

## Farmington Observer™

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Our fundamental purposes are to enhance the lives of our readers, nurture the hometowns we serve and contribute to the business success of our customers.

## Our pick for mayor: Re-elect Nancy Bates

It isn't often that residents have as clearly defined a political choice as the one for Farmington Hills mayor. Incumbent Mayor Nancy Bates and first-time mayoral candidate Ron Oliverio have been on opposite sides of the universe so long, someone ought to establish a Roman Neutral Zone between them.

In our estimation, however, there's no need for voters to boldly go where no one has gone before by electing her opponent. We endorse Bates' bid for re-election to her final term.



Nancy Bates

During Bates' tenure, city officials have faced some tough issues. While there have been tense moments, she has generally shown a capacity for patience, tolerance and understanding.

She conducts a dignified formal meeting, with a civility that's vital to the business of good government. Anyone who feels she's part of a council that speaks with one voice ought to sit through a study session, meetings open to the public but off-camera, where discussions are often strident but, again, respectful.

Bates has proven herself a gracious and well-spoken ambassador for her city, and her reputation of involvement on the national level gives Farmington Hills a better shot at getting the ear of our state and federal representatives.

We appreciate her championing the cause of youth and families; however, we would urge her to pay equal attention to all areas of the community. That is not to say the city is falling apart for lack of attention, but simply that residents may look askance when this city's top official appears focused in one direction.

While youth and families are important to the city's vitality, the majority of households in Farmington Hills do have school-aged children. We were also troubled by the attempted purchase of a youth center house that fell through because officials didn't take enough time and didn't work with neighboring resi-

dents. Bates is part of an administration that has its critics - but we haven't seen the programs or virtually closed ranks alleged by her challenger. What we have seen are residents who, for whatever reason, feel their concerns are falling on deaf ears.

**We urge Bates to take a good, hard look at appointing a citizen ombudsman or review panel as a neutral sounding board for residents.**

Officials sometimes take actions that seem to fly in the face of public opinion, without adequate explanation. When litigation is involved, they sometimes can't be forthright.

Therefore, we urge Bates to take a good, hard look at appointing a citizen ombudsman or review panel as a neutral sounding board for residents. We envision panels with training in conflict resolution.

If the kids at Wood Creek Elementary School can resolve their differences that way, why can't intelligent adults?

Challenger Ron Oliverio said many of the right things in debates and interviews. We like his ideas about citizens advisory committees on controversial issues, and our suggestion about an ombudsman came straight from him. However, we are troubled by his focus on issues that don't really matter. The problem with 11 Pines, a city-owned property bought with an eye toward expanding San Marino golf course, isn't whether officials knew the wife of a judge had a small share in the property when it was sold. The problem with 11 Pines isn't even the price tag, because a private developer would have paid at least that much.

What's done is done. It's time to look at what to do with the property, and Oliverio hasn't put forth any original solutions. In fact, aside from the aforementioned citizen-involvement ideas, most of what he's done is to point out the faults of his opponent.

That kind of negative campaigning just doesn't wash with us, and we don't think voters should reward it.



## LETTERS

### No ball outs

The government should never bail out business. Industries have no incentive to cut costs or innovate when their survival is guaranteed.

Imagine airlines managed like railroads and the Post Office. Travel must be convenient, friendly and safe, but some new regulations hurt. There is no need to arrive two hours early. Red caps need work and customers desire their service. Friends enjoy meeting arrivals at the gate.

Face identification that scans passengers, pilots, food service workers and clean-up crews might be an answer. Planes will be grounded if not enough people fly. This would foil sky-jackers, but it is the worst of all solutions.

Hank Borgman  
Farmington

### Inaccuracies

I was pleased to see Kevin Brown's article ("Hills woman explains her beliefs") on Sept. 27. In light of the events of Sept. 11, I feel it is important for all Americans to understand the basics of Islam.

In particular, I was pleased by the mention of the fact that Muslims and Christians worship the same God - a fact not known by many American Christians. However, I was disappointed by the inaccuracies in the article.

First of all, the inclusion of the phrase "between sunset and sundown" (sic) and the reference to the Soviet Union in the present tense make it appear as if no one bothered to proof-read the article.

Secondly, it is a common misconception that the word "Islam" means "peace." This is simply not true. According to Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, the word "Islam" means "submission" in Arabic - politically incorrect, but linguistically accurate.

Thirdly, the article states that there are 1.2 billion Muslims around the world. The World Almanac for Kids places the number at about one billion. The Observer was off by about 200 million people.

I appreciate the Observer's effort to educate the people of Farmington and Farmington Hills. Yet publishing the assertions of someone who says, "I'm not a scholar," without checking them for accuracy constitutes poor journalism and does a disservice to the community.

Andrew C. Wayne  
Farmington Hills

### Reputation damaged

Recently the mayor and city manager of Farmington stated, incorrectly, that the group Blue Circle, of which I am a member, damaged several "items" or "artifacts" at the Governor Warner Mansion during the Café on the Porch events. The misstatements by the city have damaged my good reputation.

Had the city talked with all parties involved, it would have found that only one item was broken at the mansion - a wax centerpiece. Working as a docent at the mansion for 11 years and being an antiques collector I know how fragile items in the mansion are. I should have thought to remove the centerpiece during the activity thus, possibly preventing the accident. It was a lesson learned.

The Governor Warner Mansion Committee granted permission to paint some well-worn furniture stored in the mansion's carriage house. Blue Circle then reconfirmed which pieces were to be painted for use on the porch. Later, a complaint was received that a table, which had been approved for painting, should not have been. Is this where the rumor of "several" items being damaged began?

Blue Circle was originally established as a fund-raising group to benefit the mansion and I am proud to be a member. We brought new and repeat visitors, as well as money, to the mansion. All are much needed.

Because opinions and kitchen gossip were said to be facts and because the city did not seek out both sides of the story, the reputations of many good people have been damaged.

Tracy Freeman  
Farmington

### Lost flag

I need your help. Last week, I lost a very special flag. It is a large flag with 48 stars.

It was the flag used in the military funeral for my Godfather, in 1955. He was a decorated Marine sergeant in WWII. Last week, while attempting to hang the flag on my house, I placed it on the back roof of my wife's Explorer. Minutes later, as I was in the house, she drove off to work, not knowing it was there.

There is no name on the flag, so if someone found it, they would not know how to return it. It is very likely it blew off of our car roof on Novi Road between Nine and Ten Mile Roads. Perhaps it stayed on the car on Ten Mile Road. If anyone knows where my flag is, I would certainly appreciate hearing from you. Thank you for taking good care of it. Please contact this newspaper.

Michael Shebak  
Northville

### Millage vote

Since September 11th, our country has been awash in exhibits of patriotism and a sea of red, white and blue covers this nation.

From homes and businesses, our flag waves as never before. From every community gathering, the sounds of "God Bless America" and "The Star Spangled Banner" ring out. Everywhere you turn, patriotism is on display for the world to see.

Well, almost everywhere. The exception is the voting booth. On September 26th, Oakland County held a vote on two education millages and only 7 percent of registered voters showed up. I guess the rest were too busy being proud Americans.

Steve Sutton  
Farmington Hills

### Youth programs

Being a member of the Farmington/Farmington Hills community for six and a half years, not only as a parent but also as a middle school counselor, I have great pride in the four youth centers. One only has to travel to any of the four centers and observe the supervised activities to see our community at its best.

Research shows that the ages of 11-14 are years of great social growth and

exploration among our children. Our centers provide a safe and very social setting where our children can relax and have fun at the end of their day at school. My own children have been involved with the centers and I highly recommend the centers to all families of middle school age students.

Regardless of what we call the service; i.e. babysitting, tutoring, community outreach, the result is the same; good reliable structure that our children want to be part.

I thank Todd Lips, Alice Toroyan, and the entire staff for a job well done. Thank you for your commitment to young people and to the Farmington/Farmington Hills community.

Connie Carroll  
Northville

### Clear choices

Our upcoming mayoral election offers us clear choices in our city's future direction. The current administration of Mayor Bates has personally shown me questionable operating practices and evasiveness when legitimate questions are raised.

Fortunately, Ron Oliverio has been actively involved in community issues for years. If not for Ron, many issues would remain hidden or kept behind closed doors. Ron promises to open up the clubby atmosphere in Farmington Hills to all residents, not just a certain combination of individuals.

Ron has worked hard in his business endeavors and his private sector experience will help him lead our city. Like with Harry S. Truman, with Ron as mayor we will always know where the buck stops.

Ron's personal experiences have made him sensitive to needs of families in our community. He even cares about dog walkers! Ron is a military veteran who appreciates the price of freedom and has developed leadership skills that we need. City employees will see by example that honesty and service are expected from the top down.

Ron will be our local Rudy Giuliani. You may not always like that he tells it like it is, but we will find he can get the job done in a crisis.

Yes it's time for change in Farmington Hills. With Ron we can take comfort in knowing that an honest and competent mayor will lead our city.

Gregory Wirt  
Farmington Hills

### Share your opinions

We welcome letters to the editor. Please include your full name, address and phone number for verification. We may edit for clarity, space and content.

Mail:  
Letters to the Editor  
Farmington Observer  
33411 Grand River  
Farmington, MI 48335  
E-Mail: jhubred@oe.homecomm.net  
Fax: 248-477-9722

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## Embrace Halloween, gain control over fears

It's scary out there.

This year the ghosts and goblins on leaf-covered lawns, the skeletons hanging from shop windows and the numerous haunted houses for charity are taking a backseat to the real horrors of the world.

When airliners are hurled into buildings and packages are delivered with a potentially deadly disease and every minute of every day we are watching and waiting for something terrible to happen, store bought "horror" seem somewhat offensive and irrelevant.

Costume sellers this year are noting an upswing in police, firefighter and G.I. Joe costumes. Many children are being told to avoid the usual Jason/Freddy murdering maniac costumes in favor of something milder, something patriotic like the Statue of Liberty brought to life.

We have allowed the real world to intrude on a favorite holiday, one loved by children for its safe terrors, dress-up fantasies and sweet candies. It is a day when children are briefly allowed, even encouraged, to step outside the usual constraints and just have fun.

Some people don't like Halloween. They take it seriously. They see the late October days growing colder, the nights coming more quickly, the leaves dying and swirling in the stiff breeze and the chilling rains. Summer has gone and

winter will soon be here. This is a time to come together, to have a party, to ward off the terrors all around us as winter nights settle in.

Halloween isn't a celebration of death but an affirmation of life and a mocking of all those evils that would deny life. We dress up in the guise of those spirits that scare us as a way to thumb our noses at them and all they represent.

Could there be a more appropriate

**Could there be a better time to celebrate Halloween than this year? Could there be a better time to mock evil, instead of giving in to its power?**

time to celebrate Halloween than this year? Could there be a better time to mock evil instead of giving in to its power?

Rather than canceling Halloween, we should embrace it. What better time for parents and children to come together for fun, what better time for neighbors to join together as a community to acknowledge what we fear and rise above it?

Help your children with their costumes, find a costume for yourself and give your children an extra hug before you take them out trick or treating.