

from our readers

That Kroger was needed

To the editor:
Concerning the closing of the two Kroger stores in Farmington Hills and how it affects the customers, I asked store manager Jim McGill why they are closing the stores.

His reply was, "Kroger wants to give their customers the best, a new image."

But if they wanted to give their company a new image, why don't they just remodel the store instead of closing the two stores down.

Kroger doesn't plan on selling the property or trying to get out of the lease of the stores because of the competition of other supermarkets.

But it really hurts the other commercial businesses in the area because the senior citizens or people who now have to walk in the cold weather for two or more miles to the closest supermarket.

I encourage people to get a petition going to make them reopen the Krogers, or to cancel their lease and put in a different supermarket or store.

William J. Monson,
former employee,
Kroger Supermarket, No. 619

A yes vote for millage

To the editor:
There have been recent full page "Taxpayer Alert" ads in the Farmington Observer giving the millage issue bad press. There have also been letters in your column to the same effect.

I have been a Farmington resident for 18 years and I teach at the new Hillside Elementary in the Farmington School district. I have two daughters who went through Farmington schools from K-12, and got a wonderful education and were fully prepared for college with good ACT and SAT scores.

Enough of this negative splash. Let's look at some real issues.

Property values are affected by the quality of the community's school system. Farmington has high quality education. It has become the standard that Farmington residents have come to expect.

People move to Farmington and maintain the value of area homes because of the quality of our school system.

They realize Farmington has enriched curriculum, low class size, competitive salaries, and that we provide a safe, healthy, and attractive environment for our children.

HILLSIDE is the newest school in Farmington. It offers its students a wonderful learning environment, exciting and individualized programming, and enthusiastic teachers who are pro-KIDS.

We want to maintain our quality programs. The district has already cut over \$1 million from the operating budget in an attempt to be fiscally responsible while maintaining a quality program.

We don't want to lose professional staff, support staff, services, and our wonderful programs such as inclusive education, enrichment classes, monthly themes and weekly curriculum assemblies, and developmentally appropriate education.

Children need elementary art, instrumental and vocal music, and physical education offerings. They shouldn't suffer because these programs may be eliminated or reduced if the millage isn't passed.

As a parent, a proud Farmington teacher, and a Farmington taxpayer, I urge "residents to not be snowed under by such" taxpayer alert ads that take up full pages. Vote "yes" on Feb. 5.

Dudie Harris,
Farmington Hills

Here's a no on the millage

To the editor:
Vote for better education, not more waste of tax dollars.

Voters should vote against the school tax hike Feb. 5, and then for a better quality school board and quality education for Farmington students June 10.

Extra money is not needed to continue existing programs. Michael Flanagan is misleading parents and the public with idle threats of cutting programs.

With a \$92 million budget and an enrollment of 10,630 students, \$8,650 is spent per student, one of the highest amounts in the state.

The only justification for the 3.7-mill increase is to improve the quality of education and wisely spend the money available. This has not been done.

We have all been paying for the school board buyout of the previous school superintendent, Graham Lewis. Our high school seniors have achieved mediocre SAT and ACT college entrance exam scores.

I resent the school board spending tax money to send public school propaganda updates just before every millage and school board election. I am disappointed in the Farmington Observer for not yet printing verbatim the millage proposal and more facts about the current school budget.

Too much has been wasted on what only two people, Flanagan and Richard Headlee, have said. The voters need more information.

I want the best education possible for Farmington students. Giving more money is not the answer. Please vote no Feb. 5.

Suzanne Upmeyer,
Farmington Hills

Why can't DNR respond in time?

To the editor:

Response to "Strange gas cloud" is just a smelly...

The Air Quality Division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources is "supposed" to respond to emergency reports of gas clouds such as reported on Friday. That department has the equipment to monitor and specifically detect the presence and content of toxins in the air.

However, when the presence of the gas cloud was reported to the emergency response number of the air quality division, the division refused to respond because they cannot mobilize their manpower in time to get to the area before the cloud dissipates!

I believe the people in the area should know:

- We are paying for services which cannot be provided.
- Fire departments and police departments cannot measure the presence or contents of a non-confined gaseous cloud.

In my opinion, the public needs to write the DNR and their legislators asking that the response ability of the Air Quality division be improved.

L. Jane Evans,
Troy



Results.

Plant your advertising message in the Observer & Eccentric classified columns and reap the rewards.

Millage question is simple

To the editor:

I have to smile at the people who want a debate over the February millage. There is nothing to debate.

If you feel that the students of Farmington are receiving a quality education and you would like it to continue, you will vote yes.

If you feel that you would like the students to receive an education with less quality and services, you will vote no.

The time has come for us to show our true values. Do we value education or money? It seems as simple as that.

Bruce Brown,
Farmington

Millage try upsets voter

To the editor:

A school system out of control. Is this what the people have allowed by constantly voting in millage?

We who vote have an obligation, as do our representatives who are in authority, to not abuse the respected public -- the voters, and also the ones that don't vote for whatever reason.

I remember when a millage was not to be carried over the term of the person in office who was asking for a millage. Now we the public are asked to vote for a 20-year upping our taxes by passing this millage. ridiculous.

The monies collected are over the millage set by prudent people in office. If the ones who run the budget of our board of education can't work within those lines and have over \$14.5 million in reserve, they should not be in control.

George Streletzak,
Farmington

quest column

Headlee ads are unfair to schools

By Linda Enberg
special writer

The advertisement of Richard Headlee directed against the Farmington Public School System presented a distorted view of the school district's financial health.

By not presenting the whole story, he is not being fair to the voters in this district.

The chart in his ad summarized the financial situation at the end of the fiscal year, June 1990. It reports a snapshot in time.

To say that the district had \$14.9 million in "surplus funds" is simply misleading. It is like viewing my checking account as more than adequate before the bills have been paid.

After years of minimal maintenance, the district committed to extensive repairs and renovations in many of its buildings last summer. The funds to pay for those renovations as well as funds to pay for textbooks, supplies, etc. were waiting in the fund equity account until payment was due.

Of the \$14.9 million in so called "surplus funds," \$8.4 million was committed to the summer construction projects, supplies, and textbooks mentioned above.

The remaining \$6.5 million was split between a general emergency fund of about \$2 million, and \$4.5 million saved back in response to rumors of a reduction in state funding.

In fact, state funding was reduced by \$5.8 million and the emergency fund was necessary for budgeted obligations.

I consider the district to be fiscally responsible by having an emergency fund and by anticipating the state cutbacks.

The figure of \$82 million was also an inflated report of district expenditures. Of that figure, \$19.4 million represents services such as Boys Republic, the Special Education Center, and adult education which are either self-supporting or are reimbursed by the sponsoring agencies.

Consequently, annual expenditures for the Farmington Public School students are approximately \$73 million.

WHILE THE increase in expenditures has outpaced the rate of inflation, reasons for the increases exist:

- Employee benefits -- These costs for all employees have skyrocketed over the past five years. This was a problem nationwide, not just for Farmington schools. In one of those years insurance costs increased 30 percent.

- Capital expenditures -- When the bond issue was defeated in September 1988, the district began to use operating money for much needed building repairs and renovations.

- Two additional elementary schools -- Highmeadow and Hillside were opened to relieve overcrowding in the elementary schools. The operating costs required to run these two elementary schools increased the budget.

- Technology -- The Technology Advisory Committee has begun to implement a plan to bring appropriate hardware and software to the students and teachers of the district. Upgrading technology is, in my view, necessary to compete with the standards set nationally and internationally for technological prowess.

Finally, the figures for student enrollment were misleading. While the overall student count in the district has increased only 5 percent reflecting a temporary decrease in the numbers of high school students, enrollment in the elementary schools has increased dramatically over the past five years. These are the students whom the district must educate during the next decade.

I disagree with the conclusions as stated in the ad and support the passage of the millage for our Farmington schools. Be Vigilant. Be Informed. Be Fair.

Linda Enberg, who has two children in the Farmington Schools, is a member of Friends of Farmington Schools, which supports the request for additional millage. Voters will decide the issue in a Feb. 5 election.

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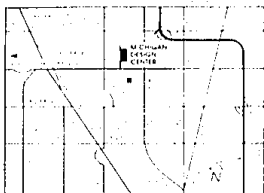
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