

# Opinion

EDITORIALS ■ LETTERS ■ COLUMNS

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## OUR VIEWS

## Rogers, Moffitt would serve well

While voters in Farmington and Farmington Hills have the opportunity to elect two new county commissioners, we suggest a balance of new and seasoned voices.

In the 14th District, Democrat Ryan Gesund and Republican Mike Rogers present voters with an interesting choice. Gesund is certainly informed and likes to joke that he has a practical master's degree in county government. He's attended more meetings than he can count, of the full board as well as committees. Gesund is a staple at city events and meetings as well, and a member of the Committee to Increase Voter Participation.

Rogers in his capacity as an employee of the Road Commission of Oakland County has prepared documents for many of the meetings Gesund attended. He has primary responsibility for drafting a \$130 million RCOC budget and knows county infrastructure inside and out. He has worked directly with county commissioners and staff.

Rather than simply attending meetings, he has been actively involved in the day-to-day operations of county government. He has gone out to visit Oakland County communities, acquiring in a base of knowledge that can't be found in a board room.

We believe that experience gives him the edge in this race, and we endorse Mike Rogers in the 14th District.

In the 15th District, David Moffitt's experience and the level he's attained as board vice president simply can't be beat.

We admire opponent Jim Nash's stand on many issues, including control of urban sprawl and developing a viable system of mass transit. Nash has run a good campaign on the issues, and we don't believe incumbents should automatically be re-elected.

Moffitt, however, has earned another term by seeking greater responsibility, demonstrating leadership through committee chairmanships and making an effort to educate the public about county government.

For those reasons, we endorse David Moffitt in the 15th District.

## SMART use study is good first step

The Suburban Mobility Authority on Regional Transportation is making good on a promise made during the primary election to begin a study of bus use and ridership in Livonia to improve service to the suburbs.

We believe this a move in the right direction toward helping create a mass transit system that makes sense for all of us.

Prior to the Aug. 6 vote on a renewal and increase in the SMART tax millage, Livonia Mayor Jack Kirksey complained that few of his city's residents used the regional bus service and the city taxpayers there were getting a poor return on their tax dollar. The new millage will raise \$10 million in Livonia over the next four years. Kirksey made overtures of pulling Livonia out of the SMART system, joining Plymouth and Canton as opt-out communities.

SMART officials responded with a pledge to do a study and revamp line-haul bus service to the city. Now they are beginning to fulfill that pledge.

Mass transit is a tough sell in metro Detroit. At best, most suburban voters give reluctant support to a bus system they see as benefiting only the poor and the small businesses that employ them. Suburban residents are more interested in having their roads maintained.

During the primary, Kirksey told SMART that the city could devise a better system on its own to provide transportation for the disabled and elderly, which are the city's biggest users of mass transit. Why, he argued, should Livonia support a system they don't use when they could spend their money on a system better tailored to their needs?

This same argument has been made by congressional candidate and state Sen. Thaddeus McCotter, R-Livonia, who supports an opt-out option for the proposed Detroit Area Regional Transportation Authority.

We believe that opt-outs threaten any successful mass transit system. But we also understand the frustration of Kirksey. And we other suburban politicians. They are not easily impressed by the grand long-range plans proposed by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments when they see how uninterested the SMART system is in their communities.

We believe Detroit needs a variety of transportation options. City workers with suburban jobs, the elderly, the disabled and students are in regular need of mass transit. But we believe that a well-run transit system can also appeal to "choice riders." By attracting more choice riders, we'll cut down on air pollution and gasoline use, unclutter the roadways at rush hour and preserve open land from being turned into freeways. Mass transit systems also help limit sprawl and spur redevelopment rather than new development.

SMART's study of Livonia will help them get a better handle on who rides their buses and why. It and other studies will help planners devise a system that makes good economic and social sense to suburban residents.



BILL BRESSLER | OBSERVER

Chief law officers from Farmington, Gary Goss and Farmington Hills, Bill Dwyer, shared a surprise with two special ladies at the Oct. 1 Call to Action breakfast. Estrelle Michaelson, left, is the organization's director and Betty Nicolay, right, has been crowned its chairperson.

## LETTERS

## Sever responds

I'm flattered that Valerie Knol felt it was necessary to go negative in the primary election. It was a slick strategy move to attack me at the eleventh hour knowing I couldn't respond.

The most impressive fact is that it was a personal attack not complaining about one single thing I did as an elected official during the past 17 years. As desperate as she was she apparently couldn't find one single thing she could disagree with me on as Mayor, Councilman or Commissioner. I guess that means I did one heck of a job representing the people of this community.

Many voters recognized the dirty trick for what it was - a distortion of facts. People were so offended by the slanderous attack that they said they would never vote for Knol in November.

Only a political coward would deliver a cheap shot in the dark. It is wrong to attack someone's character without giving them the opportunity to defend themselves against a slanted accusation of lies.

Valerie Knol lied when she signed an affidavit swearing she would spend more than \$1,000. She lied when she told the newspaper she was in favor of school vouchers and another paper she was opposed to vouchers. She lied to the public about my tax status even though she knew it might be wrong or inaccurate.

Now her campaign spokeswoman wants us to believe she spent less money on her campaign than her opponents by ignoring the thousands and thousands of dollars spent on her behalf by the special interest groups. I hope she can prove to all of us that she wasn't bought and paid for by these groups in Lansing and Grand Rapids. The voters should be aware of where her money is coming from because she will present them if elected.

We deserve a candidate who will fight for our schools, our roads, our revenue sharing, our taxes and our issues in Lansing. We deserve someone who has a proven record of fighting for us and putting service over self.

I believe the primary election produced a winner who lost a loser who won. Every day I feel more and more like a winner.

Terry Sever  
Farmington Hills

## Keep zealots in check

Once again, our publicity junkie Hollywood Dwyer, attempts to create news. This latest stunt, as with all his half-cooked public stunts, deserves a closer look by mindful citizens of the entire State of Michigan.

What a bold and noble gesture to push for the death penalty here in Michigan. And yes, I can already hear my critics - damning me for condemning such an honorable cause. Or is it so honorable?

I urge all citizens to log on to [www.innocenceproject.com](http://www.innocenceproject.com). Whether you study this website for ten minutes or ten hours, I promise you will emerge with a changed attitude about law enforcement, prosecutors and the death penalty.

Pay particular attention to the breaking news regarding Eddie Joe Lloyd, where Detroit cops set up a mentally impaired African-American to take the fall for a

murder he did not commit. Seventeen years later, Mr. Lloyd has finally been set free.

Under the "Causes and Remedies" tab on the Innocence Project home page, look up the executive order that Illinois Governor George Ryan recently issued after imposing a moratorium on the death penalty in that state.

Since the reimposition of the death penalty in Illinois, twelve people have been executed and thirteen have been freed from death row after their innocence was proven. That's not a misprint. Twelve death row inmates were executed and thirteen were set free.

Of particular note is the nearly universal absence of remorse on the part of law enforcement. When confronted with the likelihood of a federal investigation, offending officers resort to the age old defense of deny, deny, deny - a tactic that I have personally witnessed scores of times right here in Farmington Hills.

An educated citizenry will keep these zealots in check.

Mark T. Gordaner  
Farmington Hills

## Thanks for move

A hearty thanks goes out to the Farmington City Council for moving the Farmers Market two weeks ago rather than canceling it altogether when the parking lot where it is normally held was being resurfaced.

Several of our members have heard from customers, Farmers Market vendors and stores in town that the temporary location - right on Grand River in the Downtown Center parking lot - brought more exposure and business than they could have ever hoped for.

With the Farmers Market Pavilion slated to be built on the same parking lot in two years, we look forward to many wildly successful Saturdays as a result of people coming into town - not to mention passersby stopping for the market.

Thank you again.

The Downtown Merchants Association

## Vicious attack

It is incredible how the supporters of Valerie Knol are trying to justify her vicious, last-minute smear of Terry Sever in the recent Republican primary.

Miss Knol has stated that she felt compelled to share this information with the voters. However it was launched at the last moment and it was impossible for Mr. Sever to respond.

It is these kinds of tactics that give politics a dirty name and turn off voters. I hope that Miss Knol has learned from this experience and thinks twice before launching a similar smear campaign against her general election opponent, Aldo Vagozzi.

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that you learned from your primary experience and carry on a clean campaign.

George Auna

Farmington Hills

## Stop solicitors

Nearly all of us get nuisance letters and phone calls (plus e-mail) if we have an Internet computer asking us to purchase a product or service.

If we don't want it, we can simply ignore the pitch. However, when an uninvited salesperson comes to the door - especially after dark in a housing complex created specifically for senior citizens, the problem could be much more serious. That's what happened a few nights ago while my wife and I were visiting her 55-year-old mother in one of Farmington Hills' several senior citizen housing complexes.

Although the saleslady was very polite, I calmly but firmly explained that what she was doing could be very intimidating to elderly residents in the complex and probably is illegal according to Farmington Hills law.

I contacted the Farmington Hills Police and was very happy about the professional manner in which they told the sales crew leader and his two sales people that they were violating city law by soliciting without a permit and doing so after 8 p.m. The penalty is up to a \$500 fine and 90 days in jail. The next day I learned that some of the elderly residents who had been approached by the two sales people were so frightened that they had trouble sleeping that night.

I went to the city and found the Farmington Hills ordinance that regulates door-to-door soliciting. Although it forbids doing so after 8 p.m. and 10 a.m., I suggest that it be amended to forbid the practice after dusk or 8 p.m., whichever is sooner. I also recommend that it forbid solicitation in a residential complex identified as being primarily for senior citizens. Perhaps the \$500 penalty could be increased. It would be nice if other communities were to enact similar laws and penalties if they don't exist already.

The extent to which we help the youngest and oldest members of our society indicates how civilized and decent we really are.

H. Bruce Carr

Farmington Hills

## SHARE YOUR OPINIONS

We welcome your letters to the editor. Please include your name, address and phone number for verification. We ask that your letters be 400 words or less. We may edit for clarity, space and content.

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## QUOTEABLE

"We've talked about going drag."

Bill Waddell, one of the Boys of Botsford senior citizens who are already planning their 2004 fund-raising calendar

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