

## A good show! Cable enhances local politics

Anyone who fails to vote in the Nov. 7 Farmington Hills City Council and mayoral election had better start hunting up a new excuse. The old "I don't know these people" line just won't wash anymore.

Not only are the council and mayoral hopefuls profiled and their stands on the issues reported on the pages of the Farmington Observer, but the office-seekers are also in thousands of homes in living color thanks to the proliferation of the meet-the-candidate forums, most of them cablecast for Time Warner (formerly MetroVision) subscribers.

If Farmington-area voters miss hearing or seeing the candidates in the 51/2 weeks before the election, it'll be because they've decided literally to tune them out.

The civic groups and homeowner associations that sponsor these candidate forums work hand in glove with the local cable TV folks, who pepper their programming with live and rebroadcast candidate grillings.

Switch to Time Warner's local-access Channels 8 or 12 just about any day or night during campaign time and you're likely to catch a healthy dose of local politics.

This year, we're told, there'll be four or five cable programs involving the five city council and two mayoral hopefuls in Farmington Hills.

Hills voters also will decide the fate of a millage to provide funds for improved police and fire departments. A cable program about the millage, hosted by City Manager Bill Co-

stich, can be seen beginning Oct. 9.

A partial list of upcoming candidate forums can be found in Mary Linda Calderone's "Cable Connection" column on Page 5A of today's Observer. Information on additional forums will be published in future editions.

To show the importance of cable TV in local politics, consider the Hills council election of a few years ago. Something went wrong with the video equipment at one of the forums, so another meeting was put together just a few days before the election. What's a forum worth without accompanying cable TV?

In the Farmington area, the cable TV/candidate forum alliance is an offshoot of the very successful run that the Hills City Council has had on live cable. "The Monday Night Fights" (as the meetings used to be known) are regular viewing for a lot of people around here.

Recently, the council show was expanded to include a call-in segment so that viewers can launch their questions and concerns during the meeting.

Of course, the local political scene could overdose on electronics. Savvy politicians know that elections are not won on a boob tube. Elections are won on the streets and in the mailboxes.

We hope candidates won't discard door-knocking, hand-shaking, sign-planting and mailbox stuffing. If they do, we'll all be the losers. However, local politics on cable is a good show. Catch it if you can.



## LETTERS

### Safety first!

My son was hit by a car on Middlebelt three weeks ago. Now, less than a mile from there, a child is struck and killed by a car.

The Farmington Hills officials need to ask themselves this question: Are we keeping up with the needs of one existing population before we develop this city any further?

My answer is no. Traffic congestion, speed limits and sidewalks should be of top priority, not what new subdivision can go where.

This city is developing at the expense of the safety and lives of its citizens, especially the safety of our children.

Renee Ruth Vinson, Farmington Hills

### A great time

I just wanted to say what a great time my wife Judy and I had during the Historic Home Tour recently in Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Thanks are in order to the owners of these historic treasures on welcoming the public into their lives that weekend.

My compliments to the Historical Commission and the homeowners for a unique treat that was a class act.

Joe Derek, Farmington Hills

### 'Sense of Roots'

Thanks to all the wonderful people who opened their homes for the Farmington Historic Home Tour Sept. 16-17. They shared their stories, gave us information on historic home restoration and enlightened us on Farmington history.

The historic districts in Farmington/Farmington Hills give us a sense of roots and added pride in our community.

Pam Wright, Farmington

### Dolan on guns

Re: Concealed weapons. Current Michigan law provides reasonable regulation for the issuance of a permit to carry a concealed handgun. The county gun board is given discretionary power to grant such a permit based on established criteria.

If there have been inconsistencies by the

boards in the granting of permits, criteria should be reviewed and standardized.

Both federal and state courts have ruled that the constitutional right to keep and bear arms "shall not be construed to justify the practice of carrying concealed weapons."

Information provided by the FBI's Uniform Crime Report indicate the State of Florida, which liberalized its concealed weapons law in 1987 had the highest rate in violent crime in the nation in the five years following enactment of the law.

Adding more guns to our society surely increases the potential for an increase in accidental shootings and violence.

I support the current laws that grant an individual's the right to own and bear arms, with reasonable regulations. Elimination of these restrictions is a step in the wrong direction.

State Rep. Jan C. Dolan,  
37th District

### Why bother?

The subject is the editorial in the Aug. 31 Farmington Observer, "Has the silly season begun?"

Specifically, I refer to the first column, last paragraph: "We know seem to be decent people. We're sure the community will be well-served no matter who is elected."

If what the writer says is true, then why hold an election? As I stated on the phone, hold a lottery and save taxpayer money. A political campaign ultimately entails a lot of waste, particularly for the loser.

True, even after an election, we are unsure that the most competent, most decent, and most well-served persons were elected. But we voted for them and therein lies the difference: democracy was at work.

To imply that regardless of who is elected, the community will be well-served by seemingly decent people, is to stretch logic to absurd lengths.

And, to be quite frank, I find such sentiment as expressed by the editorial writer, to be downright distasteful — even insulting. I support my candidate because I exhaustively researched his background, philosophy, and credentials and concluded that he was the best of the lot to be elected for the office in question as well as for the community as a whole.

To read in a respected newspaper that all will be well-served "no matter who is elected" is to debate the democratic process and reveal the writer to be foolishly naive. I expect more from professionals in the journalistic profession.

Albert Rosen, Farmington Hills

## Torch Drive helps enrich lives

It's all about people helping people — which is why The Farmington Observer is an avid supporter.

The Torch Drive is a fund-raising charm for Detroit-based United Way Community Services. It raises cash for health and human service agencies in Oakland, Wayne and Macomb counties. People who benefit face problems like domestic abuse, child abuse, infant mortality, illiteracy, homelessness, juvenile delinquency and crime, care for the elderly, and families under stress.

When you give, you help advance cancer research, protect an abused wife, shelter a homeless family, teach a teen to negotiate instead of fight, keep elderly folks independent in their own homes, retrain a laid-off worker so he can support his family and instruct a young mother in proper care for her child.

What's the basis for the Torch Drive?

Take it from Theodor Cunningham, 1995 Torch Drive general chairman and Chrysler Corp. executive vice president. At this year's September kickoff for the 47th annual Torch Drive, which runs to Nov. 9, the Rochester Hills resident said: "We light this torch to bring light to those in darkness."

"We light this torch as a beacon of hope."

How bright is that beacon?

Just ask Daryl and Pearl Thomas of Farmington Hills. They turned to Torch Drive-supported Homes for Black Children for help in adopting a baby. It was there they found the caring and support they were looking for, after talking with many agencies. "Philip is a joy for me and my husband," Pearl said about their newest family member.

Kristin Hope of Rochester was among the first high school students nominated to attend the Leadership Training School run by the Torch Drive-supported Michigan Association for Deaf, Hearing and Speech. The school, held at Michigan State University in June, helps instill self-esteem and confidence in

hearing and speech-impaired students.

Southfield fourth-grader Christian Nelson has worked hard to develop self-reliance and basic values through the Torch Drive-supported Michigan Metro Girl Scout Council.

To put the magnitude of the United Way's outreach in perspective, consider: United Way reports helping 126,000 residents in Birmingham, Bloomfield Township, Beverly Hills, Franklin, West Bloomfield, Lathrup Village, Sylvan Lake, Troy and other local towns last year.

A sampler of United Way agency services represents a tapestry of Oakland County social services.

Community and special assistance services include American Red Cross, Jewish Vocational Service, National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence and Goodwill Industries of Greater Detroit. Health services include Alzheimer's Association, Michigan Cancer Foundation, Children's Hospital of Michigan and United Cerebral Palsy of Metropolitan Detroit.

Family and child services include Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Catholic Social Services of Oakland, Lutheran Child and Family Service of Michigan, First Step, HAVEN, The Sanctuary, St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center, Arab American and Chaldean Services Council and Turning Point.

Youth services include Boys and Girls Club of South Oakland County, Camp Fire Boys and Girls and YMCA of Metropolitan Detroit. Last year, United Way allotted \$9.7 million for 71 agencies that provided children and youth in crisis services to 420,000 young people across the tri-county area.

The 1994 Torch Drive generated \$59.2 million with \$46 million distributed to 133 United Way agencies that touched 1.7 million lives. People were helped.

The spirit of generosity combined with a few strokes of your pen will go a long way to helping others enjoy better lives. You might even help save a life. So give a little and help a lot. Pledge to support the 1995 Torch Drive.

## COMMUNITY VOICE

### QUESTION:

What's your idea of a good book?



"Personally, I like Gore Vidal. My favorite is 'Lincoln.'"  
H.W. McLeod  
Livonia



"'Tale of Prince Genji' by Murasaki Shikibu. It's one of the world's classics."  
Mark Sreogath  
Farmington Hills



"'Cold Sassy Tree' by Olive Ann Burns. A lot of people are reading it."  
Marilyn Smith  
Farmington



"I'm re-reading 'Diary of Anne Frank.' My dad was in Germany during World War II."  
Becky Davis  
Farmington Hills

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

## The Farmington Observer

TOM BAEH, COMMUNITY EDITOR, 477-5450  
SUSAN ROSEN, MANAGING EDITOR, OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS, 953-2149  
PHIL KOWSEK, ADVERTISING MANAGER, OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS, 953-2177  
LARRY GEDER, MANAGER OF CIRCULATION, OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS, 953-2234  
BANKS M. DASHMAN, JR., PUBLISHER, OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS, 953-2100  
STEVEN H. POPE, GENERAL MANAGER, OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC NEWSPAPERS, 953-2252

SUBURBAN COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION  
PHILIP POWER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD  
RICHARD ADRIAN, PRESIDENT

Our Mission: "Because we publish community newspapers, we think about community journalism in a fundamentally different way than our bigger competition. They consider themselves to be independent from the stories and communities they cover, swooping in to write the unusual or sensational and then dashing off to cover something else. We regard ourselves as both accurate journalists and as caring citizens of the communities where we work."

— Philip Power