

Aw, only 3?

Few want to come on board

Last year, when there were nine candidates running for two Farmington Board of Education seats, we said, "Well, gag us with a punch too! Shall we break out the baseball bats and gloves?"

This year, though, three-handed bridge would be the more appropriate activity.

What a difference a year — and just who's up for re-election — makes in local school politics. In 1993, there was an open seat and a weak incumbent, and nine came running. This year, two incumbents with solid power bases are up, and they'll be tough to beat. Just one challenger wants to try.

R. Jack Inch and Cathy Webb are incumbents with exceptional survival skills. If he wins, Inch will become a 20-year man on the board. Webb is finishing off her first term. Both are about as popular as it's possible for a school trustee to be in these days of Proposal A and tight-fisted voters and failed millages.

The challenger is Kenneth Stein, a 25-year-old product of the Farmington Schools, back for another try after landing way down the casualty list in last year's race.

There could have been — let's make that should have been — another challenger, a gent named Doug Swiatkowski, who had a back-to-basics bone to pick with the school establishment.

We'll admit to being a little disappointed when Swiatkowski pulled out at the last moment.

Feelings about the so-called "basics" movement (Just teach the readin', writin' and 'rithmetic, please, and let's have report cards that the parents can understand!) run deeper in this community than some school officials might suspect.

The movement badly needs a hearing. That's

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how these issues get settled, after all, by talking about them in an open and honest manner. With Swiatkowski in the race, perhaps that hearing would have been held.

Oh well, at least a handful of Farmington Hills residents won't be shut out of a hot school race. They're the folks who live in the far northwest corner of the city.

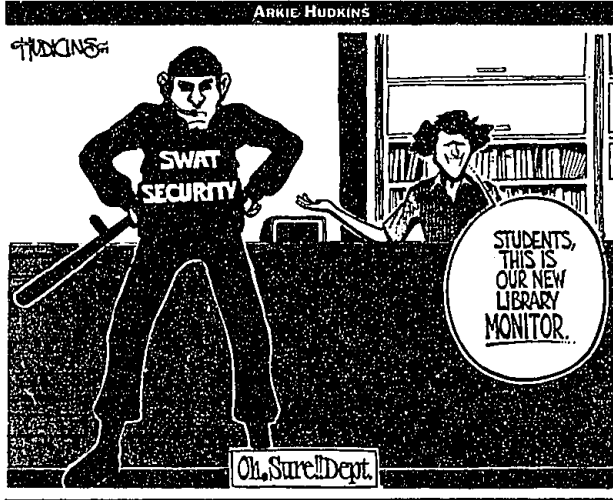
Their square mile is part of the Walled Lake District, where incumbent Thomas McConnell faces challenges from Steven Kennely, Katherine Phillips, Dave Dewar, Joe Miller and Taffie Wiggins.

At issue: The board's decision to redraw school boundary lines, sending some students to schools far from where they live.

In the Clarenceville District, which encroaches slightly into southeastern Farmington Hills, incumbents Linda Brandemuhl and Lisa Burr seek re-election against challenger Garry Garrison.

A smaller field does have some advantages. For one, with only three candidates, maybe the voters can be more focused. They'll hear more in a less-crowded field — let's hope it's something worth hearing.

Now it's officially school board season. So let the races begin.



LETTERS

Kiss that frog!

I was amused by John Richardson's opinion of Tom Baer and the Farmington Observer's editorial in the April 14 edition.

Richardson, as a member of Farmington's pseudo aristocracy, is astounded that the governed may have a differing view of what's beautiful and right for the city of Farmington.

Even when there are a majority of residents against a project, their concerns are ignored until the paper expresses them. It is a paper's duty to voice the concerns of all the people, not just a few.

If we want to talk about guts, it takes guts to go against the establishment, and it takes guts to admit you are wrong.

And, what does Richardson mean when he says, "Do you suppose that if the editor of the Farmington Observer would kiss the frog (on the Masonic Temple Sign) on the butt, it would turn into a handsome prince or a beautiful princess (which ever he might prefer)?"

Is he questioning Tom's or the frog's sexual preference?

I, for one, will kiss the butt of the frog on the sign when the disgusting sign is removed.

John Kenney, Farmington

Percussion World, Pizza Hut (Grand River), Pizza Hut (10 & Orchard Lake), Pizza Hut Carry Out (Orchard Lake), Ram's Horn (Grand River), Ram's Horn (Orchard Lake), Ram's Horn (Orchard Lake), S-G Imported Inc., Sam's Club (Haggerty), Smith Lumber, Strawberry Hill and Target.

Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, The Jacksons, Hungry Howies, Tri-Country Orthopedic Group, P.C., Wendy's (Grand River), Wendy's (10 & Middlebelt), 7 Eleven (10 & Middlebelt) and Zip Printing (Southfield).

Christine Cahill, Farmington Hills

Think again, Joe

Immediately following President Clinton's April 8 Town Meeting program on local TV, three Michigan Congressmen were interviewed on the proposed health care program. One of these was our own Joe Knollenberg.

Knollenberg said there was no health care crisis and only minor improvements were needed. It's easy for the Congressman to take that position, considering his free, very comprehensive health benefits which are paid for by us taxpayers.

Let's also remember that when uncovered families crowd our emergency rooms, those very expensive medical bills are paid by . . . us taxpayers again.

The millions of Americans without secure coverage quickly recognize that there is indeed a health-care crisis, one that can only be resolved by universal coverage for all Americans whether they are unemployed, part-time workers or full-time employees.

The health crisis is very real to the unemployed and to part-time workers. It is also real to anyone afraid of losing his job or to any employee with an illness in the family that is not covered by the current plan.

Maybe we need a law cancelling health coverage for our Congressmen. Perhaps that would help representatives like Knollenberg understand that it's easier not to recognize a crisis when it doesn't affect you personally.

Albert Swardlow, Farmington Hills

Thanks, merchants

Many area merchants generously supported the Harrison High School Band & Orchestra Boosters in their attempt to raise funds for their music students.

The following businesses either donated food for the recent spaghetti dinner, or paid for an advertisement at the dinner. The Harrison Boosters wish to thank:

Arby's (12 & Orchard Lake), Art Knitting Mills, A & W Restaurant (Nine Mile and Grand River), Big Boy (10 & Orchard Lake), Best Foods, Buddy's Pizza (Northwestern), Burger King (downtown), Burger King (Orchard Lake), Cahill's Discount Pop (Livonia), Cattleman's, Conrad's and Contemporary Awards.

Dance World (Livonia), Dimitri's of Farmington, D & M Catering, Domino's Pizza (Grand River), Family Buggy Restaurant, Farmer Jack/A&P, Farmington Bakery, Fox Formal Wear, Ginopolis Restaurant, Gordon Foods, Happiness Is Florist, Heeneey-Sundquist Funeral Home, Hong Kong Restaurant (Grand River), Howard Michaels Company and IGA (10 & Orchard Lake).

Iverson Bakery, Korner Barbers, Kroger (11 & Middlebelt), Kroger (12 & Halsted), Plute World, Marco's (downtown), Marshall's Music, McDonald's (10 & Orchard), McDonald's (12 & Halsted), Melior (Eight & Haggerty), Mitt's Chinese Food, Mitchell's (12 & Middlebelt) and Papa Romano's (12 Mile).

Opinions are to be shared: We welcome your ideas, as do your neighbors. That's why we offer this space on a weekly basis for opinions in your own words. We will help by editing for clarity. To assure authenticity, we ask that you sign your letter and provide a contact telephone number. Letters should be mailed to: Editor, The Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336.

Unity is key to moth's demise

So far — with just a little prodding — it's together we stand against that flying arch enemy — the gypsy moth.

Gypsy moths are a pestilential plague that has oak-rich areas of Oakland and Wayne County shaking since the potential impact is leafless trees that could die if the insect population remains unchecked.

Affected communities — including Rochester Hills, Bloomfield Township, West Bloomfield, Farmington Hills, and, to a lesser extent, Plymouth and Canton Township — are looking to the history of the forested areas of New York and Pennsylvania to see the impact of the gypsy moth caterpillars.

The hungry bugs eat leaves, preferring the oak variety but settling for anything including pine needles if their gourmet requests are unfulfilled.

The voraciousness of the caterpillar's appetite and the mess associated with the moth at that stage have put communities on alert across the two counties. And much to the communities' credit, they're not battling the problem one by one. They're banding together to plan a strategy to combat the problem and have spent months working toward a resolution.

Wayne County communities haven't felt the impact that Oakland County communities have but a population unchecked will move into Wayne County in its traditional northwest to southeast migration pattern.

It's good to see the spirit of cooperation on a problem that affects multiple communities. It's good to see communities talking to each other, rather than trying to solve problems by themselves within their borders.

Oakland County is using a staff person to coordinate the gypsy moth program, especially the spraying of Bt (bacillus thuringiensis), a bacterial agent that will kill very young caterpillars just hatched from egg masses scattered throughout the affected communities.

It is effective on caterpillars that are actively feeding during the spraying period. Helicopters will be spraying the affected acreage shortly after sunrise, since early morning is a primary feeding time for the insects.

Depending on temperatures and wind conditions, spraying is expected to take place the second week of May.

The spraying decision is one that is being followed by all the affected communities, though several including West Bloomfield, Rochester and Bloomfield Township have hired private contractors rather than utilize the county spraying contract. It's a minor point since their departure didn't hurt the Oakland County consortium in any way, from a financial standpoint. And after the spraying, the consortium again will get together to discuss results.

With the continued cooperation of adjoining communities, the gypsy moth problem can be controlled.



COMMUNITY VOICE

<p>QUESTION: How long will the Red Wings last in the Stanley Cup playoffs?</p>	<p>I have faith in them. I hope they go all the way. Jeanne Yates Farmington</p>	<p>I think they can win it if their defense and goaltending come through. Mike Peed Farmington</p>	<p>I don't follow hockey anymore. I used to 50 years ago, but now I get upset about the fighting. All they do is fight. Mary Vertanen Farmington</p>
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