

C'mon, deliver!

Our water woes need attention

Ah, the good old summertime: The mercury climbs into the 90s, pavements buckle, cars overheat and officialdom hoses us with these infernal water-use restrictions.

Yep, here we go again. The weather's turned warm — but hardly unseasonable — and here come the "official" (voluntary cum mandatory) restrictions on outdoor water use.

Farmington Hills faxed us a missive late Friday: Residents can water lawns from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and from 8-11 p.m., and only on the odd-even address system. The problem is lack of pressure in the Detroit water system, or some such thing.

If the lyrics of this cracked record sound familiar, they should. The same old song was played last year about this time. Officials love to spin it every summer.

Now, we can just see John Q. Suburbanite, who simply wants to maintain his lawn and garden in the best suburban tradition, scratching his head and mumbling, "Water restrictions? How can that be when we live on the edge the largest supply of fresh water on Planet Earth, the Great Lakes?"

Good question. No matter what the politicians or the engineers or the Poppies and Pumpadours of TV news say, there is no water shortage in metropolitan Detroit.

The problem, people, is in delivery, not supply. Most of us get our water from Detroit, the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department to be specific, and there have been some real problems with that entity over the years.

As we suffer through yet another water crisis, we wonder if Detroit Water — with its antiquated mains and equipment, and shot through as it is with constant city-suburban bickering — is what we need to supply this

precious commodity to an expanding metropolitan Detroit.

There are a couple of options:

■ A regional water authority for all of south-east Michigan, one that would have, well, authority. It would be empowered to set standards and make them stick. Its word would be law, and it would put an end to the petty politics that have divided Detroit and the suburbs for the past half century. And, unlike the present setup, the suburbs would be well represented on the authority.

The best thing about a regional authority is that it would play a huge role in curbing the kind of runaway suburban development that has led to excessive demands on the water delivery system in the first place.

■ Dumping the Detroit system all together in favor of a new (and certainly more efficient) water delivery system that would serve Oakland and western Wayne counties. Expensive? Could be, and it would take an area-wide support to pull it off. And of course the Detroit people would fill the air with accusations of racism and city-bashing and the like. But the fact is that the expansion is here. The need is here. The new water delivery system should be here.

OK, so it's hot and dry and the water's short. We guess a little conservation isn't too much to ask if there is a real emergency.

But, as we turn off our outdoor water spigots, we demand that officialdom — and that includes elected and appointed officials from the city councils through the county commissions and into state government — please do something about this inadequate water delivery system in the Detroit area.

It'd be nice not to have to hear that same old scratchy record next summer.

There's hope for OCC trustees

The Oakland Community College Trustees Monday showed signs they may be getting their act together. Their demeanor was civil and they got some things accomplished.

They acted quickly to set the new tax levy at \$1.65 for each \$1,000 of state equalized property valuation. They decided who should go to the Michigan Community College Association conference. They agreed on a strategic planning session involving the community and students as well as the administration and faculty. They acknowledged their need to avoid personal acrimony and focus on the situations and issues essential to the well-being of students.

This is good news for the community served by this multi-campus college.

No doubt about it. This past year was difficult and the trustees were challenged. Complex maintenance problems and the frustration resulting from voter rejection of the board's first request for additional millage found the board trustees sniping at one another in efforts to assign blame.

But passage of the seven-year millage request offers hope. Trustees, nonetheless, will have to plan prudently, laying the groundwork for sustained voter trust in them and confidence that the college can meet its educational objectives.

To achieve this, the trustees will need to continue the display of leadership they flashed Monday. No longer can they show up for meetings unprepared for analytical

■ **Complex maintenance problems and the frustration resulting from voter rejection of the board's first request for additional millage found the board trustees sniping at one another in efforts to assign blame.**

discussion of the budget and other equally complex operating issues. They must personally assume responsibility for using resources available to them so they are knowledgeable and prepared to discuss issues on the basis of facts. They must reign in their desire to micro-manage the administration and demonstrate they have confidence to trust their hired administrators to fulfill the responsibilities of their jobs.

For example, hints that the board should review engineering plans, get involved in selecting the curricula and set maintenance priorities is an invitation to disaster. The board should be setting criteria and then holding the administration accountable for presenting quantifiable options that are action plans to achieve the defined objectives.

It appears the trustees have this capability. We appeal to their intellectual ability to respect the distinction of their role and get on with the business of setting goals for the college that will benefit the community and its students.

ARKIE HUDKINS



Enjoy your summer community concerts.

LETTERS

Thanks for coming

On behalf of the entire Farmington Hills Police Department, I would like to thank everyone who took the time to visit the department during our eighth annual Open House June 4.

The presence of so many of our citizens is very welcome and heartwarming.

We are continually pleased by the ongoing participation demonstrated by this community we serve, and I look forward to this yearly opportunity to personally meet and get to know as many of the visitors as possible.

Everyone in the police department is very appreciative of this community's support, which only reinforces the strong spirit of commitment by the city of Farmington Hills and its officials to make it a model community strengthened and maintained by its devoted citizens.

The police department looks forward to next year's event with renewed anticipation.

I might add, no one has to wait until next year's open house to visit and tour the police department. You're welcome any time.

Police Chief William J. Dwyer

Supports Sowerby

As a community leader who pays close attention to local government in Farmington Hills, I want to take this opportunity to share my thoughts with you about the city's first-ever direct election of the mayor to take place this fall.

In the U.S. House of Representatives we are working hard to strengthen local governments. In the future, it is my hope that even more critical decisions will be made at the local level instead of Washington, D.C.

That's why the election for mayor of Farmington Hills is so important to all of us.

Last year the voters of Farmington Hills said they wanted change in overwhelming numbers. They called for a voice in the election of their mayor to work with the citizens to help shape the future of this great community.

Soon each voter will be asked to make their decision about the candidates for this important post. But I want you to know that I have already made my decision.

I am enthusiastically supporting Paul Sowerby for mayor of Farmington Hills.

I am supporting Paul for some very important reasons. First, because he brings a fresh perspective to City Hall. Paul Sowerby is an individual who strives to bring people together and resolve conflict — qualities we could use more of at all levels of government.

Second, because Paul Sowerby cares about

people. I am very impressed by Paul's volunteer work with senior citizens in Farmington Hills. It really says something about his character and I believe this is the kind of person we need in public service.

Finally, I am supporting Paul Sowerby for mayor of Farmington Hills because he has a vision for this great community. His years of experience as a citizen activist have clearly demonstrated his commitment to putting the interests of people first and to making Farmington Hills a great place to live, work and raise a family.

I'm truly excited about working with Paul Sowerby. He has my strong support for mayor of Farmington Hills and I hope he can count on yours, too.

U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg,
11th District

Edit's an insult

I was very disturbed to read your June 1 editorial endorsing Jennifer Levin for school board.

For you to overlook the outstanding qualifications of Linda Enberg and apply the fad of "outsiders are in" to our local election is an insult to the candidates, the current board, your community, and, most of all, to the children that are relying on us to provide them with the best education possible.

I am impressed with Ms. Levin. She is obviously bright, ambitious, and well educated. I'm glad she is so interested in our schools, and I certainly hope she will continue to be involved.

But in her statements she has shown that she is not aware of some extremely important issues like the Mission 2007 project and the Student Profile that the Farmington Schools have already adopted.

Further, to claim this as an example that the schools don't communicate well with residents that don't have children is simply a dodge. I know that there was at least one major article on the Mission 2007 Project in this paper. Also I doubt that she has the background of community knowledge that I feel a school board needs.

Ms. Enberg, by her active involvement, has shown us that she is not only a knowledgeable and capable leader, but she cares about quality education for all children in our community, not just her own.

For you to try and pin a diminutive label on her is a shoddy attempt to cheapen her valuable contributions, and is an affront to all of us who work to help provide quality schools in this community.

Marshall (the Schoolie) Hutchinson,
Farmington Hills

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:

Do you plan to observe outdoor water-use restrictions now in effect in most of the metropolitan area?

We asked this question in the Downtown Branch of the Farmington Community Library.



'Sure. Conditions warrant it.'
Ralph Peckham
Farmington



'Yes. I recognize the need.'
Gene Kratt
Farmington Hills



'We usually do. We can see the reason for it.'
Helen Bowler
Redford Township



'No. I live in an apartment. I have no control over what they do.'
Harold Leach
Farmington Hills

The Farmington Observer

TOM BAER, COMMUNITY EDITOR, 477-5450
SUSAN ROSEN, MANAGING EDITOR, OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS, 953-2149
PEA KNOX, ADVERTISING MANAGER, OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS, 953-2177
LARRY GOSCH, MANAGER OF CIRCULATION, OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS, 953-2234
BARBARA M. DESHAW, JR., PUBLISHER, OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS, 953-2100
STEVEN K. POPE, GENERAL MANAGER, OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC NEWSPAPERS, 953-2252
SUBURBAN COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION
PHILIP POWER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
RICHARD ADRIAN, PRESIDENT

OUR MISSION: "Because we publish community newspapers, we think about community journalism in a fundamentally different way than our bigger competition. They consider themselves to be independent from the stories and communities they cover, swooping in to write the unusual or sensational and then dashing off to cover something else. We regard ourselves as both accurate journalists and as caring citizens of the communities where we work."

— Philip Power