

## Farmington Observer™

Part of HomeTown Communications Network™

Jon Hubred  
COMMUNITY EDITOR  
Hugh Gallagher  
MANAGING EDITOR  
Sue Rosiek  
PUBLISHER  
Dick Brady  
VP/General Manager

Jeanne Towar  
VP, EDITORIAL  
Dick Agniet  
PRESIDENT  
Phillip Power  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

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.

## Three incumbents, new voice in the Hills

In virtually any election, incumbents have a distinct advantage. They've got track records, a sense of history and established relationships that make doing business a little easier.

The race for Farmington Hills City Council is no exception. Jerry Ellis, Jon Grant and Cheryl Oliverio have a solid record of service to the community that includes the first real progress made in the 14 Mile/Northwestern corridor in decades, the establishment of a tough, legally defensible collar around the tower ordinance and a community in which only about 5 percent of residents are dissatisfied with their quality of life (DMG-Maximum Citywide Management Study, 2001). We have no reservations about endorsing them for the three open council seats, and here's why:

We haven't seen any real evidence that council members have been "closed" to the people they serve. We read the city's newsletter, we visit the city's Web site and we have representatives at council meetings and study sessions. That's our job.

If there is collusion in "executive sessions," which aren't open to the public, we'll never know. We have to trust that these seven people, whose lives are always in the public eye, are intelligent enough to know elected officials who play fast and loose invariably get caught.

And we're convinced the combined experience Oliverio, Grant and Ellis bring to the table will be worth trusting. They provide a continuity vital to two of the largest and most fragile pieces of this city's development puzzle: 11 Pines and the 14 Mile/Northwestern/Orchard Lake "Triangle" project.

Ellis demonstrates a good understand-

ing of the community and a confidence in the citizens of Farmington Hills. His 30 years of experience in negotiations have proved invaluable in getting this city the best public deal in the Triangle, and he always provides a cogent narrative to explain his toughest decisions.

Cheryl Oliverio is very approachable and in study sessions often comes up with thoughtful, citizen-driven questions and suggestions, even though she can be relatively quiet at council meetings.

Grant says this is probably his last term. He almost didn't run and seems the least involved among the three incumbents. His 12 years of experience provide a sense of history that keeps everyone on track. We appreciate his decision to spend one more term following through on 11 Pines and the Triangle, because we know it isn't easy to subject one's self to harsh criticism for doing the job as best you can.

However, 12 years is a long time. We recognize citizens are looking for fresh voices, and they couldn't find one better than that of Randy Bruce, chairman of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Bruce gets our vote because he favors development of 11 Pines that will provide a return on the city's \$10 million investment. He's also looking for answers to the kinds of questions that have bothered citizens all along, regarding price and process in acquiring the 92-acre property.

Bruce also demonstrated corking initiative in developing a Web site that details Zoning Board of Appeals agendas and activities, after council members turned down his request to televise meetings. He's shown a willingness to work "outside the box" for something in which he believes strongly in informing citizens. We also believe that the outcome of this election, those who aren't successful will remain active and involved, and those who are elected will see to it their interest in public service won't go unnoticed.



Jerry Ellis



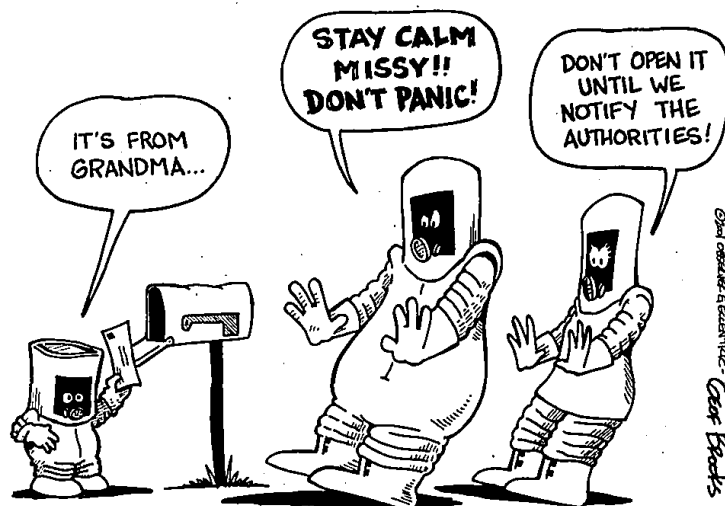
Jon Grant



Cheryl Oliverio



Randy Bruce



## LETTERS

### ■ Age appropriate?

I took two bottles of liquor to the counter at a local drugstore. "I need to know your birthday," the cashier said. I have not been asked for 50 years, and if I look too young at 75 then someone is crazy.

She said she could not ring the register unless I told her, so the sale was not made. My wife suggested the register might be programmed to require a date to ensure employees ask the question.

Perhaps, but I consider this a needless invasion of my privacy. I can still buy liquor elsewhere.

Hank Borgman  
Farmington

### ■ Star informants

Like everyone else in America, I am grief-stricken by the tragedy of the terrorist attacks on America. I mourn the loss of our people and I harbor tremendous disdain for our enemies, whoever they may be. Unfortunately, I now believe that the American media, far from being a source of comfort and support, is a source of fear and confusion. The media is a source of fear and confusion.

A day never seems to pass that our celebrated "star informants" don't mercilessly dig into classified information concerning America's "next move." The President and all those that surround him are relentlessly quizzed and pressed with prying questions of strategy and maneuvers.

Frankly, I believe we're at the point where our reporters should just cut to the chase and simply e-mail the details of U.S. counter-measures directly to the terrorists. Why even bother with the broadcast?

This may be a brainless notion, but certainly no more brainless than the American media's ongoing preoccupation with greed at the expense of common sense.

Is it possible that our country could lose the very freedom that we've fought for and won for the last 225 years because we're just simply too damn free?

Dan Yessian  
Yessian Music  
Farmington Hills

### ■ Something wrong

A number of disturbing facts are emerging about the Eleven Pines project.

The 92-acre parcel, which includes an unprotected toxic landfill, allowed Eleven Pines Joint Venture, the sellers, to escape all liability for this landfill. When asked about this, Mayor Butes said she neither knew nor cared who previously owned Eleven Pines. Her answer was characteristic of the hostile responses both she and the entire city council greet any citizen's perfectly legitimate questions.

In the Agreement of Sale the sellers stipulated that the test borings could only be done to find out the extent of the landfill. What was in the landfill was not to be determined or disclosed until after the closing.

Consequently, citizens accepted the responsibility, for all time, of a seriously contaminated property at a price of \$4.5 million.

On top of that, \$1.5 million is being taken from the Parks and Recreation millage to cap this landfill. I voted for

that millage but did not envision it being used to cap a landfill.

The \$4.5 million to purchase the property was taken from the Northwest Pressure District. This action was defended by the council as being perfectly legal and, in fact, as common practice. This despite the fact that creating a deficit in a municipal fund is a violation of the Uniform Budget and Accounting Act.

The city is rushing forward and already has trucks on site capping the landfill. They are also hurrying to get a Planned Unit Development zoning (PUD), in order to allow condos to be built on the property.

This way they can bail themselves out financially and have a 9 hole golf course for entertainment. Meanwhile, the water and drainage crisis in the city continues unabated. Also, most people don't even know that the city paid \$1 million plus to buy the school property at the corner of 11 Mile and Halsted, or that close to half a million goes to the developer for construction management of the golf course.

Environmentally speaking, this whole thing is a disaster.

As the list of unanswered questions grows, so does the feeling that something is terribly wrong at Eleven Pines and at city hall.

Mary Johnston  
Farmington Hills

### ■ Vote for Massey

This year an exceptionally strong candidate, Dr. Kenneth Massey, has chosen to run for City Council.

His academic background combined with his current experience in "Corporate America" should be considered welcome additions to our local government. Furthermore, Dr. Massey represents a significant talent upgrade over an incumbent like Cheryl Oliverio. We would honor ourselves by electing him.

I sincerely hope that many of my fellow citizens will join with me and vote Ken onto our City Council.

Christopher M. Cummins  
Farmington Hills

### ■ Special elections

On Sept. 25, Oakland County Schools held a special election that cost \$250,000 of the taxpayers' money to benefit special educational and vocational schools. The results of this election which will increase each resident's annual taxes \$139 using \$200,000 as the average home price, won by only a couple hundred votes in Farmington and about 1,000 county wide.

About 1 in 30 people I talked to both before and after the election knew anything about it. You should probably feel mad that our county and city school officials did not do their job to make sure all the citizens this election affected were informed. I am inclined to believe that our school district wanted it this way to assure the approval of this millage increase.

A representative of Oakland County Schools, said that having a "special" election like this one was very costly to hold, and that they only had limited funds to notify the public affected. It seems to me that those limited funds were used to contact voters in the county most likely to vote yes.

Farmington/Farmington Hills Dis.

trict School Officials defend themselves by saying they notified our community of the election by the Farmington Schools Update Newsletter which is delivered to each resident. This newsletter was delivered more than six weeks prior to the election.

Diane Bauman of Farmington School Public Relations Department also informed me there was information on the district website and in Friday folders in the schools. I think our school officials need to be reminded that this school district does not consist only of the citizens who are using the schools at this time, but of all citizens who support them through our taxes.

Most disturbing to me though is the fact that when I contacted a school board member four days prior to the election to obtain information about the election that I might pass around to people that I knew who were uninformed, I was only given a biased flyer that encouraged citizens to vote yes. Oakland County Schools did publish a very nice informational unbiased brochure about the election, however, it was not circulated in the Farmington School District.

I was somewhat relieved to find out when I contacted our state representative, Andrew Raczowski, that a bill has been introduced in Lansing that would prohibit special elections such as the one on Sept. 25 requiring all issues such as these to be voted on ballots in June and November. I will personally do what I can to encourage our lawmakers to approve such legislation, so that all citizens are properly informed of their basic right to vote.

On Sunday, Oct. 14, The Observer & Eccentric papers posted a notice of a public hearing on increased property taxes by the Board of Education of Oakland County Schools. It seems to me they are making a final attempt to cover themselves on the issue of public notification after the fact.

If all of this upsets you as it does me please make an attempt to attend this public hearing at 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 23 at Oakland Schools, 2100 Pontiac Lake Road, Waterford, MI 48328. Or contact the Board of Education and let them know that you feel that this election was not done in a proper manner, by writing them or phoning before the hearing date at (248) 209-2000. Following the hearing, the Board of Education will take action on the proposed additional millage.

Amy Malaney  
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.hometowncomm.net  
Fax: 248-477-9722

HomeTown  
COMMUNICATIONS  
NETWORK

## Balance anthrax caution with common sense

Franklin Roosevelt told the American people in the 1930s that the one thing they had to fear was fear itself. The economic depression that gripped the nation would pass with time. Things would improve, but only if we did not let unreasoning fear drag us under.

Fear is gripping this nation again. The attacks of Sept. 11 led to a sudden and steep decline in air travel, delivering a crippling blow to an industry already in economic trouble.

In recent weeks, biological terrorism has spread the web of fear even farther.

First several large media companies received letters laced with anthrax, a bacterium that if inhaled can be deadly. Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle received one of these deadly letters, exposing several staff members to the bacteria. This led to a parting of ways by House Speaker Dennis Hastert opting to close for a few days to decontaminate the Capitol.

And the fear has spread to our own communities. The sight of any white powder is creating high anxiety. In a recent 10-day period, a western Wayne County hazardous materials team has dealt with 17 calls about powder in a letter. Many local police departments are receiving calls about suspicious white powder in everything from Christmas ornaments to dusty stock rooms to a high school in Inkster, where the powder turned out to be cocaine.

In addition to fears generated by incidents in New York and Florida, there have been local reports of crank threats to abortion clinics and reports of jokers sending flour in the mail.

Wayne County Sheriff Robert Picano issued a stern warning to those who participate in false scares either for intimidation or for a twisted sense humor. "We will devote the highest priority to capturing you, we will seek the maximum crim-

inal penalty under law, and we will go after your financial assets to pay for the costs associated with evacuating buildings and lab testing of materials."

We agree with Sheriff Picano that anyone who contributes to the fear already gripping this country should be vigorously pursued and prosecuted.

Your chances of being infected with anthrax are considerably less than your chances of being injured in an auto accident, yet most of us do not drive in a state of fear.

Still, some common sense precautions, like a sent bell when driving, will reduce your chances of being infected with anthrax. Here are some suggestions for those who are suspicious of letters that appear to have a white powder:

Do not move the envelope; do not attempt to clean up any spilled material; do not shake the contents of suspicious items; do not turn on ventilation systems; do not remain in the area; do not smell the substance; do not expose the substance to wind; do not walk through or track the substance around the area; do not touch any body parts until hands have been washed with soap and water.

Do place unopened letter in a plastic bag; cover any spilled contents; wash hands with soap and water; place clothing in plastic bag that may have come in contact with the substance; leave the room immediately and close doors; shut down fans; call local police department immediately.

Be alert, be careful, but do not be afraid.