

Education

Voters: Brush up for election

"Democracy is a device that ensures we shall be governed no better than we deserve."

—George Bernard Shaw

November isn't that far away. Before you know it, the general election will be here. That's why we are already delving into the races, candidates and issues that affect voters in Farmington and Farmington Hills.

We think it's important to thoroughly cover the candidates seeking election. We think it's equally important to cover the three state proposals on the Nov. 3 ballot.

A primary reason for kicking off coverage in September — when most voters are just getting over the August primary — is because a lot of you vote absentee. And if you're a conscientious and organized voter, you vote earlier and earlier each election. We want you to be armed with enough information to cast your ballot.

You will notice that we are taking a bit of a departure from our traditional profiles on candidates in each of the races that affect the community. We want to give you a more in-depth and multi-dimensional understanding of the candidates — and their backgrounds — you will consider for election. That includes not only their positions on issues important to them, but issues important to you, the voter.

That's why we need to hear from voters. Let us know what issues are important to you. Our reporters will soon be out in the community asking voters what concerns they have as we enter election season. Are you concerned about roads and their funding, business taxes, environmental issues, governmental spending? Give us an idea. Write us a letter. Send us a fax. Call us, or send us an email.

While we are busy talking with candidates and addressing the ballot issues that will face voters in November, we ask that as voters you take this upcoming election seriously.

If you are not yet registered to vote, do so. It's easy and may be accomplished at either Farmington or Farmington Hills city halls or any

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Michigan Secretary of State office. The deadline is the end of business, Monday, Oct. 5.

Also take the time to read and learn about the candidates; consider the issues important to you; consider issues important to your community. Then make an informed decision. Not a hurried one. Not one based on name recognition. Ask yourself if the candidate you choose will adequately and appropriately represent you and your community in the state House, state Senate or Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

Take your education a step further and attend a candidate forum. One is already planned by the Council of Homeowner Associations of Farmington Hills at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 7, in Farmington Hills city council chambers. Oakland County Commission and state House candidates will be there.

A candidate forum is a good opportunity to see the candidates in action and to see them on the spot, responding to questions.

In such a busy world, it's easy to forget to vote, or to make it the last thing on your "to do" list. If you cannot be in town on Tuesday, Nov. 3, remember that applying for an absentee ballot and voting it, is as simple as registering to vote.

City clerks and their staffs in Farmington and Farmington Hills have worked hard to make the whole process of voting — from registering to voting — as simple and uncluttered as possible. Take advantage of it.

And it's true. If you don't vote and don't vote armed with knowledge and a good sense for whom you are voting, really, you shouldn't complain. It's what you deserve.

Learn about U.S. Constitution

Today marks the start of "Constitution Week," and with all that's going on in Washington, D.C. these days the venerable old document is bound to get a workout.

The federal convention convened on May 14, 1787, in Philadelphia to revise the Articles of Confederation. It was a long, hot summer, and through discussion and debate it became clear by mid-June that, rather than amend the existing articles, the convention would draft a new document.

Throughout the summer — in closed sessions criticized by Thomas Jefferson — the delegates worked to draft the new constitution.

The work of many, the constitution stands as a model of cooperative statesmanship and the art of compromise. When the delegates left Philadelphia after the convention, few, if any, were convinced that the constitution they had approved outlined the ideal form of government for the country. Late in his life James Madison scrawled out a letter, one never addressed. In it he declared that no government can be perfect, and "that which is the least imperfect is therefore the best government."

Take time to read the constitution and know the freedom it guarantees.

Cycle of nature brings us fall

Fall begins this year at precisely 1:37 a.m. Eastern Standard Time on Wednesday, Sept. 23. Officially that's the autumnal equinox, the point at which the sun seems to cross the celestial equator from north to south.

It's one of two days in the year when there are an equal number of dark and daylight hours.

What the day really signifies is the changing of the season from summer to fall. Those green leaves, symbolic of new life when they emerged in the spring, begin their ritualistic color changes, soon to end up in a compost bin or as much in a flower bed. It's all part of the cycle of nature.

And that leads to the inevitable coffee break discussions about which is the favorite season. Snow skiers declare winter to be the best while water skiers proclaim the joys of sum-

mer. Gardeners look forward to spring when they can begin working with the soil. And hunters can't wait for the deer season to get under way in the fall.

Snowbirds start preparing for their annual trek to points south, extending the summer season through the winter months. They don't care what time of year it is, just so long as it's warm.

We're not advocating one season over another. They'll come and go, no matter how much we pontificate. We're just happy to be around to watch the changes. William Browne, the 17th century English poet, probably summed it up best:

"There is no season such delight can bring,
"As summer, autumn, winter, and the spring."

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:

Should President Clinton be impeached, censured or have no penalty?

We asked this question at the Farmington Post Office



"Impeach."
Colin Ashworth
Farmington Hills



"I think they should impeach him."
Janet Cross
Novi



"He should be held accountable to the full extent of the law. I guess impeachment."
Donna Wallis
Farmington



"I'm not really sure. I'm disappointed in how he goes on about family values and what he shows America."
Laura Williams
Farmington

Concern



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DREXLER

Careful: Longacre Elementary Safety Patrols Gabrielle Sikora and Shawn Clark watch for clear spaces in traffic so their classmates can cross Gill Road. Parents are concerned about the safety of their kids as the walk to school. Parents want the city of Farmington to pay for an adult crossing guard. But city officials aren't sure traffic volume warrants such a move. Meanwhile, public safety officers were on hand one morning to monitor the morning rush.

LETTERS

Unfair bill

A recent article in the Observer quoted a state representative as saying that Senate Bill 733, which gives 84 cities and townships the authority to lure businesses from other communities through absolving all new personal property taxes, would not harm the city of Farmington Hills.

The reason Farmington Hills City Council launched a vigorous campaign against passage of the legislation is that it has the potential of hurting our city very badly as any of the 84 communities could dangle the substantial personal property tax savings over an extended period of time to convince our companies to move to the tax-free haven.

Business publications recognized this when the agreed that Computware, presently based in Farmington Hills, could be a prime target of Senate Bill 733. The computer firm, with its high proportion of personal property, is already being sought out by the city of Detroit.

Other Farmington Hills firms could be the targets of one of the communities favored by the law. While our city government is not wedded to the personal property tax, we do believe that if it is replaced, there should be replacement funds provided by the state to make up for about \$3 million in lost revenues. Otherwise the burden would fall on individual homeowners.

The problem with Senate Bill 733 is not only its unfairness to our city, but also in the manner which it was adopted by the Legislature at the last moment of the session, without scrutiny by a committee and without many of the lawmakers realizing what was in the bill. That is obvious by the statement in the Observer and by comments by other area lawmakers.

In the final analysis it was a bad bill, approved without full knowledge of most of the lawmakers and an unfair intrusion into the home rule of our city.

Aldo Vagnozzi, mayor
Farmington Hills

Constitution honored

I would like to remind your readers that "Constitution Week" is Sept. 17-23. This week celebrates the signing of a document over 200 years

old. It was written by our founding fathers to secure liberty and guarantee our freedoms as a self-governing nation.

Study the constitution, know your rights enjoy the freedom that was fought for by so many.

History has it that at 4 p.m. on Sept. 17, 1787, the actual signing of the document was undertaken by 39 of our ancestors.

Remember this date and read your constitution.

Judy Myslivice

'Raged officers'

Actually "road rage" behavior as blamed on motorists is prevalent in some police now cruising our streets. Police rage is the direct result of inadequate and superficial hiring tests used by local governments.

Raged police habitually abuse motorists with provocation, intimidation, entrapment, high speed chases, beatings, unwarranted tickets and outright lies. Burnout is a common excuse, but anyone can be burned out before hiring, not just at the 11-year duty mark given to the police specifically.

It is nearly impossible to later dispute the lies of a raging individual policeman because of union, "partner" and prosecutor/legal protections.

Higher education and service records can even mask this unstable individual. Any government employee with vested authority to harm or kill needs all the psychological testing available! The net benefit to law enforcement will certainly be added respect by the public.

James E. Mills
Farmington Hills

Opinions are to be shared: We welcome your ideas, as do your neighbors. That's why we offer this space on a weekly basis for opinions in your own words. We will help by editing for clarity. To assure authenticity, we ask that you sign your letter and provide a contact telephone number.

Letters should be mailed to: Editor, The Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington Michigan 48335. Or they can be faxed to 248-477-9722.

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— Philip Power