

# Farmington Observer, LeMieux win awards

The Farmington Observer captured a first place for Design and staff photographer Sharon LeMieux took first for Spot News Picture and third for Sports Photo in the 1996 Michigan Press Association Better Newspapers Contest.

In all, Oakland editions of the Observer & Eccentric Newspa-

pers captured 20 awards.

In the top General Excellence category, the Rochester paper placed second to the Birmingham-Bloomfield edition. "The overall winner is the owner of the Observer & Eccentric newspaper chain," wrote the judges. "All the newspapers were excellent in all categories."

"We're delighted at the variety and number of awards but we're especially thrilled to be honored by a panel of our peers while doing what we do best — covering our local communities day in and day out, every week of the year," said Bob Sklar, managing editor of the Oakland editions. "Our staffs are dedicated to covering your hometown and to consistently meeting your expectations in community coverage."

In awarding the Farmington Observer first place for Design, the judges wrote: "This generally had better photography and art."

LeMieux's photo depicting a Farmington Hills firefighter clenching the hand of a Hills

police officer injured in a traffic accident collected first place for Spot News Picture.

"Excellent framing of subject matter. Photographer tried to focus on the victim. Dramatic clenching fist adds intensity," the judges wrote.

LeMieux received third place for her photo of a Farmington High track member doing the high jump. "Unusual action made this a winner," the judges said.

The Birmingham-Bloomfield edition also placed first for Lifestyle section, edited by Ethel Simmons.

The West Bloomfield-Lakes edition of The Eccentric grabbed

first among Feature Stories for staff reporter Tim Smith's series on micro preemies.

West Bloomfield-Lakes edition staff photographer Dan Dean won a first for Sports Picture and a third for Spot News Picture. West Bloomfield staff reporter Suzanne Parker placed second in Spot/Breaking News.

Southfield Eccentric staff photographer Jerry Zolynsky placed first for Feature Picture and second for Sports Picture. Sports editor Marty Budner finished first for sports writing. His sports section placed second in Sports Coverage. Editor Wayne Peal placed second in Editorial Pages.

"The Perfect Gift," the Oakland editions' holiday gift guide edited by Susan DeMaggio, took third among Special Sections.

The Rochester Eccentric captured four awards in the contest, including first places for best Editorial Pages and Editorial Writing and second place for General Excellence.

The Wayne County editions of the O&E earned 12 awards.

The Minnesota Newspaper Association studied nearly 3,000 entries from 136 Michigan newspapers in judging this year's competition.

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STAFF PHOTO BY DAN DEAN

One vote counts: U.S. Rep. Joseph Knollenberg, R-Bloomfield Twp., explains to students at Meadow Lake Elementary School that a number of important elections in American history were settled by a single vote. So was one local race, where state Rep. Barbara Dobb edged challenger Debbie Schlussel.

## Knollenberg tells youngsters about need for voting

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

Imagine a Colonial America where the natives spoke German instead of English? How about the United States without Texas? Or history without Hitler?

All of those situations were one vote shy of reality, said U.S. House Rep. Joseph Knollenberg Tuesday morning at Meadow Lake Elementary School of the Walled Lake district.

Before an audience of students in grades 3-6 in the Meadow Lake gymnasium, Knollenberg talked about the importance of voting, as well as the political process. He also answered pupils' prepared questions about current events.

"People sometimes say voting's not that important, they say 'What can my vote count for?'" said Knollenberg, a Bloomfield Township Republican who represents the 11th House District. "Well, one vote does make a difference."

"It does even locally. There was an election in West Bloomfield where (state) representative (Barbara) Dobb won by one vote."

Knollenberg emphasized to the youngsters how crucial participating in the voting process is to American democracy. But he also cited a troubling fact, that millions fail to vote every election because they don't think their say is important.

He estimated that, out of 260 million people in the U.S., only about 170 million are registered to vote. Out of those, perhaps 48-60 percent will actually follow through at the polls.

"If you want to make it better, you have to vote," he continued. "And what we've found is, the more educated people are, the more likely they are to vote. So it's important you begin to think about educating yourselves on the issues, on the candidates. After all, we're your servers."

After a question-and-answer segment, some of Knollenberg's

Meadow Lake audience said the need-to-vote message was crystal clear and that they would make sure their parents vote in November.

"He said voting is really important and I agree with him," said Samir Rao, a fifth grader in teacher Melanie Medawar's class. "Like he said, a lot of votes have been one vote off from being really different."

Samir also said Knollenberg's talk also will do nothing but help instill an attitude that might steer students toward being responsible voters in the future.

"It's good to get this at a young age because you'll remember," he said. "Something like this is a really good experience."

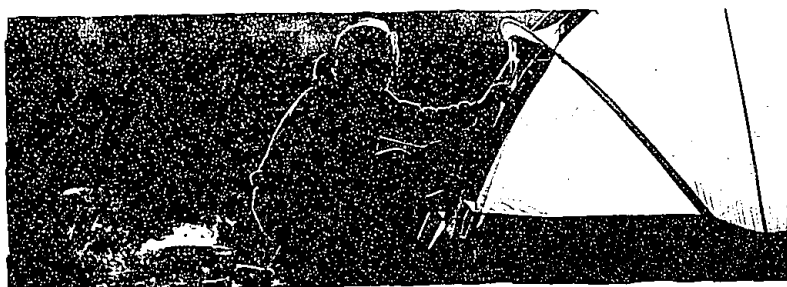
Caitlin Shull, a sixth-grade pupil in teacher Renee Valentine's class, said the talk was helpful because "now I know when I get older I'm going to vote and I understand why it's important to vote. I think a lot of people who don't vote should."

Following the assembly, Knollenberg commended the students for being so interested and astute about voting and politics at such an early age.

"Frankly, I'd like to probe just how deep their awareness (of politics) is," Knollenberg said. "I think they've got a substantial jump on a lot of folks who are students in high school."

The congressman said he was impressed that Meadow Lake teachers emphasize those subjects in their curriculum. He also said the youngsters have already had a positive early exposure to how the political process works.

"I think the (Sept. 28) bond issue must have been a spark," Knollenberg said, referring to the \$114 million proposal that won handily at the polls, following an urgent citizens' campaign. "It put some meat on the bones and they could see what was happening and why it's important to persuade the public on an issue that is important to the community."



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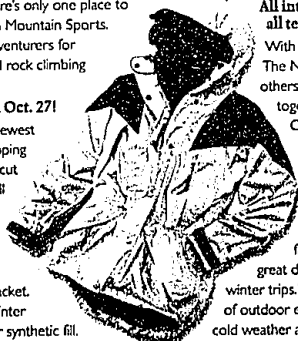
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