

Anyone for the board? A big job for people who care

Have you been thinking about running for the school board? If so, it's almost time to stop thinking and begin doing.

The deadline to file nominating petitions is about five weeks away, so potential candidates will want to obtain a nominating petition and begin getting signatures within the next couple weeks.

To run for the school board, go to the superintendent's office in the board of education office and ask for a nominating petition.

If you don't know where the board of education office is, you probably shouldn't be running for the school board.

You will need 20 signatures of qualified electors living in the school district. Those petitions must be filed by 4 p.m. Monday, April 8. The annual school election, at which trustees will be elected, is Monday, June 20.

By the way, the deadline for voters to register for the June 10 election is Monday, May 13.

The Farmington School District includes Farmington, most of Farmington Hills, and a portion of West Bloomfield Township. The terms of incumbents Helen Prutow and Joe Svoke are up. Prutow isn't running for re-election. Already two new newcomers have announced their intentions to run.

The Clarenceville School District, includes the southeastern part of Farmington Hills. The district extends into northern Livonia and Redford Township. There are two four-year

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terms, held by Wilson Bowden and Gary Gasser, up for election on June 10.

About one square mile of the far northwest corner of Farmington Hills lies in the Walled Lake School District. Incumbents up for re-election are David Flammer and Alp Onder.

In deciding whether to become a candidate, a resident should be genuinely interested in and committed to public education and be motivated by a desire to serve the community.

It is important to have residents run for school board rather than only incumbents or other candidates who are "favorite sons" of other school board members or of the administration.

But "fresh faces" also must be informed, knowledgeable, and committed.

School boards are important. They're made up of average Joes and Janes — non-educators for the most part — who set policy for multi-million dollar organizations.

If you think you fit the bill, by all means take a trip to the school board office and pick up a nominating petition.

We encourage you to do so. But we won't tell you where the board office is or your district of residency.

County airport boasts global flair

Those of us who live and work in prosperous Oakland County towns should do our part to help further polish the image of Pontiac, our county seat.

But Oakland/Pontiac Airport is no longer a municipal airfield. It now serves more than one town and truly has an international clientele. So I support County Executive L. Brooks Patterson's pitch to give the airport a more worldly moniker: Oakland County International Airport. The Oakland County Board of Commissioners has the final say.

Oakland/Pontiac logs nearly 400,000 take-offs and landings a year. Corporate and charter flights comprise the bulk of the business. It's the second busiest airport in Michigan.

And it soon will boast a cutting-edge precision approach system that operates off a satellite.

It's no wonder the airport is planning \$18.5 million in runway, taxiway, administrative, flight tower and landscaping improvements.

Most of Oakland/Pontiac's international flights come from Canada and Mexico. "Every week, if not every day, planes from all over the world take off and land at Oakland/Pontiac Airport," said Patterson in his State of the County Address on Feb. 6.

The airport now offers full-time customs service, thanks to Patterson's perseverance and the influence of U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg, R-Bloomfield Township. Foreign flights destined for Oakland County no longer need to land first at other airports to clear customs.

Oakland is the third wealthiest county in the United States. It has more people and households than 10 states.

A glance of foreign firms operating in Oakland County reveals a global potpourri: BASF, The Budd Co., Fanuc Robotics, Volkswagen, Canon, Nissan, Robert Bosch Corp., Jaguar, Pirelli Tire. Twice in the last six months, the Patterson administration invited Mexican delegations to visit Oakland County to initiate trade talks with locally based businesses.

Oakland is home to 220 Fortune 500 companies, 40,000 businesses and a new Export Assistance Center. It boasts 425 foreign-owned businesses from 22 nations. Upwards of 65



BOB SKLAR

percent of all foreign-owned firms in the state are in the county. Oakland-based robotics firms account for half of all U.S. robotics sales.

For sentimental reasons, I'd hate to drop Pontiac from the name of the airport. But doing so in no way should be construed as snubbing the historic 176-year-old city, which hasn't owned the airport since 1967.

The 68-year-old airfield is actually in Waterford Township, 4.5 miles west of Pontiac. The airport brings \$80,000 a year in property taxes to the township, Waterford Schools and Oakland Community College.

Pontiac has suffered from crime, logging property values, Mayor Charlie Harrison's death and the flap over the Detroit Lions' threatened move from the Silverdome. Prosperity, though, has weaved itself into the fabric of other county communities like Rochester Hills, Oakland Township, Auburn Hills, Troy, Bloomfield Township, Birmingham, Southfield, Farmington Hills, West Bloomfield, Commerce, Clarkston, Lake Orion and Oxford.

There's been some re-birth in Pontiac, thanks to caring investors willing to take a chance. The Phoenix Center, Industry, Pike Street Restaurant, General Motors plants and a thriving restaurant district are a few examples.

In short, Pontiac doesn't need to stand beneath the wings of the growing airport; it's taking flight on its own. It's doing its part to help jet-fuel the county's economy.

Bob Sklar is managing editor of our Oakland County editions.

MEMORY LANE

This week in history as reported in the pages of the Farmington Observer and the Farmington Enterprise:

■ 40 years ago — March 1, 1956 (Enterprise)

Earl Scherffius, assistant city manager of Port Huron, was named Farmington City Manager, replacing James Tennant.

Rib steaks ("small and lean") were advertised at 69 cents a pound at Farmington Meats, 33419 Grand River.

Don Robinson scored 28 points in Farmington High's 72-57 win over Van Dyke High School.

■ 10 years ago — Feb. 27, 1986 (Observer)

Gregory Milosch, a former Farmington Hills

resident and a 1976 graduate of Harrison High School, was hailed as a hero after he pulled a Fenton woman and her 2-year-old child from the waters of Strawberry Lake near Brighton. The all-terrain vehicle on which the woman and child were riding had fallen through thin ice.

■ 1 year ago — Feb. 27, 1995 (Observer)

Despite falling off in some areas district-wide, Farmington Public School students continued to score well above the state average on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program test, school officials said.

An official for Hospice of Southeastern Michigan said he has found "an ideal site" for a new hospice — the southwest corner of 11 Mile and Middlebelt in Farmington Hills.

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:

Are you following the assisted suicide trial of Dr. Jack Kevorkian?



'To an extent on TV and in the papers. I'm in accord with what he's doing to an extent.'
John Prentice
Farmington



'No. It doesn't interest me.'
Karen Willoughby
Livonia



'Not really. I have a lot of other things to do.'
Carol Shier
Farmington



'Unfortunately, no. I've been out of town and I'm kind of behind on the news.'
Ryan Koonce
Farmington Hills

We asked this question at the 12 Mile Road Branch of the Farmington Community Library.

LETTERS

Deplores terror

The Jewish community of Detroit deplores the brutal acts of terror that have taken innocent lives in Israel's cities of Jerusalem and Ashkelon. We extend our condolences to the families of the victims and to the people of Israel, with whom we share sorrow and anger.

To retreat from the gains that have been made between Israel and her neighbors would be to hand terrorists a victory toward their ultimate goal of destroying Israel. We stand with the state of Israel in its determination to strike at these forces of terror, and we join with Israel's prime minister and government in their resolution to go forward in the pursuit of peace.

Robert Naftaly, president,
Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit

Allen Zimmol, president,
Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Detroit

Road looks better

We would like to express our appreciation for the recent efforts of Oakland County Commissioners Donn L. Wolf and David L. Moffitt.

They have focused the attention of the Oakland County Road Commission on the deteriorated state of Eight Mile Road between Halsted and Farmington roads.

Their intervention has resulted in the recent decision by the Commission to begin the expansion of Eight Mile Road this summer. Anyone who has recently travelled this major thoroughfare is well aware of the need for immediate improvement.

Local citizens should be aware of our commissioners' fine efforts in this matter.

David and Jeannette Sharpe,
Farmington Hills

Report on Lions

For many years the Farmington-area general public has entrusted The Farmington Area Lions with a portion of their charity donations.

The Lions are honored to have that trust and we feel that we should report how we have distributed these funds. In the 1994-95 year we donated \$15,800. A breakdown shows that \$2,800 was dispersed locally, such as for glasses and exams for school children Cloverdale Training Center, local groups that work to combat substance abuse, and Oakland County Library for the Blind.

Substance abuse is one of the larger causes

of blindness, in line with our program to prevent blindness we assist local groups combating substance abuse.

The largest portion of our funds, \$9,800, went to Southeast Michigan organizations such as Leader Dogs for the Blind, Penrickton Center for multi-handicapped children, Michigan Eye-Bank, Beaumont Silent Children, Seedling — a supplier of Braille books and the Blind Children's Fund.

The remaining \$3,200 went to Welcome Home for the Blind in Grand Rapids and to international Lions programs that are combating blindness causes worldwide.

The Lions have a policy that specify that all monies raised from the public are returned to the public. All club administration costs are financed by the club members.

Another policy is that we solicit our funds from our chartered area and with that we have responsibility for helping those within our own territory first and can then look outward.

We thank the Farmington area for the past support. The next time you see a Lion soliciting funds, remember this report and please continue your generous support.

Dick Carvell, secretary,
Farmington Area Lions

Anti residency bill

I can't believe the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills are so upset about the residency bill.

The bill being considered doesn't even concern the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills paid-on-call employees. This bill pertains to the full-time departments, not the paid-on-call.

Of course the paid-on-call would have to live within a certain area. This goes without saying.

I don't feel it is fair for the city or the state to tell me where I can or cannot live. I also wish our state representative, Jan Dolan, would be better informed before she made statements to the press regarding these issues.

My husband and I have tried to discuss this issue with Ms. Dolan on several occasions. However, she is not interested in what we have to say.

My husband is a full-time firefighter for the city of Birmingham and is required to live within a 12 mile circle from downtown Birmingham. It is difficult to find decent and affordable housing in this radius.

We are very limited on where we can live due to the residency restriction and the salary they pay the firefighters.

This Farmington Hills resident does want the residency bill to pass.

Christel L. Lampear, Farmington Hills

The Farmington Observer

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— Philip Power