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From our readers— Secrecy is the key in mayoral debate

Editor:

Tim Richard's article on the mayoral selection process in the City of Farmington missed the point in two major areas—the secrecy which surrounded the decision and the complete disregard of the wishes of the voters.

The voters gave Bill Hartsock a resounding vote of confidence, placing him first with a substantial lead over the then mayor. Certainly, this demonstration of public support should have entitled Hartsock to be considered for the position of mayor pro-tem.

Yet, when the clubby members of the Farmington City Council got together behind closed doors they determined that passing the mayor and mayor pro-tem jobs among the elders was more important than the assessment of the voters. No wonder the voters are turned off and stayed away in droves in the recent city elections.

While the City of Farmington Hills chose the first two finishers in the first two elections as mayors, they passed over the third place finisher last year to give the mayor and mayor pro-tem posts to two councilmen who would take those titles into this year's election.

THE SAME seems to be true in the City of Farmington where the outgoing mayor was up for reelection this year and the new mayor and mayor pro-tem will have to face the voters in the next election.

This has all the appearance of using those two positions to give certain council members an added advantage when they have to face the voters

In the Hills, the mayor and mayor pro-tem campaigned with those titles. The voters weren't fooled as they relegated the two to third and fourth place, with the mayor getting only a two-year term.

I would hope that this kind of use of what are essentially titles would concern Richard. And if these positions are ceremonial and almost meaningless as Richard seems to indicate, why should they be denied to every council member except to those annoyed by the club.

Richard criticizes Hartsock for abstaining on the vote for mayor and mayor pro-tem with the statement that it was his duty to help elect these officers. The abstention, however, was the only avenue open to Hartsock to protest the fact that he was completely excluded from the mayoral election process.

The danger is that the maneuvering implied in a selection process behind closed doors which consistently passes over certain council members is bound to effect the performance of the total council.

I speak from experience on the Farmington School Board, where the annual election of officers, particularly the president, which wasn't based on a rotation system, created splits which affected selection of committees and other votes throughout the year.

WHAT IS the solution? I am not particularly in favor of amending the charter to take care of a problem which the council members themselves should be able to handle.

I would hope that the respective city councils would implement, on a voluntary basis, a plan which would rotate the mayor and mayor pro-tem offices every two years. The mayor's position would go to the first-place finisher in the most recent election and the mayor pro-tem would be the second-place finisher.

If the selection is made on an annual basis, as in the Hills, the mayor pro-tem would move up to mayor in the second year and the third-place finisher would become mayor pro-tem.

If the council members can't work out such a plan or any other reasonable proposal then a charter amendment would be in order.

ALDO VAGNOZZI
Farmington Hills

Vet disagrees with dog article

Editor:

I read with interest in Dr. Stear's column Nov. 6 on "protecting your dog from pregnancy" and think some clarification is in order.

There isn't, to my knowledge, any "hormone injection" approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use in dogs to "halt the heat period." Recently, however, there has been introduced an oral tablet which may be safely used to "postpone" the heat period for a month or so.

This product may be prescribed when a heat period could interfere with a pre-planned activity such as a dog show, hunting season or family vacation on which you plan to take the family pet.

I would suggest your readers consult their own veterinarian, and he or she can discuss the use of this product as it relates specifically to a patient the doctor is familiar with.

JOHN RICHARDSON, DVM
Farmington

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