



Walled Lake School Board

WL school board hopeful beats different Drum

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Rubber stamp be gone. That's what William Drum promises would happen if voters elect him Monday, June 10, to one of two four-year seats on the Walled Lake Board of Education.

"It's no secret I have a decidedly different viewpoint," said the 45-year-old Novi resident, who was an unsuccessful candidate in the 1995 contest.

By profession, Drum is a metrologist for Eaton R. & D. in Southfield, where his job means to "measure and evaluate performance" daily, according to his campaign flyer.

He vows to "examine each program on a

cost/benefit basis... fight against costly and divisive special elections," the flyer reads.

Drum was a member of the Citizens Alliance of Walled Lake that was instrumental in defeating previous bond issue attempts by the district.

"I think I can bring that perspective to the administration and to other board members," said Drum during a recent interview. "With that viewpoint at the table, we can get a dialogue started, a consensus solution that's going to work."

According to the candidate, he concurs with a poll by Michigan State University's Ned Hubbell after the first

failed bond issue in October 1993. Among Hubbell's findings were that the school board was: 1.) part of the problem in effectively communicating with the public; 2.) a "rubber stamp" for the superintendent.

Drum insists he is not a tax-hating nut, merely someone who wants what's best for students' education. And for that to happen, he said board members need to have divergent viewpoints on issues and be willing to stir it up.

A stickler for detail and a research devotee, the challenger wonders if that's happening with the current board.

"The danger of having

a one-sided board," Drum said, "is what we're seeing happen—that the board vote 7-0 (to propose a bond) and have the community reject it consistently."

Three bond issues of more than \$116 million have been defeated between October 1993 and February 1995. A fourth bond issue is expected to be put before voters in late November or December.

Meanwhile, Drum repeatedly stated in a recent interview that the current board and administrators need an attitude adjustment so that a wider segment of the population is heard on important issues.

Changing the attitudes

of school officials so that residents feel their input is valued, Drum said, "is absolutely dead crucial to getting things accomplished. That's the thorniest problem they face."

Unless that happens, "we're going to be condemned to another divisive fight in the community... Right now, a lot of people feel they're not even welcome at the table."

One major reason why Drum said he thinks they may not be, as well as why the board seems to follow the whims of administrators, is fear of disputes at public meetings.

"I believe the current administration and the

current board is very fearful of anything that might even remotely resemble conflict."

To minimize any disagreements at the table, Drum said issues are debated more at school board retreat sessions than at regular meetings.

"It has all the appearances that the decisions (were) already made and that they're going through the motions," said Drum, a veteran of the U.S. Marines.

To offset that, Drum would promote making the retreats more public and making sure "actual board meetings would be more like a retreat, where there's give and take."

Incumbent views bond as crucial to future

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

David Flammer wasn't sure at first if he should seek reelection to the Walled Lake Board of Education.

And no one would have blamed him if he chose not to. After all, Flammer and his colleagues on the Walled Lake Board of Education have had to endure plenty in recent years—mostly because of the never-ending bond issue quest needed to offset heavy enrollment growth.

But those needs haven't disap-

peared since voters rejected the last bond issue attempt in February 1995. And the fact that Flammer ultimately filed for the Monday, June 10 election indicates he won't vanish easily.

"I'm an open person, a good listener and I'm more than willing to work with the people in the district to make Walled Lake schools the very best it can be," said the 45-year-old Flammer during a recent interview.

When he spoke, he came across the same way he always has: honest, likeable, but realistic. To illustrate the latter, the

incumbent underlines the need for more classroom space and, for the solution, advocates going the bond issue route one more time, probably in late November or December.

"That's the utmost priority for the school district," Flammer said. "We need to be able to deal with the growth and be able to provide the best possible learning environment for the kids."

If the bond issues keep failing, we're just going to be put in the position where we have to do things that are not beneficial for the kids, and I think will nega-

tively affect the district in the long run."

He mentioned split shifts "at every level, and increasing class size dramatically."

But a successful bond issue would, according to Flammer, maintain the high quality of education that he said his own two children have benefited from.

Support for the bond issue aside, it is obvious that Flammer views his role on the board as much more than managing budget line items.

He estimates he has visited 160 of the state's 540 school dis-

tricts, gleaned key information required to knit an informational quilt to show to colleagues.

"It's so I'm able to have a broad idea of what other districts are doing and use those ideas to help Walled Lake schools," Flammer explained.

But Flammer's efforts on behalf of children branch out to other areas. A former teacher and high school coach, he also is a technology expert, owning his own business, The Flammer Group.

That expertise is being put to good use on the board, which

keeps working with district administrators to make sure every Walled Lake graduate has the necessary computer skills to prepare for uncertain futures.

"The hardest thing we have to do now is preparing kids for a future that nobody knows is," he said. "It's far different from when we went to school. You'd go to college, be a lawyer, doctor or work for AT&T."

"Now most of the pundits who examine these things feel that, in the year 2010, most jobs available for our students haven't even been designed yet."

Alp is on the way for growing school district

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Now that Alp Ouder has his

feet wet, he can't wait to dive in. That's because Ouder wants to take care of some unfinished

business he became involved in during his single year on the Walled Lake Board of Education.

If voters elect him next Monday to one of two four-year terms, he'll certainly get that opportunity.

At the top of that list is long-range planning, putting to good use his personal background as a financial consultant at Ronney & Co. If elected, there's no doubt that expertise will be tested.

For starters, there is the continuing uncertainty over state education funding, including topics such as blended student counts and post-Proposal A fall-out.

Secondly, it is becoming more

and more difficult fiscally to operate school districts, especially those that are basking at the seams. And don't even start to talk about the need for voters to approve a major bond issue in late 1996.

During a recent interview, the 35-year-old Novi resident reflected on the need for a money-management type to be part of the next board.

"It's important (that) a board be comprised of people of different individual talents and backgrounds," Ouder said. "Because our community is diverse, I

think the board should be as well."

"My area of expertise is in the financial area. Much of the problems that will face us in the future, due to Proposal A, are going to be financial and budgetary."

Then, tack on the ever-present question of need a bond issue. Although Ouder recognizes many people in the district are "a little tired dealing with this, everyone's tired of dealing with this," he underscores the importance of getting something done.

VOTE TUESDAY, JUNE 4TH

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BARRY BRICKNER

for State Senate - 15th District



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State Government has not been responsive to the residents of Oakland County. Lansing has ignored local cities and schools. Our present representation wants to neglect our roads, eliminate the core curriculum in education, erase mandatory requirements for driver's education, decimate adult education, and underpay wage earners.

The residents of the 15th District deserve a voice **IN** Lansing, not a voice **FROM** Lansing. I will make **OUR** voices heard in Lansing!

NO MORE BUSINESS AS USUAL

Paid for by Barry Brickner for State Senate Campaign
32021 Old Homestead, Farmington Hills, Michigan (810) 228-4100

Dear Children

I am sorry I haven't written sooner, but I've been so busy. I know you were concerned about my move to The Grand Court-Farmington Hills, but I love my new one bedroom, screened porch apartment. I've adjusted very well!

I've made lots of new friends and have been doing a lot of new activities. In fact, yesterday, I went to the race track (don't worry, I didn't lose your inheritance!) I actually won \$6.00! I'll put that in my pocket for maybe bingo or a theater ticket. Who knows? Oh, by the way, that picture of me - that's Roger, our Chef. He's wonderful and our food is great here. You should have seen the wonderful Prime Rib Dinner we had for our 'Prom'. It was delicious!

As you can see from the picture, I've already put on a few pounds. I can't wait 'til next week. I'm going on a Mystery Trip to who knows where? I'll have to let you know where we end up on our trip - I'll write you soon.

Give my love to the grandchildren. Maybe they would like to come and see me and stay at Grandma's.

Love, Mom

P.S. Why don't you come for a visit. I'm sure you know of other mothers and fathers who would like to live in a place like this!

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