

Opinion

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Taking on trash

Recycling, reducing: up to us

BURY, BURN, recycle. These are the concepts behind Oakland County's solid waste disposal plan designed to meet the trash crisis.

But the scene is in flux. Two communities targeted as possible sites for the proposed Oakland County landfill had property tax issues on the ballot this week to raise money for a war chest.

Also this week, the 14 communities known as the Southeast Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority had a proposal to replace trash-to-energy incineration with a trash-to-synthetic coal process. It is hoped to release less into the air and to cost substantially less.

Because there are environmental concerns — both in trash burning and landfill — we encourage less reliance on these methods. More emphasis must be put on recycling, reusing and reducing our trash.

In fact, the 14 communities recognize just that — having recently changed their collective name from the Southeast Oakland County Incinerator Authority.

Meanwhile, a southwest Oakland County consortium that includes Farmington and Farmington Hills is developing its own strategy for recycling, processing, composting and waste-to-energy facilities as well as new landfills.

THE CHRISIS is real. Landfill space is becoming increasingly costly as older sites become full. Opposition is rising against new landfills.

We must seek new options — and soon — if we are to avoid being buried under a mountain of trash. Already, our region lags behind other parts of the country.

The search includes a role for all of us — from producer to consumer, from lawmaker to CEO — at the federal, state and local levels.

Reduction means cutting off waste at the source, eliminating excessive product packaging and other unnecessary waste. But source reduction, while vital, has been too little explored.

'No knock' Search law would go too far

"No-knock" is no good. A bill that would allow police officers with search warrants to enter homes without announcing their presence and intent — "no knock" — has already passed the state Senate by a wide margin and is in Perry Bullard's House Judiciary Committee.

The committee should deeply ponder the ramifications of compromising a citizen's constitutional right to privacy; and then it should take note of the design flaws in the bill. Careful scrutiny will support the contention that no-knock should not be reported out of committee.

No-knock came about as a tool to use primarily against drug dealers. It's designed to give police holding search warrants the authority — which, in practice, they already have — to enter homes without knocking, identifying themselves, stating they have a search warrant or waiting for some kind of response from the person inside the home.

The purpose of this proposed law, Senate Bill 23, is twofold: let police recover evidence that might be destroyed if they announce themselves, and make sure police don't get killed once they do identify themselves.

Barging into a home, unannounced, is no guarantee of living through a drug raid. Quite the contrary — barging into anyone's home, without warning, is an invitation for the resident to protect him- or herself. Whether one is pro or con, remember: there is a constitutional right to bear arms, and millions take advantage of it.

Public Act 189 of 1966 and subsequent case decisions already have given officers with warrants the right to immediately enter a home, at their discretion. That fact alone should make



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Experts believe an effective source reduction program could cut waste by as much as 20 percent.

AS FOR recycling, there's plenty each of us can do — from taking recyclables to recycling centers, to storing yard waste in a compost pile.

Oakland County and some local governments already are recycling paper. Both Farmington and Farmington Hills operate drop-in recycling centers for everything from newspapers to glass to batteries. Many area communities now ask residents to put lawn clippings in biodegradable bags, separate from regular trash.

Businesses also need to make greater use of recycled and recyclable materials. And, if necessary, government needs to legislate that they do. Recycling won't succeed if markets for recycled goods don't develop.

McDonald's has just announced it will recycle its containers — testing it first in New England. Even the smallest business can make greater use of recycled and recyclable materials.

WE ALSO need to be smarter shoppers by seeking out and patronizing products stored in packaging that can be recycled and those that cannot.

And we must prepare to separate our trash. All signs point to curbside recycling coming in the early 1990s.

Beyond that, we need to change our way of thinking. We need to drop the mind-set that equates recycled goods with inferior goods.

More than a decade ago, Michigan residents banded together to pass a bottle bill to clean up our littered roadways. Now there is much more to at stake.

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consideration of this new no-knock bill a moot point.

There are many other reasons.

The bill says at the time a search warrant is requested, an officer also must ask a magistrate specifically for a no-knock clause on the warrant and cite reasons why it seems to be necessary. It could be argued that every circumstance warrants no-knock authority, and judicial generosity in empowering law enforcement officials with this opportunity could be abused.

Further, the magistrate will not be along on the raid, so the decision to implement the no-knock clause, if granted, falls to individuals who already have that authority — the officers on the scene. Remote-control justice will not work.

These are all technicalities, and trivial when seen in the same light as our right to privacy. Don't confuse the issues, though — the life of an officer is anything but trivial. But we won't save any more lives by giving them powers they already have.

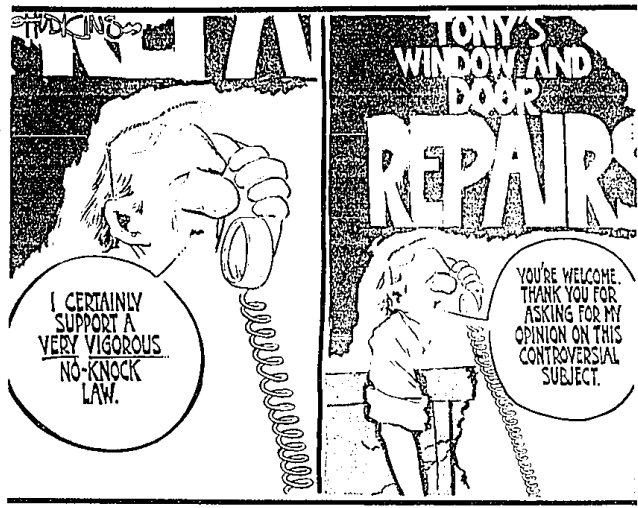
The concern that evidence will be destroyed — part two of the argument for this bill — is simply not a good enough reason to usurp our constitutional right of privacy. Miranda laws, advising a suspect of his or her rights, already have been weakened by the Supreme Court.

Further dilution, this time on the privacy front, means one conceivably could be sitting in a living room, have the police break down a door and, depending on the circumstances, maybe or maybe not advise that person of his rights. Our Constitution was intended to be amended — not bent out of shape.

It's important to look ahead, past the current drug war crisis, at the way these laws could be applied once the purpose for which they were created has ceased to exist. Many laws get put on the books; comparatively few are removed.

No one today should question an officer's right to kick in a drug dealer's door or return fire if threatened or fired upon. The solution is not to warp the Constitution. It's to get Lansing and Washington to provide more dollars for more resources to fight the drug war.

Let's worry about that, instead of trying to revise and subvert the laws by which the vast majority of individuals in this state and country live.



Be sure to clear signs; winners get a mandate

IN THE aftermath of Election Day:

• I trust the 20 city council candidates in Farmington and Farmington Hills will fulfill their civic duties and take down their political signs as quickly as possible.

City inspectors have better things to do than clean up after an election. Candidates, of all people, should acknowledge the importance of keeping signs out of the right of way and off city poles.

Political signs are no more an eyesore than real estate signs. But there's absolutely no reason, other than laziness, to keep them up after the polls close.

Flag signs are the more exception than the rule. Posting a gaudy sign or not repairing a damaged one says a lot about a candidacy — all bad.

Besides promoting candidates, the signs help identify who's actively involved in this representative democracy of ours.

At the very least, they — as companions to cartop placards, bumper stickers and campaign fliers — help publicize the election. If they bring out a few more voters, well, that's dandy.

Granted, political signs can clutter roadsides and create prob-



Bob Sklar

lems when excessively used or haz- ardously placed.

But this election year, the signs around Farmington and Farmington Hills seemed well done and not overbearing. Frankly, there were fewer than I expected.

Farmington Hills candidate Larry Lichtman, one of the top spenders, no doubt boasted the largest signs.

But Farmington councilwoman Shirley Richardson, a statewide leader in civic beautification, boasted the most novel approach — green ribbons tied to trees.

• The two state school finance proposals had a lot to do with it.

But the huge voter turnouts in both Farmington and Farmington Hills for a non-presidential election also stemmed partly from two city council races with near-record candidate fields.

With seven candidates vying for three seats in Farmington and 13

candidates seeking five seats in Farmington Hills, voters had plenty of campaign themes to choose from.

I was particularly impressed with the number of sincere, informed, legitimate contenders in each city.

Apathy took a backseat — make no mistake about that. Winners this year can truly view their elections as a community mandate.

• Farmington Community Library director Bev Papal gave it her best shot to win support Tuesday for a \$14.5-million bond issue for a new Farmington Hills branch and a renovated Farmington branch and for a 1.5-million library operating levy.

The tax levy was defeated roundly. The bond issue fell by less than \$25 votes.

Papal, an articulate ambassador for the treasures our public library holds, talked to nearly 1,000 voters over the past six weeks in a determined bid to successfully culminate four years of well-documented planning.

If it's any consolation, Bev, it's my hunch the tax levy defeat was more a vote against any new tax levy, in whatever form, than specifically against the library.

Bob Sklar is editor of the Farmington Observer.

Farmington readers' forum

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Another view of abortion

To the editor: I believe that it would be wise for state residents, the anti-abortion clan and local prosecutors to review the state of affairs that their dubious accomplishments have helped instigate over the last year.

Financially unstable, drug-using women have been denied, by Michigan voters, the funds and, therefore, the option, of aborting a pregnancy that now, in all likelihood, results in the premature birth of a chemically dependent child who suffers an untreatable pain. Not to worry, anti-abortionists claim — tell these women not to get pregnant.

One fact should stand undisputed — drug-using women living in poverty can hardly be expected to exercise sound judgment and use contraceptives effectively, as anti-abortionists would like us to believe, while these same women cannot even control the demerol impulse to destroy their bodies and minds with crack.

We are not dealing with clear-thinking women; nevertheless, that does not permit us to self-righteously deny this minority equal protection under the law.

Thus, due to the whims of the majority, we are faced with the crisis of "crack babies," unwanted children born trembling with the agony of addiction, deformity and massive re-

tardation, most of whom die a slow death.

The anti-abortionists, as well as voters who denied state funding for abortion, can find comfort in the fact that their "moral" crusade halted a few abortions. Now, these babies are forced to endure prolonged suffering before they die. Congratulations on your victory.

Ironically, the same groups we now see blocking the doors of abortion clinics (while clutching bibles and jars of embryos) are not to be found in inner-city delivery rooms, caring for the deformed products of their cause. Nor do we find the supporters of this law clamoring into adoption agencies, accepting the responsibility they claimed as their own by forcing poor women to give birth to children they simply do not want.

Now, some states, including Michigan, want to press charges against these women for delivering a controlled substance to a minor. Whereas crack babies have, until recently, been afforded the care of a hospital environment during their suffering, the threat of prosecution against the mother will now push these births out of hospitals and into the nearest trash dumpster, back alley, or toilet, all of which guarantee anonymity.

I find it absolutely inhumane that, after forcing these women to carry their pregnancies to term, we are now tempted to throw them in jail for doing just that.

R. Iverson, Farmington Hills

Proud parents extend thanks

To the editor: We thank you for your recent endorsement of our son for election to the Farmington Hills City Council.

The political opinion of the endorsement was secondary to your insightful recognition of Larry's character and capabilities.

His interest, integrity and demeanor are assets that will serve the city well, whatever his role in the future.

You were right to endorse him . . . not because he's the son of a former councilman.

But, inmostest as it may appear, we must point out that the qualities you extol were nurtured in a home where dedication and service to the community were part of the daily agenda.

Again, thank you for telling the electorate what we have always known.

We are proud and grateful parents.

Naomi and Fred Lichtman, West Bloomfield

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