old. In this day and age, one third of all college graduates are 35 or older, so age is no longer an issue in our society and should not be an inhib-

iting factor.

You are part of a mainstream of an era in which adults are determined to better their existence regardless of their age.

And rather than viewing going back to school as taking time away from your son, view it as setting an example of the importance of schooling.

Your son will be in school until he is 27 or older if he pursues his desire to be a doctor. What a priceless example you will be setting as to the importance of education. Indeed, he will be proud telling his friends how his mother is going back to school for a college diploma.

Lack of money is usually the greatest obstacle facing a single parent. However, there are numerous loans, grants and federal aid for those seeking a degree.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is a good start. The forms are free. And most financial aid grants are based on need, which I am certain you will be able to demonstrate. Another financial resource is the Federal Student Aid Information Center, which can be reached by calling 1-800-4-FED AID.

You have skilled professionals to help you right in your own back yard.



Doc Doyle

What a priceless example you will be setting as to the importance of education. Indeed, he will be proud telling his friends how his mother is going back to school for a college diploma.

Too many adults who have graduated from a high school don't realize the counselors in their former high school will be more than willing to assist one of their own. That is part of their life commitment.

Another option for you would be your local community college. The flex-

ibility of its class offerings during the day, in the evening, and on Saturdays is an avenue you may need to consider.

Visit a counselor at our community college and have the counselor assess your strengths and interests, and then lay out a career plan. Taking one or two classes at a community college can help you get back into the swing of higher education and its demands. You may not want to take a full load. Give yourself some time if you feel insecure about re-entering the educational mainstream.

Make sure that you take classes that are transferable to a four-year college if you want a college diploma. However, you may find a career path right at your community college and complete your education there. Look at all options.

If you decide to go back to a four-year college where most classes are during the day, you will be home with your son at night, which is fine, but you still have to eat. The grants you receive are primarily for tuition, books and some room and board. A part-time job or doing some work out of your own home is an issue you must address.

Life is not easy. It certainly is not easy for you, a single parent. But many adults in your situation, who I have

known, have paid the price and improved their quality of life by taking on this challenge.

Use some constructive thinking as opposed to accentuating the negative. Our fear of going back to school is very normal. Most people re-entering the educational mainstream experience these illusory fears. As Franklin Delano Roosevelt said, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." His classic remark is a yardstick I've carried all through my life.

It takes commitment — it's a way of life for a period of time. The major question you have to ask yourself is five years from now, do I still want to be working at \$6.50 an hour in a dead end job? Or do I want to have a degree and a job that will challenge my mind; that will improve my financial situation and my quality of life? Who was it who said, "Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: 'It might have been.'"

Don't end up saying those words. Go for it!

James "Doc" Doyle is a former public school teacher and administrator. He is currently an educational consultant. He lives in Northville Township and Arizona.

'Market schools': Scam could destroy education

If you still are complacent about the fate facing our public schools, a brief glance at the news reports of the State Board of Education's meeting last week should provide a wake-up call.

The board, now sporting a 5-3 conservative majority, clashed bitterly over a set of proposals for school reform that follows closely the famous dictum of the Vietnam War: "We had to destroy the village in order to save it."

The plan would redefine a school as any body providing primary and secondary education, thereby breaching the constitutional firewall between public and parochial schools. It would allow school districts to disregard state regulations, thereby eliminating state standards for teacher competence, curriculum and performance assessments. School aid would go directly to families, which would then pay tuition to whatever public school they choose for their children.

The logic behind this proposal — breathtaking in its sweep and radical scope — is simple: The schools are bad because they are "geographically based monopolies," controlled by the (evil) government. Schools have not improved — cannot be improved — because they are immune from competition and market forces.

The way to progress is easy, the argument goes. Erect a market economy for education. Give school aid to "customers" (parents and children) and free them to spend it in whatever school they wish. Make it as easy as possible to start new and different kinds of schools. Obliterate any state standards, such as core curriculum, uniform performance assessments or certification of teacher competency.

I call 'em like I sees 'em: This is nothing less than a bunch of hard-right ideologues intent on revolutionizing the school system in Michigan and, in the process, willing to risk its destruction.

They don't care much for people who irritate them with common-sense questions.

How come, for example, poll after poll over the past 20 years indicates a large majority of parents are quite satisfied with their neighborhood schools? Is this evidence of public support for radical policies? I doubt it.

And, more importantly, what evidence is there that a pure market system is the only



Philip Power

proper model on which to base educational policy for our children? I can take a pretty tough-minded approach when companies screw up and go out of business, but I'm not so sure that the educational fate of our children should be treated solely as the intersection of supply and demand curves.

Here's a worthwhile question for the State Board to consider at its next meeting at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, July 19, in Lansing: Are there any existing models of how schools operating entirely in a market system really work?

I know a fair amount about one: the proprietary schools. They are the schools that teach truck driving and cosmetology. They're profit-making, run by the entrepreneurs the right wing admires so much. They market themselves to people who are poor, lack skills and are out of a job. Most of the revenue comes from the federal government — Pell grants, job training programs. They are great feeders at the public trough.

Once again, I call 'em like I sees 'em: Too often the proprietary schools are a scam.

I saw plenty of those babies when I was chair of the Michigan Job Training Council in the 1980s. We had to do-fund one bunch when they didn't teach what they claimed to and another bunch because the jobs they promised never materialized. Another group would go out of business when we started asking questions and then re-emerge with a post office box address a few months later.

If the kind of market-driven school system the ideologues on the State Board of Education are pushing is anything like the proprietary schools, I don't want any part of it.

Maybe the few moderate members of the State Board could start asking some interesting questions before the meeting.

4th of July ★ Specials! ★

3" x 5" x 8' Premium LANDSCAPE TIMBERS
HOT SPECIAL!
\$2.99 each

15% OFF TREATED LUMBER

Great For Decks • Fences • Docks or Any Other Outdoor Projects

• We stock top quality ponderosa pine.

The finest wood finish available

Penofin® seals and protects the mill-bright beauty of natural wood. • Brazilian Rosewood Oil base deeply penetrates and stabilizes wood fibers. • Blocks ultraviolet rays, the number one cause of discoloration. • Microporous finish seals out moisture, yet allows wood to breathe. • Safe and easy to use.

Treated Landscape Ties

4" x 4" • 8' • #L4408	\$3.49
4" x 6" • 8' • #L4608	\$6.49
6" x 6" • 8' • #L6608	\$10.99
6" x 8" • 8' • #L6808	\$14.99

\$21.95 per gallon
REG. \$25.99 #521601

ALSO AVAILABLE IN 5 GAL. SIZE

NEW BOSTON
36500 Sibley Road,
New Boston, MI
313-941-3131

TRENTON
3100 W. Jefferson, Trenton, MI
313-476-7000

CANTON Do-It Center
41900 Ford Road, Canton, MI • 313-981-5800
Kitchen & Bath Showroom 313-981-5800
N.A. Mans Floors 313-981-3582

FREE DECK DESIGN
Ask our service people to help you design your next outdoor project — for FREE!

MONROE
2734 N. Monroe St. Monroe, MI
313-241-8400