

FM station 'signs off' on political placards

BY WILLIAM COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Sometimes cleaning up politics isn't as easy as it seems. That's what FM radio station WCSX found when it offered a bounty on political signs.

The station's "J.J. and the Morning Crew" announced that the station would pay 10 cents a sign and asked that they be delivered to Langan's Bowling Center on Northwest.

Listeners complied in a big way, bringing in hundreds of signs. But candidates, who own the signs weren't laughing.

"My signs are like two bucks apiece," said state House candidate Steve Dibert. "We save those."

Dibert's Republican opponent who won the House seat, said he also wants to get his signs back. "Taking private property is a no-no," said Andrew Ruczkowski. "They cost a lot of money."

Farmington Hills city officials said although taking the signs is potentially a matter for the police, storing them at the bowling alley without a special permit causes a problem.

"It looks awful," said Zoning Division Director Lee Blizom of the signs at the bowling alley. "The use of a bowling alley for outdoor storage requires a special even permit, permission from the Zoning Board, the fire department and the police."

The city sends candidates a letter requesting them to pick up the signs within five days of the election.

"This was good natured to begin with," said Chris Herrmann, WCSX assistant program director. "Our original thought was to try and turn a bad into a good," he said.

Dibert said he wouldn't have minded, since proceeds of what the signs brought would go for charity, had he known in advance.

The station sent crews out Saturday in an effort to get the signs back to those candidates who wanted them, Herrmann said.



Picked-up signs: Farmington Hills-based classic rock station WCSX-FM offered a financial incentive to listeners to collect political signs after the Nov. 5 election. However, the radio station's promotion was more popular than some would have liked.

STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LAMHEX

Group strives to make ballot issue of 'death with dignity'

BY WILLIAM COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Assisted suicide is an issue that is not going away.

And a group is working to put the issue of "death with dignity" before the state's voters on the 1998 November ballot.

To that end, and to discuss what has been an emotionally and politically charged issue in Oakland County, a group promoting legalized assisted suicide is meeting Thursday at the Universalist Unitarian Church of Farmington at 25301 Halsted.

"There will be opposing views," said Robert Gardon, a facilitator for the Farmington/Southfield Chapter of Merian's Friends, the group named for Merian Frederick. "We recognize that many people have reservations. We will try to deal with them."

Merian Frederick, an Ann Arbor resident who suffered from Lou Gehrig's Disease. At 72 she ended her life with the help of Dr. Jack Kevorkian at his Royal Oak apartment on Oct. 22, 1993.

Gardon said the issue is not generalized euthanasia, but physician assisted suicide for the mentally competent, terminally ill.

Dr. Kevorkian, who has so far successfully fought attempts to convict him of assisted suicide, has forced the issue that many believe must be legalized.

Janet Good, a Farmington Hills resident who has been involved with the Hemlock Society for years and is herself ter-

minally ill with cancer, said she welcomes the group's effort.

"I helped them start it," she said. "It started as an offshoot of the Hemlock Society."

Good, who has admitted to allowing a terminally ill Windsor man, Austin Bastable, to end his life at her home with the aid of Dr. Kevorkian, said the practice must become a licensed medical procedure.

"That's the only answer," she said. "But my main concern is what should we do with the catastrophically ill, suffering people who need this now."

Even should Michigan voters approve assisted suicide, it could take two to three years to implement it, she said.

Physicians have rejected the idea of making it a medical procedure, but that could change.

"I'll make the comparison to Medicare," she said. "For many years physicians opposed Medicare. Then it became the goose that laid the golden egg."

She said when Dr. Kevorkian's assisted suicides became a media circus, he tried to make them private.

"Because this could not be done in a clinic or in some other comfortable setting, and he did not want a circus atmosphere, he looked for a quieter way," she said. "Then they criticized him for that."

State Rep. Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, will host Thursday's meeting, which begins at 7:30 p.m., and one at the Southfield Civic Center on Nov. 21, also at 7:30 p.m.

"Living in Oakland County, it's in the headlines all the time," Dolan said Friday from Utnh. "I'm one of those who feels that under certain criteria and conditions, this should be permitted. We need to talk about this because it won't go away."

In fact, the United State Supreme Court agrees last month agreed to decide the constitutionality of doctor assisted suicide when by hearing a Washington State and a New York State appeals case in January. Those two states are fighting appeals court decisions allowing assisted suicides.

Public referendums in Oregon, Washington and California have shown that the public is evenly divided on the issue.

"And I don't think the legislature is going to tackle it," Dolan said.

Among Merian's Friends are some well-known Michiganians, including Former Gov. William G. Milliken, Former Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, Wayne County Prosecutor John D. O'Hair and Macomb County Prosecutor Carl Marlinga.

Thursday's meeting is at 7:30 p.m. at the Universalist Unitarian Church at 25301 Halsted between Grand River and 11 Mile. The group will meet at the Southfield Civic Center at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 21 in room 222, in the parks and recreation building off Evergreen between 10 and 11 Mile roads.

Everyone is invited. For more information, call (810) 626-6367 or 349-6364.



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Yard waste patrol out in force

Farmington and Farmington Hills residents will have their yard waste collected through the month of November.

To assure collection, residents should observe these guidelines:

■ Yard waste must be placed in a rubbish container identified with a yard waste label or a 30 gallon paper yard waste bag available at local stores. In Farmington Hills only, yard waste can also be placed in a clear plastic bag.

■ Branches, heavy brush, and large pieces of wood (not to exceed 6 inches in diameter or 4 feet in length) must be bundled and not weigh more than 60 pounds.

Following these procedures will allow the waste hauler to identify the yard waste so it can be collected in a separate truck and taken to a compost facility, in compliance with state law.

Many homeowners must to avoid raking and bagging grass clippings and leaves. Leaves can be picked up by moving over them several times and leaving them to break down on the lawn.

Grass clippings can be left on the lawn. They are 80 percent water and will break down on the lawn.

Questions about the yard waste program can be addressed to the City of Farmington Hills at 658-8580 or the City of Farmington at 473-7250.