

Opinion

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Vote yes

2 library proposals merit OK

IT'S A treasured community resource. Ninety-five percent of this area's residents who use public libraries regularly and exclusively use the Farmington Community Library.

The University of Michigan underscored the Farmington Community Library's community standing by making its vast library resources readily available, by link-up, to our area's business, professional and governmental sectors.

But ironically, the library's very popularity has propelled use far beyond design capacity. In the past 10 years, reference use has jumped 169 percent and circulation of materials has grown 30 percent. Shelf space is at a premium.

The annual circulation of 577,000 materials ranks second among the 59 member libraries in the Wayne-Oakland Library Federation.

During daily peak usage periods, the main library branch in Farmington Hills operates beyond capacity. Noise is up, waiting is longer and seating is limited.

A RELENTLESS demand for services has prompted library trustees to seek voter approval to not only expand the 38,000-square-foot Hills branch, but also give the board autonomous taxing authority.

We urge voters in the Nov. 7 city elections to approve both Farmington Community Library funding issues on the ballot.

The first proposal authorizes the library board to borrow up to \$14.5 million and sell bonds to build an 80,000-square-foot main branch in Farmington Hills and to renovate the downtown Farmington branch.

The second request empowers the library board to levy up to 1.5 operating mills a year for 20 years.

Building a new main branch on 18 acres at 12 Mile and Halsted is a wiser use of tax money than adding on to the 17-year-old branch on five

acres at 12 Mile and Kendallwood, in our view.

First, there's not enough land currently to expand both the branch and the parking area, even if two adjacent acres were bought.

Second, the branch's concrete construction would in effect make an addition a second building, creating higher operating costs than a new building.

Third, future expansion at the current site would be impossible. More than 170,000 books already vie for a patron's eye alongside videocassettes, compact discs, microfiche records, databases and a computerized collection and subject index.

A smaller third branch makes no sense because of unnecessary duplicated operating costs.

AS FOR the second request, we've long felt Farmington and Farmington Hills shouldn't be forced to weigh library needs against other budget line items.

If this request passes, the city councils have agreed to roll back their operating budgets in the amount they've earmarked for the library, .75 mill — \$1.5 million in Farmington Hills and \$169,500 in Farmington.

That, of course, doesn't mean the cities couldn't turn around and re-levy their share of the millage to meet other needs.

Nor does it mean the library board would only levy .75 mill, although it probably wouldn't levy more until the new branch opens in 1992. Then, the tax rate is expected to be 1.2 mills to cover higher operating costs.

If the bond issue passes, the library board will offer to deed the 12 Mile site to the two cities for another public use. If they decline, the site would be sold and the cash applied to retire the bonds. The site is appraised at about \$2.5 million.

"Yes" votes on both funding bids will assure local library needs are met for the next 25 years — based on a realistic projection of 103,000 residents in the Farmington area by 2015.

Parental consent

Proposed bills victimize youth

HERE WE go again. Some state legislators are taking a tragic situation and trying to make it even more tragic.

Fresh from a victory in outlawing Medicaid-paid abortions, pro-life advocates are now taking a second step in trying to cut off abortion rights to another group.

We oppose the bills now being debated in Lansing that would make it mandatory for those under 18 years of age to receive permission from parents before getting an abortion.

On the face of it, the legislative initiatives sound to many like the right thing to do. After all, encouraging a closer relationship between parent and child is a lofty goal. But a closer examination reveals that the state Senate and House bills, if adopted, would only serve to victimize the youth.

The only relief allowed in this proposal would be a waiver of parental consent by the courts.

This stipulation is typical of the entire proposal and the pro-life movement in general — uncompromising, lacking compassion and totally unrealistic.

Few youths would have the know-how to seek out legal counsel. Those needing it the most would be the least likely to avail themselves of the courts.

UNDER THE proposal, the waiver only could be granted if the judge determined that a minor was "sufficiently mature and well-enough informed." Again, it is unlikely that a youth need-

ing the courts help would be one who was well-grounded in abortion education — thanks mainly to pro-life advocates who have consistently opposed realistic sex education initiatives.

In this cynical age, legislators should remember that most children do turn to their parents in a time of need.

Those who don't often find their parents to be the problem. Some parents just don't realize it.

In other, more tragic, circumstances, children are pregnant because of incest. Expecting an understanding parent in this case is simply ridiculous.

Females, whether they are 15 or 50, should have the right to privacy and a confidential relationship with their physician. This bill would prohibit those under 18 from maintaining that kind of relationship.

Abused teenagers shouldn't be expected to turn to those who have battered them for advice and comfort.

And physicians shouldn't be turned into criminals because they are performing a procedure approved by the highest court in the land.

Certainly, abortion can take place under tragic circumstances. But adding to the misery by inflicting an unrealistic and unjust state law to the books would only help the situation deteriorate.

Women, either alone or with the people of their choice, must suffer through the decision.

We really don't need the Michigan Legislature determining in whom we need confide.

Dropout rate

Seizing licenses is no solution

THE STATE HOUSE of Representatives this week began debate on three controversial bills designed to strip high school dropouts of their drivers' licenses.

We addressed the issue last summer when the idea was proposed and once again we say: This type of legislation seems to us to be aimed at removing the symptom, not curing the problem.

Lawmakers should be working on measures that will make all youths — those who drop out and those who stay in school — capable of functioning in today's society.

They can do that by strengthening minimum standards in reading, math, and science so that by the time someone is 16, he or she will have the basic skills to compete.

The proposed bills, HB 4183, HB4184 and HB 4234, amend both the school and motor vehicle

codes and would apply to people age 16 but not yet 18 who drop out of school, are expelled or fail to meet attendance requirements. The bills would inform the Secretary of State's office, which would then suspend the driver's license.

It would be up to local school districts to adopt a policy of seeking license suspensions.

Legislation like this will not succeed at keeping some teenagers in school. It doesn't mean they will become better students, though.

For others, the threat of losing driving privileges won't be much of a deterrent.

The solution to the dropout problem goes beyond holding uncooperative students hostage in the secretary of state's office.

It's time to address the problem, not merely mask the symptoms.



Practice of equality — key to ethnic harmony

"What is the city but the people?" — Shakespeare

COLOR IT cosmopolitan.

The Farmington area — a 165-year-old community with Quaker beginnings — is more ethnically diverse than one might think. Farmington Public Schools' bilingual staff, for example, writes and speaks 18 languages.

Despite the vastness of our community's diversity, ethnic tensions do exist.

But in the wake of Love Force United's peace march for racial harmony this Sunday in downtown Farmington, it's worth underscoring that ethnic hostility is the exception, not the rule.

Racism and anti-Semitism are alive in some parts of this tapestry we call home. Chaldeans, Arabs and Asians have also been subjected to ethnic taunts.

The test of time has proven that ingrained feelings of ethnic supremacy can't be swept neatly under the rug, nor can every cobweb of prejudice be vacuumed from every home in the area.

BIGOTRY HAS lessened since the civil rights breakthroughs a generation ago. But minorities remain a



Bob Sklar

ready target when pangs of supremacy strike.

On the heels of ethnic unrest among teenagers along Orchard Lake Road two years ago, a grassroots cultural awareness committee formed to talk freely and bluntly.

Lack of support doomed the group. But its notion stands: "To raise the community's consciousness about the variety of cultures and traditions in our neighborhoods."

In trying to treat the symptoms of cultural conflict, Farmington and Farmington Hills are way ahead of other cities that waited until discrimination took root before responding.

Still, there's no doubt some local folks gag at the thought of neighbors calling themselves Americans without totally abandoning the traditions of their homelands — or at the thought of living next to a black person.

IT'D CHALLENGE these folks to

shed their blinders and take the initiative to get to know their minority neighbors.

By penetrating the superficial barrier between them, they might just find that their black or first-generation neighbor's sense of community really does fit into the melting pot we call the American neighborhood.

Clausing between outside groups may tarnish the peace march on Sunday. But I sincerely hope the unity walk's goal — "the right of every person to live in peace and harmony" — isn't obscured.

At best, the march will prick the community's conscience.

But it's not likely to magically change attitudes. To truly live in peace, we must commit ourselves to practicing equality.

Only then will we heal the social wounds inflicted by people driven by ignorance about the heritage of others whose race or ethnicity happens to be different.

Bob Sklar is editor of the Farmington Observer.

Farmington readers' forum

Letters must be signed, original copies and include the address and telephone number of the writer. Names will be withheld from publication only for sufficient reason. We reserve the right to edit them. Send letters to Readers' Forum, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River Ave., Farmington 48024.

Help poorest of the poor

will help the poorest of the poor.
Joan S. Sanders,
Farmington Hills

To the editor:

The World Bank and the IMF are holding their annual meeting in Washington. Conditions set for borrowing countries are among topics to be considered.

Western banks in the 1970s loaned money deposited with them by OPEC countries to developing country governments. In the early 1980s, the northern countries experienced a recession.

The borrowing countries found their debt repayments rising and their earnings falling. The World Bank and the IMF loaned new money to Third World governments on conditions they change their economic structure. The poor were hit the hardest as governments cut back food subsidies as well as money for health and education.

I am interested in having these proposals adopted.

First, any loan would be judged on specific social indicators, not on GNP alone. Next, policies should benefit, not just compensate, the poor. These small loans should be made available to the poorest 20 percent of the population. Lastly, assistance should only be given to governments that are working to alleviate poverty.

It is important that the World Bank and IMF consider policies that

Clerk notes C'ville view

To the editor:

I answered a request for information about Clarendonville taxes that, in short, identified school tax increases from 14-21 percent in all of Clarendonville's subdivisions for 1989 and stated that of the three school districts — Livonia, Farmington and Clarendonville — it costs \$300 to \$600 more to operate Clarendonville than the other two districts and that Clarendonville residents are not wealthy individuals and they may not be able to afford to keep paying higher school taxes than other districts require.

Clarendonville, in Livonia, is made up of just average working people.

If the above remarks are offensive to anyone, than I apologize.

I am neutral on the Clarendonville issue but it is my observation that the 14-21 percent tax increase for 1989, plus 12 percent last year, has put a burden on the "average" taxpayer in Clarendonville.

Elaine Tuttle, city treasurer
Livonia

Traffic light in wrong spot

To the editor:

The light at Grand River and Albion is an accident waiting to happen. I mean more than the fender-benders that have happened and not been reported.

The white line traffic engineers painted helps some. Most people come off the expressway, speeding to make the lights at Albion and Middlebelt.

No one goes 45 mph.

The people who live in the area should have been consulted on where to locate the much-needed light. Believe us, we need a light, but not on the corner of Albion and in a position that is hard to see from Albion. You cannot get in or out of these three dead-end streets.

The light needs to be after the freeway ends, west of Purdue. That way, traffic off the freeway will be stopped to let in Purdue, Colgate and Albion, plus traffic off old Grand River.

This is a very bad intersection.

Some time in rush morning or evening, its takes as long as 10 minutes to get south to Albion. No one waiting for the light or trying to make the light will let you out of the island. They barrel through this area.

Robert Miracle and
30 other residents,
Farmington Hills

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