

3 elected to C'ville school board

In the Clarenceville School District, school board trustee Gary Garrison, a newcomer just four years ago, now finds himself the most senior member of the board after winning re-election in Monday's school election.

Newcomer John Shaw and incumbent Garrison both won four-year terms. Newcomer Bryan Bentley won an open two-year term.

In the race for the four-year term, Shaw was the top vote-getter, with 145 votes followed by Garrison who garnered 132 votes. Brian Silvernail came in third, with 62.

With 133 votes, Bentley beat Crystal Waack's 82 votes to win a two-year term on the Clarenceville school board.

"I was the new kid on the block four years ago, and I never, ever thought that one day I would be the senior member," Garrison said. "It's always better to have a mix, experienced and newcomers."

Board President Linda Brandemuhl leaves her post this



Poll watching: Candidate John Shaw (right) waits for school election results to start coming in at about 8:15 p.m. Monday. Shaw was the top vote-getter for a four-year term in Clarenceville.

month, and the other six trustees have all been elected since Garrison first took office four years ago.

Voter turnout tallies in the

small Oakland County district, which serves parts of Livonia, Redford Township and Farmington Hills, were not immediately available.

Absentee ballots tip WL board vote

Before the results came in, Michael Karson had a feeling absentee voters would determine who was elected to the Walled Lake school board.

He was right.

With a voter turnout of only 2.5 percent in the district race for two four-year terms, absentee votes made up a 41 percent of the ballots cast. And 415 of the 598 absentee votes supported Karson for one of the terms.

The West Bloomfield resident will take his seat on the board July 1 and board vice president Thomas McConnell will return for another term.

Randolph Ston, appointed to the board a year ago, was ousted by 90 votes. McConnell took 1,031 and Karson received 820.

Candidates and school officials were disappointed with the turnout of only 1,447 people out of 87,000 registered voters. The district includes the northwest corner of Farmington Hills.

"I think typically if there isn't a financial issue on the ballot people feel it isn't worth their time," said James Geisler, superintendent.

The only action happening at

Oakley Park Elementary, precinct eight, was a karate class which moved its lesson out on the front lawn to make way for voting machines in the school gym. About 73 voters turned out at that poll.

"There was nobody there," McConnell said of the different polls he visited Monday.

Karson suggested the district post election signs outside the polling places to raise awareness in future elections.

"It's a shame that people don't know about the election," Karson said.

All three candidates and their wives congratulated each other shortly before 9 p.m. Monday in the district board room occupied by less than 20 school officials and supporters.

Ston, who received more votes than Karson in seven of the 10 precincts, wasn't sure why absentees were overwhelmingly cast in Karson's favor. "It could be as simple as I have a short name and I think I was third on the ballot."

Ston said candidates really need to get the word out earlier

than in past years since more voters in recent years are casting absentee ballots.

"I'm very surprised," Karson said of his election. "I'm also very excited. I'm looking forward to representing everyone in the district."

Karson said a lot of friends and supporters helped him win the election including his two sons, Jeffrey and David, who got the word out in their schools.

"I wasn't shocked at all," McConnell said of his top status among voters. "I was very confident I've done a good job over the last few years."

All three candidates posted signs in the district, but McConnell noted his extra campaigning tool - candy mints covered by re-elect McConnell wrappers.

Both winners said they don't have any immediate issues they wish to address.

"I think, at this point, I need to be brought up to date on all the issues," Karson said.

"I'm going to relish the moment for a while, then I'll sit back and decide the direction I'm going to go," McConnell said.

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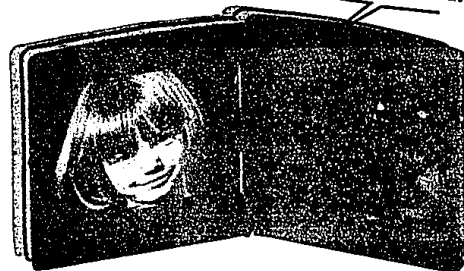
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