

Farmington Observer OPINION

33411 GRAND RIVER, FARMINGTON, MI 48335

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The Fax

Senator served area well

In a time when voters are telling incumbents to hit the road, Jack, one by the same name is bowing out gracefully.

State Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, is calling it quits after 33 years. Reapportionment left the 15th Senate District in the rock-ribbed Republican domain of Farmington, Farmington Hills and West Bloomfield.

Faxon didn't fancy his chances - especially with a Republican tidal wave that has left Dems feeling they've taken a foot bath in a pond of piranhas.

Faxon has also stated he's tired of the divisiveness of Lansing partisan politics. We can't blame him.

Regardless of his political affiliation, Faxon enjoyed the respect accorded a long-serving public servant in the Farmington area. A lot of it was earned, we believe.

Faxon's knowledge of the state Constitution was unquestioned, having served as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention. His stand on issues was as fortified.

He pushed for anti-smoking legislation and bans on cigarette vending machines, authorizing the Michigan Clean Indoor Air Act.

He championed the arts with relentless vigor. He was a driving force behind the creation of the Michigan Council for the Arts and supported the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Detroit Institute of Arts.

His biggest tussles were on behalf of education. He stood against state-aid recapture, which lopped \$7 million in revenue from Farmington Public Schools alone.

We were particularly impressed by the way

Regardless of his political affiliation, Sen. Jack Faxon enjoyed the respect accorded a long-serving public servant in the Farmington area.

Faxon refused to become part of the madness last year, which led to the abolition of the then property tax method for funding public education. His vote was only one of four against Senate Bill 1.

Often, during those uncertain times, Faxon thought nothing of dropping by a Farmington Board of Education meeting unannounced. He'd grab the remote microphone and proceed conducting his own informational meeting from a chair in the audience.

Previous votes - or his staunch support for education - didn't approach the notoriety his performance in "The Nutcracker" last year did.

He missed three key votes during a marathon Christmas Eve session where Proposal A was hammered out.

Many saw the move typical of the arrogance pervading among elected officials. Faxon was unapologetic, though.

His absence was, in effect, a no vote. He didn't want to be part of a political spectacle, choosing a holiday one instead.

We would have preferred he had just said no in Lansing rather than doing it waltzing across the Fox Theatre stage. But that was Jack.

Such flamboyance and conviction will be missed.

County must plan for future

Ninety-nine percent of American mayors and county chiefs would love to have Oakland County's "problems" - an almost trivial unemployment rate, the lion's share of the entire state's business growth, great natural beauty and livability.

Yet if Oakland's quality of life is to remain superior, its leaders must diligently mind the store and maintain their problem-solving, non-ideological attitude toward the world of change.

Here are the spots that in our view merit the most attention:

PUBLIC TRANSIT - Many jobs, particularly in restaurants and retail, are going begging because those who want to claw their way up the ladder can't get to them. A regional bus system - not just one for Detroit and another for the suburbs - is more in order today than 30 years ago.

Michael Duggan, who runs the suburban system called SMART, says \$60 million will be needed to meld the systems and extend them to suburban job centers. Oakland Executive L. Brooks Patterson scoffs and says \$4.5 million is more likely to be coming.

The best number is probably in the middle.

CRIME CONTROL - To most people, it's the number-one issue, and they're willing to pay for it. There are indications Oakland needs another jail. Furthermore, the abuse of lakes by speedboats and jet skiers tells us there's a need for more marine patrolling, and as time goes on, we'll see a greater need for arson investigation.

JOB TRAINING - Our work force must be ready to think in a world economy. There's no room for the old drill-and-memorize routines.

The specific issue before Oakland voters in 1995 is upgrading the labs and teaching tools of Oakland Community College, our two-year, open-door, five-campus academy. OCC's board is belatedly seeking a one-mill tax hike. Patterson is endorsing it. We'll have more to say on this topic in the weeks before the March 16 election.

COURTS - Lansing is a beehive of activity over court funding. There's also talk of reorganization - juggling the lines of responsibility between circuit, probate and district courts and maybe instituting a "family" court.

The Oakland circuit bench wants more judges. Many district courts like the Farmington and Novi areas also want more judges. Some communities are jealous that county government funds the 52nd District Court and not their local district courts. We oppose adding more judges until Oakland officials rethink the entire court system and help the Legislature design a better, and perhaps, less expensive one.

URBAN SPRAWL - Michigan's population is merely inching upward after two decades of stagnation. You'd never know it from the way bulldozers are devouring Oakland's meadows and fields for bigger houses and more malls.

Oakland, more than any of the other 82 counties, must be conservative about protecting its older cities, their downtowns and their housing stocks. It's not a matter of "another give-away to Detroit," as some county leaders blurt. It's a matter of saving our own tax dollars.

For thousands of years, communities have been born, grown, waned and died. But the waning and dying phases can be delayed for many centuries if leaders make sound decisions during the growth stage - like the one Oakland is in today.

ARKIE HUDKINS



Stamp of Approval

LETTERS

All is good

Life is like a bowl of cherries. Now and then there are pits in the cherries. Life does have its bitter pills now and then. But there are times when life has its good times too.

If one picked up the Farmington Observer and just read it, and did nothing else, one might tend to think all is wrong with the city of Farmington Hills. One issue is not the whole city. Nor is it the reason to condemn six members of a city council.

When I went to vote, sure there were a couple of people there that wanted me to sign their petition. But, I did not. For I believe that in some ways these people were not all that informed about these people that were elected in the first place. These people had their chance to vote their way.

The trouble is not everyone cares about the problem. The overall picture is not as bleak as these people believe. Many people have benefited from those now in office.

As the holiday season is here let us not just look upon the bad. Let's think about what is good. Oh sure, I am mad at some people at the city, but as much as I don't like what they did, they still stand for certain things.

City Manager William Costick, for example, even though I am mad at him he is still one heck of a man. Kathy Dornan, the city clerk; She is always friendly. As nasty as you get with Tom Baer of the Observer, he still prints our letters. He is a good Joe.

Silent Night, Holy Night. The city came still for just a spell to look at what is bright and nice. And all it took was a small child in a town of Bethlehem to remind us some things are still nice, and we should take the time to acknowledge that.

Silent Night, Holy Night. All is calm even in the city of Farmington Hills. Amen. God Bless our city of Farmington Hills.

Vernon C. Kjelinski, Farmington Hills

Soccer support

The present Farmington Hills City Council has unanimously supported issues critical to the Farmington Soccer Club. As a result, soccer fields have been developed at Little Caesar's, Tyndale, North Farmington and Founder's parks. School fields have been improved, new fields are in work at The Farmington Activities Center and a grant ap-

plication has been submitted for the remaining fields at Founder's.

The Soccer Club was short of fields before and has experienced over 60 percent growth since this development started. The present council listened to the forecasts and had the vision to provide facilities for this growth.

The Farmington Soccer Club cannot afford to acquire, develop or maintain the fields needed for its teams. Before the present level of support of council, the fields did not exist. Years of effort have been required to establish the basis of information and trust necessary to enable this support of council.

Although the Farmington Soccer Club has no official position on the property at 12 Mile Road and Middlebelt, we do support the members of city council. We also understand that some individual club members may have differing views. The club's position is based solely on the city council's continued support of well over 1,000 children who play soccer in this community. Soccer club members are asked not to sign the recall petition, remove their names if they have signed, and encourage others not to sign. Support Farmington Soccer, say no to recall.

Tim Zajaros, president
Joe Miller, past president
Farmington Soccer Club

No heaven-ho here

Over the past 12 years I have had several occasions to work with members of the Farmington Hills City Council on various projects. My closest acquaintance has been with Nancy Bates, Aldo Vagnozzi, Terry Sever and Jon Grant. I have found these people to possess integrity, values and commitment to the well-being of the citizens. I am opposed to the recall. While it is true that some politicians ought to be thrown out, these folks are not among them - the city would be the loser.

Robert E. McQuaid, executive director,
Detroit Baptist Manor, Farmington Hills

You're yellow

Your Thursday paper headline, "Residents praise recall targets," represents the lowest of yellow journalism. William Randolph Hearst would be proud of you. Discerning readers are not.

Albert Rosen, Farmington Hills

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:

What is your opinion of school prayer?



"If they want a silent prayer, that's OK not a whole classroom, though, just a silent prayer."
Margo Sexton
Farmington



"I'm for it. It doesn't necessarily have to be a prayer. It's just a positive message at the beginning of the day, that's fine."
Anthony Anne
Farmington Hills



"I would prefer it, but I don't think they should (have school prayer) because of all the different religions."
Debbie Lee
Farmington Hills



"I think people should have the right to say their own prayer. If they set aside five minutes for a prayer, I don't think it would hurt."
Rita Zafra
Farmington

We asked this question in the Farmington Branch Public Library.

The Farmington Observer

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— Philip Power