



Farmington Observer

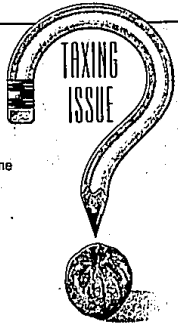
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FIFTY CENTS

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Proposal A

How did Farmington vote?
For election results call the Observer hotline 553-2011 starting 9 a.m. Wednesday, March 16.
Rotary dial may be used



Class action: Teens to work polls



Ten North Farmington students will rush to the rescue as fill-in poll workers in Tuesday's ballot proposal election. They'll replace vacationing regulars. A large turnout could be possible in the Farmington area.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Some North Farmington students will have their first-time kiss with the democratic process during Tuesday's ballot election.

They'll be working in some Farmington Hills precincts as voters decide, among other things, whether

they want a higher sales tax or income tax to pay for public education. Polls are open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

City clerks for both Farmington and Farmington Hills are bracing for large turnouts.

The odd timing of the election has caused some problems. For one, many election workers are vacationing this

time of year.

In Farmington Hills, City Clerk Kathy Dornan is taping the North Farmington students to fill in the ranks. Ten seniors from William Brinker's American government class are going to serve as precinct workers.

"I think it will be a positive experience in that they get to see how the operation works," Brinker said. "Of course, this is a simple election but it's a good learning experience."

"It's going to be a long day for them. They were a little taken aback when I told them they would have to be there between 6:10 and 6:30 in the

morning and be there until after 8 (p.m.).
Students will be paid for those hours worked outside of the normal school day. Brinker cleared it with North Farmington's administration, which will grant the seniors an excused absence.

To be an election worker, a person must be 18 and a registered voter. Brinker is a certified registrar and has students register in his class.

Dornan is grateful for the help. The number of absentee ballots indicate

See STUDENTS, 3A

IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Guilty — for now: A man who pleaded guilty to running an auto subleasing scam in Farmington Hills has been given an opportunity to withdraw that plea and go to trial. /2A

Going, going, gone: A going-out-of-business sale is in progress at Ray Interiors. When it's over, a downtown Farmington business landmark will be gone. /3A

Down, down, down: Farmington Public Safety officials are proud to show their latest crime statistics, which show a drop in crime. /4A

OPINION

On the muscle: A local Realtor, "Jerry" McKeon takes on Michigan Citizens for Fair Taxes for inaccurate statements against the real estate industry in his guest column. /10A

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Polls and politics: Mary Matalin, former campaign manager to George Bush and new weeknight talk show host, gives Hudson's shoppers an insider's view of politics at Oakland Mall. /8A

SPORTS

Falcons still flying?: Was Farmington High able to overcome West Bloomfield in the Class A district basketball tournament Friday? /1C

Over the net: Farmington Hills Mercy tried to extend its season Saturday in regional competition at Berkley. /1C

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'Annie' going great guns at Mercy



Making ready: Dana Piccoli (Minnie) and Sara Horgan (Nellie) clean imaginary guns during a recent rehearsal for "Annie Get Your Gun" at Mercy High School. The musical will be staged March 18-20 at the Farmington Hills school. For more photos and a story, please see pages 6A, 11A.

Area Dems don't find proposal as they like it

BY BILL COULTANT
STAFF WRITER

To "A" or not to "A." That is the ballot question.

But local Democrats were lamenting the fact that whether Proposal A passes or fails, they should take another line of Shakespeare to heart and "beware of the idea of March."

Tuesday, March 15 (the idea), is the date for the election on Proposal A.

The Farmington Area Democratic Club discussed the issue Thursday night at the Botsford Inn in what had been planned as a pro and can debate. When the Dems could not find a proponent, Vicki Barnett agreed to play

devil's advocate and argue for the proposal.

"It was tough," she said of her effort. In fact, most of the 28 Democrats attending favor the fallback proposal that would increase the state's flat-rate income tax to 6 percent.

Hills city councilman Aldo Vagnozzi said one of the more troubling aspects of the campaign by Gov. John Engler in support of the proposal was that he was making deals with real estate, business and farm interests that have changed it.

"It's pretty hard to speak in opposition to A because it's changing every day, every hour," Vagnozzi said.

Not only did that change the proposal, but it was likely to worsen a

tax shortfall predicted by opponents of the measure, he said. That shortfall would likely be made up by cuts to social programs and the public safety budgets in many cities, including Farmington Hills, Vagnozzi said.

A feature of the backup plan that Vagnozzi said would help "the working poor, middle class and seniors" is the increase of the exemption for individuals from \$2,100 to \$3,000.

Hills Mayor Larry Lichtman, in a phone interview, said he supports Proposal A and doesn't think it is the partisan issue that many politicians and the media have made it out to be.

"I think there are plenty of people who can look at the issue objectively," he said. "I don't think Engler's

re-election depends on "A" passing." Lichtman, a Republican, said he believes most voters will see opposition to the proposal and support for the statutory plan as "very transparent."

The Michigan Education Association, which opposes "A," represents teachers whose retirement would not be subject to the 6 percent income tax, he said.

The tobacco companies are also against the proposal because it would raise cigarette taxes by 50 cents a pack instead of the 15-cent increase in the backup plan.

See DEMOCRATS, 3A

Barnaby leads Observer group

Steve Barnaby has been named publisher for the Observer Newspapers by acting general manager Dick Brady.

Barnaby, a Plymouth Township resident, was formerly managing editor of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Before that he worked as community editor of the Farmington, Westland and Garden City Observers.

"As a member of the Observer & Eccentric Management group, I had the opportunity to work with Steve on a regular basis," Brady said. "We work well together."

Barnaby is a graduate of Wayne State University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in Journalism.

"I'm looking forward to working with the Observer team in serving the residents of some of the finest communities in Michigan."

Steve Barnaby

He serves on the board of directors of Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills. "I'm looking forward to working with the Observer team in serving the residents of some of the finest communities in Michigan," said Barnaby. "In future months and years, our readers and advertisers will experience even better service than they have in the past from all of our departments."



Publisher: Steve Barnaby has been named publisher of the Observer Newspapers.