

the farmington enterprise & observer

YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

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40 Get Layoff Notification In Case School Tax Fails

Woman Of The Year

Mrs. Lillian Allen, a hard-working school backer, has been named woman of the year by the Farmington Area Jaycee Auxiliary which has bestowed upon her the annual Community Service Award. The award comes at a time when she is working even harder — for passage of the millage in Monday's election.

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Rumors, Warning

Rumors have been spreading through Farmington about bussing and other topics which, if believed, could convince residents to vote against Monday's millage request. The facts are reported inside but Daniels Den warns that today's edition is the last before the election and rumors heard this weekend must be met responsibly by voters.

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Smell Of Victory

Miss Marilyn Jean Kelly, member of the State Board of Education, will be the keynote speaker for the upcoming annual dinner — dance of the Farmington Democratic Club. The story of her appearance appears below predictions of victory by Farmington Schools' citizen millage backers based on increased registrations, absentee ballot requests, and positive thinking amongst the electorate.

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Friends Unwelcome?

The Quakers, who were among the first Farmington residents, report they've felt a bit unwelcome there recently. A story in our Church Section tells why and what they plan to do about it.

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Farmington School District will reduce its school staff by laying off 40 teachers at the end of this school year if the millage proposal is defeated on Monday's ballot.

The teachers affected have already been given notice, and the action was confirmed by the board of education at Monday's meeting.

The board's action was taken in order to comply with the state tenure law and the district's local agreement with the Farmington Education Association, both of which require teachers be given advance notice of such a layoff.

EFFECTIVE June 16, the reduction is being made for "budgetary reasons" with the

understanding that teachers will be recalled if Farmington's district financial position permits it. Similar action was taken at the close of the last school year. Actions taken last year and this year represent attempts to reduce expenditures in order to balance the budget.

"We lost 53 teachers last year. Whether we could keep the teachers this year depends on the millage," explained board trustee Aldo Vagnori. "We are anticipating 100 additional students next year. We may be able to rehire the teachers, but their positions may not be there."

ROGER ALLEN, FEA executive director, says the anticipated staff reduction will result in increased class

size, more classes in which students of two grade levels are combined (combination classes) and elimination of some advanced classes on the secondary level with limited enrollments.

Allen added that the teaching staff was reduced by 53 this year, although enrollment increased by 400 students. Despite an enrollment which is expected to increase by 100 next year, if the millage fails, teachers will again be laid off.

Further board action involved the sale of several school sites and the naming of the fifth junior high school, which is now under construction.

THE BOARD approved the sale of a 20-acre junior high

site north of Northwestern Highway and east of Middle Belt for the original purchase price of \$200,000.

Terms of the sale include a payment of \$40,000 at closing, which is not to exceed 18 months, and a land contract not to exceed five years at five per cent for the remainder of the purchase price.

Board President Richard Peters explains that when the site was originally purchased, it was the only one available in that area. Later the "cost of utilities, clearing and grading made the site too expensive" to be developed, and the present site for the fifth junior high was negotiated.

Peters adds that other buyers were sought through real estate brokers. However,

the site is not zoned for commercial use.

The board will retain an eight-foot easement through the property, and money from the sale will be funneled into the building and site fund.

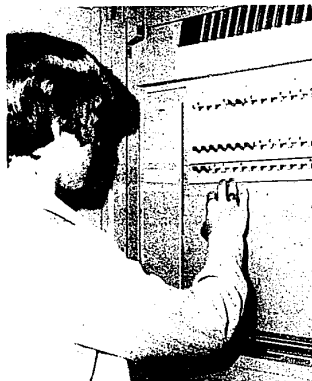
Following an offer made to purchase the old Nichols School and adjoining 68 acres of property, the board agreed to accept sealed bids by May 15 for the sale while reserving their right to reject any and all bids.

Although William Prisk, Farmington School's business manager, said the school "cannot be repaired for use," a representative of the historical society, Paul Schreiber, said that the society is interested in having the purchaser restore the building.

THE BOARD is also asking students and other community residents to suggest names for the new junior high school. All suggestions should be submitted to the board in writing by May 15.

Kenneth F. Perrin, board vice-president, added that the final authority for naming the school will still rest with the board, which will not be limited to the suggestions made.

Schreiber made the first suggestion during the meeting with the name of Harry N. McCracken, a former teacher, principal and superintendent of schools in the township who later went on to become township supervisor, treasurer and clerk.



AT THE POLLS — Students at the three high schools of Farmington School District went to the polls Thursday for a straw vote on the millage question and presidential preference. Studying the board before entering the booth is Kurt Heiss, Harrison junior. (Evert photo)

Mock Election OKs Millage 3-1

Indications given Thursday were that students attending the three high schools in Farmington Schools District are overwhelming in favor of the 3.5 mills on Monday's ballot.

A mock election Thursday resulted in students at all three schools voting 1,779 (71 per cent) in favor of the millage and 750 (29 per cent) against.

By schools, the millage straw vote was: Farmington Senior High, 627 yes and 333 no; at Harrison High School, 646 yes and 177 no; and at North Farmington High, 466 yes and 240 no.

THE MOCK election also included a presidential

preference vote with Sen. George McGovern and Gov. George Wallace the leading Democratic winners and President Nixon winning the GOP balloting.

About 65 per cent of the total secondary student body participated in Thursday's mock election on the millage question and presidential preference.

This is based on a total high school enrollment of about 4,360 and an average absenteeism of 450 a day. Assuming the average number of students missed was 2,529 voting from a possible 3,910.

School officials see Thursday's straw vote as another indication the millage will pass Monday but wonder if the

"victory margin" will be closer than the 3-1 high school gap.

ON THE Democratic ballot for presidential preference: McGovern received 482 votes; Wallace 431; Sen. Hubert Humphrey, 181; Sen. Edmund Muskie, 163; Rep. Shirley Chisholm, 72; Sen. Henry Jackson, 21; and Sen. Vance Hartke, one.

On the Republican ballot, Nixon received 1,101 votes and Paul McCloskey, 58. The presidential preference votes are totals from all three high schools. Wallace ran strongest at Farmington High and McGovern led at Harrison and North Farmington.

ON THE MILLAGE vote,

Richard Crudele, co-chairman of Citizens for Better Schools Committee, commented:

"I was surprised and pleased when the students announced their plans for having a mock election on the millage question."

"In early reports received, students had heard many reasons for a no vote and I was concerned. The results confirm my belief that our voters are capable of learning the facts and will support this millage request overwhelmingly and the Farmington community will be the winner."

"I only wish we could communicate with the community in a confined area like a high school," he concluded.

An Editorial

Millage Is Necessary To Retain Local Control Of Our Schools

Before "maintaining local control" of schools, Farmington residents must first grasp control forfeited last summer when they twice defeated operational millage for Farmington School District.

Those defeats resulted not only in program, maintenance and staff cutbacks, but also created a financial vacuum which, if continued, will be filled by federal or state funds and increased state and federal control.

If suburban voters refuse to financially support schools, the aftermath very well could be a financial crisis forcing the state to redistrict local districts to metropolitan districts.

By defeating local millage requests, "cross-district" bussing could become a fact by the state organizing metropolitan districts to avoid local bankruptcies.

IF LOCAL control is important, Farmington residents are faced with an overpowering motive to vote "YES" Monday, April 24, on the district's request for 3.5 operating mills (\$3.50 per \$1,000 equalized valuation) for ONE year. We endorse a "YES" vote.

Residents must avoid allowing the bussing controversy and its emotional backlash to trap them into voting against local millage. The tax will be levied for only ONE YEAR, and it is impossibility that cross-district bussing will be implemented during that year — namely, 1972-73.

Michigan Attorney General Frank Kelley has

promised the state will appeal immediately if Federal Judge Stephen Roth orders cross-district bussing. This appeal cannot possibly be completed and bussing implemented within a year.

In addition, Roth has decided against ordering the 350 new school buses needed to implement massive bussing this fall.

Thus, the revenue raised from the 3.5 mills voted on Monday will not be used for cross-district bussing but spent instead to educate Farmington pupils, all of whom will remain within the district during '72-73.

Editorial

THREAT OF bussing is not a reason to vote "NO" on Monday. But there are many reasons to vote "YES."

Basically, the previous millage defeats have required cuts which are already eroding educational quality, and this erosion will continue to spread with more opportunities for children being washed out in the slide.

A third millage defeat will mean children will be short-changed in the areas of art, music and physical education. Some principals will have to continue administering two elementary buildings. Libraries will continue to be closed half a week for primary grades, and advanced courses will be dropped at the secondary level because the reduced staff will not permit classes with small enrollments.

In the past two years, local operating income has been affected by state actions to the tune of \$625,000. In two years, state aid to Farmington schools has been reduced by \$265,000, and the district was given an additional expense of \$360,000 when the State Supreme Court ruled districts must provide students with free books and instructional supplies.

That money loss has resulted in this situation which has raised class sizes: 807 teachers in September 1970, with 15,400 students; 754 teachers in September 1971, with 16,800 students; and almost 17,000 students expected in September 1972, with only 717 teachers if the millage fails Monday.

This past year, extra-curricular activities were retained when a citizens committee raised \$55,000 to donate to the district. That committee, however, has pledged no repetition of the campaign if the millage fails. The campaigners feel it is time citizens assume responsibility for education and extra-curricular programs, and they are right.

What will the 3.5 mills cost you? The owner of a home valued at \$30,000 and assessed at \$15,000 would pay an additional \$52.50 next year in taxes which computes to less than 15 cents a day.

The Farmington Enterprise & Observer joins the Citizens for Better Schools and urges residents to "Be a Better Believer" by voting "YES" Monday.

FARMINGTON ENTERPRISE & OBSERVER

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