

OUR VIEWS

Hold candidates to promises made

Since the polls closed at 8 p.m. Tuesday, we've heard two words repeated over and over again by voters in Farmington and Farmington Hills: THANK GOD.

Now the flood of campaign literature will stop. Now, finally, we can get down to the business of holding Jim Brady, Mike Rogers, David Moffitt, Aldo Vagnozzi and Gilda Jacobs accountable for the promises they made.

Our compliments to Brady and his opponent Annette

Ruczkowski, to Rogers and Ryan Gesund, to Moffitt and Jim Nash, to Jacobs and Marc Wilkins for maintaining issues-based, positive campaigns that were informative for voters. While not perfectly well behaved, those candidates talked mostly about themselves and their stand on important issues.

Only the House District 37 race marred this election season and we hope Republicans who pinned their hopes for Valerie Knol's election on negative campaigning take a lesson from her margin of loss.

That song just doesn't play here, folks. Contrary to popular belief, not all voters are uninformed enough to fall for blatant smear tactics.

We also have to chide Vagnozzi, whose party took the low road in the waning days of the election. This vitriolic one-upsmanship made us wonder whether sibling rivalry might not be the basis for a new political strategy.

Vagnozzi demanded Knol apologize for distorting his record. Knol demanded Vagnozzi apologize for insulting her 75-year-old mother.

How could anyone possibly consider that "informing voters"?

This campaign season was the worst in recent memory, but fortunately, the season is over. As Michigan faces historic change, so does the Farmington area, with its first Democratic team in Lansing. We wish Vagnozzi and Jacobs luck, and we hope to see more of them in the coming months — along with all of our elected representatives. In another few months, we get to do this all over again. Let's hope next year's local candidates were paying attention.

This year's local voters certainly were.

Granholt triumphs, but it's a GOP night

It was a big night for the Republican Party nationally and statewide. A popular and aggressively campaigning President and a lack of focus by the national Democratic Party swept the Republicans to control of both houses of Congress, many state houses including Michigan and half of the nation's governorships.

Jennifer Granholm's victory is an impressive personal triumph, although without the margin of victory or the coalitions Democrats expected.

We would like to believe that her victory is a resounding repudiation of the racially and regionally divisive campaign tactics of Dick Posthumus and the Republican Party. But the results suggest that it is more a triumph of style, as many other GOP candidates benefited from the party's ill-considered ad campaign.

We would like to think that the combination of Granholm's win and the implementation of the McCain-Feingold election reforms that began Wednesday will put an end to the uninformative, unproductive, nasty advertising that demeaned this election, but we don't hold much hope.

Now, however, is the time for the winners.

We offer congratulations to those victors in both parties and ask them to honor the commitments they've made and to work toward practical, meaningful solutions to the many problems we face.

Granholm's task is especially daunting. She will have to work with a Republican legislature at a time when the state government faces a nearly half billion dollar deficit. The national and state economy are still wobbling. The prospect of a long and draining foreign war still looms.

We urge the new governor and the legislature to meet together in the middle to provide positive, imaginative, cost-effective programs. We do not condemn partisanship, but urge all partisans to understand that as the battle moves forward, the goal is to reach acceptable compromises.

We also congratulate our U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg on his reelection and urge him to join with others in Congress to forge meaningful legislation in the best interest of all.

This campaign season was the worst in recent memory...



Devil's Night and Halloween were a little safer this year, thanks to a helicopter and ground patrol partnership between Oakland County (represented by Sheriff Michael Bouchard, left) and Farmington Hills police (represented by Chief Bill Dwyer, center).

LETTERS

Issue should go away

As parents and members of the church, we are required under Church law. If we have the means, to send our children to those schools, which will provide for their Catholic education.

Therefore, in the interest of good stewardship, I believe that Catholic leaders, administrators and educators have an obligation to parents of Catholic school children to make any effort possible to keep Catholic schools and their programming all Catholic.

These leaders have had no problem making an effort to raise money to rebuild Archdiocese centers and build monuments. Why can't they extend their efforts to keep their Catholic schools open and all Catholic?

We the people that make up the Catholic church have supported Catholic leadership for centuries. We are now asking that they allow us the same stewardship.

We have wonderful teachers, generous parents and a strong community at Our Lady of Sorrows. The shared time issue should just go away.

Denise M. Wood
Our Lady of Sorrows parent

Just war?

Would such action fall under the "Just War" theory? How does such contemplated action measure up to the ideals of the U.S.?

1. Every peaceful means have been exhausted.

Some say that 10 years of efforts to get rid of their possible nuclear, chemical and biological weapons are sufficient. Others say there are still some possibilities by the U.N. or others to arrange for this and that all peaceful means have not yet been exhausted.

2. The cause must be just. (Are the values at stake in a conflict of such character that the conscious systematic taking of life may be required to preserve them?)

Are our values and security endangered to such an extent that aggressive war must be waged? Or, as others argue, there is a potential risk to large populations by Iraq, or terrorists supported by them.

3. Does the end justify the means. (How devastating and widespread would the physical and material damage be to the non-combatant civilian population?)

One moral point of view holds that compelling moral causes must be pursued with limited means because not all are involved in the evils of war. They point to the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan and other devastations. Others hold that morality has no place in a war, and any means to win is justifiable.

4. Reasonable hope of winning one's objectives. (i.e., war should not be undertaken if there is no reasonable hope of attaining one's objectives.)

As of this time, (August 2002) many claim that our objectives have not been clearly spelled out so that everyone can assess the future implications. They are concerned of the possible backlash that can occur in the Middle East and the potential adverse economic and political damage to the world. Even military victory could result in such damage.

5. Proportionality (Would a greater evil

be created than the current evil by going to war?)

Even constraints on goals and methods may make it difficult to succeed without protracted conflict which may cause disproportionate harm.

James J. McElroy
Farmington

School sign

The variable message sign that was installed at Harrison High School had brought forward an issue many planners and zoning officials have had to deal with for years.

Schools are not required by Michigan Law to follow local zoning ordinances. Also Road Commissions have no authority to make schools follow the same guidelines all other developments must adhere to as relates to traffic safety.

Mr. Vagnozzi and Ms. Knol, when either of you arrive in Lansing, please make sure that government institutions follow the same laws everyone else must abide by.

Mike Rogers
Transportation Planning coordinator
Road Commission for Oakland County

Concerned about downtown

I've read with much interest of the evolving plans and aspirations of the Farmington Downtown Development Authority, and quite frankly I'm concerned.

Why must our downtown area, with its charm and intimacy, be given over to discounting? Where and when can residents have a voice in the planning of the retail mix? Why are downtown retailers not a more accurate reflection of the city's demographic?

Why is it that surrounding communities with real downtowns (Brighton, Northville, Rochester) can attract and keep retailing that compels shopping, and staying, and spending money, while Farmington devolves into the bargain hunters paradise of cast-off merchandise?

And now we're to get another bargain book store to add to the previous two, added to the discount clothing, the discount furniture, the bargain shoes. Is anyone noticing a trend here?

Personally, I would like nothing more than to spend a larger proportion of my family shopping and entertainment dollar downtown. I will most certainly vote with those dollars at Cowley's, where I think they "get" the notion that Farmington can pay off as an investment. I think that they also understand that they need to present a more refined, cleaned-up image. When are others downtown, in return for increased patronage, going to begin to understand the same.

My questions are to the planning commission and the DDA: where is the master plan? Why is it not published on the city's Web site for review. I can't get to a DDA meeting on Tuesday mornings, like others I need to be working.

I guess I really wonder if others share a concern regarding the retail direction of Farmington.

Mark Peters
Farmington Hills

Arguments don't wash

None of the arguments about Iraq are credible.

Perhaps the U.S. should not meddle in foreign governments but liberals applauded intervening in Bosnia and Kosovo where the conflicts were internal. Iraq used chemical weapons in Iran, set fire to 700 oil wells in Kuwait, launched missiles into Israel, financed terrorists and distributed frightful weapons. We are advised not to act there without the approval of other nations.

Begging Saudi Arabian help to wipe out terrorism is like asking the Mafia to make our streets safer. This kingdom is the birthplace of Osama Bin Laden, many followers and most 9-11 hijackers.

The UN would welcome our removal of Ariel Sharon but not Saddam Hussein. This organization excused suicide bombing of Jewish school buses and civilians but condemned Israeli retaliation.

America asked Iraqi citizens to overthrow Hussein during our rescue of Kuwait. Many good people tried but died when we left them to face Iraqi tanks without support. Can they trust another American request to revolt? If Hussein is eliminated, these terrorists will choose a younger, possibly deadlier leader. President Bush was correct when he said this would be a long war.

America will not "go it alone" and the next act of terrorism will trigger more headlines: "Why didn't our leaders prevent this?" or "What did he know and when did he know it?"

Hank Borgman
Farmington

Editor's note: A number of readers have inquired as to why their election-related letters were not published. The newspaper's policy is to print letters on a first-come, first-served basis, as space allows. While we made accommodations to publish as many letters as possible, the deluge of correspondence that arrived via regular and e-mail in the last two weeks of the election season made it impossible to publish all submissions. For future reference, letter writers are encouraged to send their letters as early in the campaign season as possible, to ensure their voices are heard.

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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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.

QUOTABLE

"For me, being in the ministry keeps me grounded."

— Michael Vaughn, associate pastor at Metropolitan Community Tabernacle and owner of the newly opened University Business Interiors