

# State Senate

## Honigman deserves re-election

For a man who said he doesn't want his health to become a campaign issue, State Sen. David Honigman sure spent a lot of time talking about it during a recent interview with this newspaper.

The West Bloomfield Republican told us that he is still recovering from life-saving surgery, which involved the removal of most of his small intestine. He missed time - and a lot of votes - in Lansing because of the illness.

He's on the mend, however, and is running for a second term in the Michigan State Senate. We've long admired Honigman as a fighter for tax reform, and we support his bid for re-election.

Honigman will best serve the interests of the residents of the newly drawn 15th Senate District, which includes Farmington, Farmington Hills, West Bloomfield and points west. The area is overwhelmingly Republican.

During his first term Honigman has been a good listener, and he's gone beyond the call of duty to respond to community needs.

Example: During a very local West Bloomfield parks spat, the senator offered his services as kind of a mediator, as well as his house for a meeting place, for the two factions. He wasn't taking a stand for or against. He just wanted to help.

Now that his new district includes

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Farmington and Farmington Hills, we hope the senator will be as responsive to concerns in this community.

He hasn't shirked his responsibilities in Lansing. Despite his illness, he was on hand to deliver a crucial vote on Proposal A that helped bring about needed reform in the way public education is financed.

One problem with Honigman, though: He can be politically expedient and he can come across as wishy-washy on certain issues. He seemed very pro-choice on abortion during his first campaign.

When pinned down, he said something about "not wanting to be labeled." Come, now Senator, what is your position on the issue?

Anyway, we're happy his health is improving, and we're happy he's running. We're also pleased that he's getting a race from Democrat Vicki Barnett, who's running hard for the seat.

Every incumbent needs a race, even a Republican in friendly territory who happens to be recovering from life-saving surgery.

# Parks proposal merits support

Baseball, motherhood, apple pie, Proposal P. "P" stands for parks - specifically, state parks. They are a source of amusement, for which the state charges fees. They are a natural resource and deserve to be supported from the state general fund. They are a tourist attraction and mean business and jobs to our northern counties.

Under two governors from two parties, general-fund support has shriveled from 80 percent to 20 percent of the state parks' \$31 million budget. Prison-building, welfare and schools have soaked up the pool of money, for better or worse.

The Michigan United Conservation Clubs in 1993 floated an idea for a one-cent increase in the sales tax to be dedicated to parks. That idea died when voters approved a sales tax increase for schools.

So a lot of creative minds - from both parties, private associations and recreationalists - produced Proposal P. Both chambers of the Legislature placed it on the ballot with overwhelming votes.

The beauty of it: No new taxes are involved. The state already gets revenues for the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund - rentals and royalties from oil and natural gas found on state lands. Basically, they come from the Pigeon River Country, where the elk herd hangs out.

Michigan was smarter about its non-renewable resources than other states we could mention. One state went on a prison-building binge with its oil, gas and uranium taxes. Another built palatial county courthouses with its coal revenue. Michigan uses its revenue as its natural resource.

Put simply, Proposal P deals with using that revenue to build up an endowment fund to support state parks. If passed, it will free the Department of Natural Resources from

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the lobbying job of fighting the annual legislative appropriations donnybrook.

A constitutional amendment, Proposal P would (1) establish a state parks endowment fund to receive \$10 million a year from energy sources and mining on state lands; (2) require that the endowment be used to operate, maintain and improve state parks; (3) halt the \$20 million diversion of natural resources money into the Michigan Strategic Fund, a commerce-based program; and (4) alter the allocation of funds from the Natural Resources Trust Fund to the State Parks Endowment Fund.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of our state parks system. The parks, however, have fallen on hard times. Park staffing fell from 700 in 1975 to about 600 currently. Last year the DNR officially shut down 23 state forest (rustic) campgrounds which had been neglected to death and reclaimed by weeds.

Daily vehicle permits have gone from \$2 in 1980 to \$4 this year. Annual permits have gone from \$7 to \$18 in the same period. Camping fees have gone from \$2 to \$6 to as much as \$14 a night. The fees are becoming absurd. State parks are a natural resource, not a business like Pine Knob.

Proposal P deserves an overwhelming "yes" vote Nov. 8.



### LETTERS

#### How about Cuba?

The other day I read in your paper that Mike Breshgold, Democratic candidate for Michigan's 11th Congressional District, favors a global minimum wage.

The last time I read a statement like this, I was in my college political science class studying the principles of socialism. Now, last time I checked, we are a representative democracy - not a Communist or socialist state.

If Mike Breshgold wants to run on these types of principles, maybe we should send him over to Russia and try and get him a seat in the Russian parliament.

But no, I guess that won't work, either - even Russia now knows that those ideas are stale and out of date. Who knows, maybe Cuba will take him.

Richard DeVries, Farmington Hills

#### Joe's a leader

As I understand in your article "Breshgold pushes middle class relief" that our district's Democratic nominee plans on making himself a fixture in Washington, D.C. if he wins election this fall?

He says, according to your article, that "he would not put his career on hold and return to it after serving in Congress. . . ." The last thing we need in our nation's Capitol is a career politician.

Our congressman, Joe Knollenberg, has already publicly said that he does not plan on building a second career as a member of Congress. In fact, one of his first acts as a member of Congress was to sign on to legislation limiting the number of terms that members of Congress can serve.

This is leadership. Joe Knollenberg knows that representation by a citizen legislator is best, and is willing to fight for it. It's just a shame his Democratic counterpart hasn't caught on to this basic American concept.

Mary Zick, Farmington Hills

#### Recall is needed

My decision to support Voters' Voice and the recall of City Council members Bates, Grant, Lichtman, Sever, Smith and Oliverio has not been made lightly. It is a decision that has kept me up nights

and very likely will keep me up for a few more.

Witnessing the actions and statements of the council over the past several months, which have ranged from arrogance through incompetence and downright foolishness, has convinced me that recall is richly deserved and necessary.

The people of this community must have better leadership, and they must have it now. Our community is at a crisis point, and rubber stamping is not enough.

The next few years will determine whether the Orchard Lake syndrome will be allowed to spread, until we become an overbuilt, traffic-clogged suburb, slowly declining into blight or a vibrant and pleasant place in which to live.

The answer is to regulate development through vigorously defended zoning and to creatively direct it as other communities are doing so that it adds positively to the quality of life here.

Make no mistake, the Jonas and the Kmarts will return. They will be bolstered, as always, by the finest attorneys that money can buy.

Our city must be ready with leaders of intelligence, courage, vision and absolute integrity who can successfully balance the interests of developers with those of our residents and taxpayers.

Our council has shown that it is either unable to or unwilling to meet the challenge.

I urge all Farmington Hills residents to continue to inform themselves on this issue. Look for Voters' Voice at the polls in November. We'll have petitions waiting for your signature.

Betty Laurie, Farmington Hills

#### The real culprit

The 12 Mile-Middlebelt recall fiasco is misdirected. The real culprit is the lone dissenter. He knew that the other council members were going to approve the development.

The city could be liable for monetary damages if Joanna was denied use of the property in accordance with the zoning ordinance.

Secure in that knowledge, he voted the way the single-issue fanatics wanted. Bingo! That's 300-400 votes in his pocket.

If the rest of the council played that game the taxpayers of Farmington Hills could have been on the hook for big bucks.

Six people voted the right way for their community. One cowardly pol sold out for a few hundred votes. Aldo Vagnozzi should be the recall target.

Frederick Lichtman, West Bloomfield

### COMMUNITY VOICE

#### QUESTION:

What's your favorite spot for fall color?



"Up north . . . anywhere up north." **Dorey Townsend Livonia**



"Kensington, I guess. Great scenery." **Robert Keely Farmington**



"Up north . . . Gaylord. We have a cabin there." **Kelly Allen Wixom**



"Anywhere in Michigan, it's all beautiful." **Bobby Allen Wixom**

We asked this question at the Crossroads ABW restaurant.

## The Farmington Observer

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