

Spike the list

Event needs ordinary folks

Oh, what's this in the mail? Why, it's an invitation to the Farmington Public Schools' inaugural "Back to School" do Oct. 17.

It's sort of a mega-open house complete with "light breakfast," overview of the district and "a delightful trip to your choice of an elementary, middle or high school building."

The cream of Farmington-area officialdom will be there, we're told, to celebrate its public school system. Of course, we're ever so happy to be counted in that number.

"We are proud of the job we are doing," said the letter/invitation, signed by District Superintendent C. Robert Maxfield and Thomas S. Chrzanowski, president of the local teacher union, the Farmington Education Association.

"The support we receive from the Farmington community is outstanding. As a leader in our community, you are a VIP (Very Informed Person), and we value your contributions to our success."

VIPs? Community leaders? Us? Oh, surely you're stroking our considerable egos — and we'll give you about 16 years to cut it out!

But seriously, "Back to School" day is a good idea. We thank C. Robert and Thomas S.

for the invite, and we're writing this to say we'll be there with our happy faces on.

However, we do have a concern about the guest list. If it only includes only other members of officialdom, what's the point?

"Back to School" will become just another obligatory whoop-de-doo put on by officialdom for officialdom.

And, think about it: Aren't we reaching the saturation point for community whoop-de-doo in the Farmington area these days?

So, how about spiking the guest list with some ordinary working stiffs... you know, the men and women who pay a hefty chunk of the freight for these public schools?

Two names come to mind: Warren Schroeder and Patti Alspach. They cared (some would say "dared") enough to criticize their precious public education — and both of them have won points over the years.

Both should be munching muffins and touring schools on Oct. 17. And there are probably half a dozen other critics that should make the guest list as well.

It's time to think about including these just plain Bills (or, in this case, Warrens or Pattis). They have a lot to contribute, too.

Prosecutor's race up for grabs

Republican Dave Gorcyca isn't taking Democrat Steve Kaplan for granted in the race for the \$101,817-a-year prosecutor's job despite Oakland County's reputation as a GOP stronghold. Make no mistake about that.

As is Kaplan, Gorcyca is running hard as the days melt away leading up to the Nov. 5 general election. Both are driven, focused, articulate and credible.

With no incumbent, this race unquestionably is Oakland County's hottest. Logic pins the "favorite" tag on Gorcyca, who rose from virtual anonymity to upset entrenched incumbent Dick Thompson in the GOP primary.

But Kaplan proved a Democrat has the potential to win a countywide office by finishing within 42,000 votes of unseating Thompson four years ago despite being outspent 3-to-1.

Both Gorcyca and Kaplan say they wouldn't waste taxpayer dollars prosecuting Jack Keovorkian without enforceable laws governing assisted suicide.

Kaplan wants a state law that permits assisted suicide under controlled conditions. Gorcyca wants legislation regulating it or banning it.

Both Gorcyca and Kaplan would consider plea bargaining in selected cases other than homicide investigations to keep the criminal justice system moving and to better manage resources. Both say they would maintain a "tough on crime" policy, however.

The two Detroit College of Law graduates see a link between continuing education and professionalism — Kaplan is a former adjunct assistant professor, Gorcyca a former police academy instructor.

Defining issues of the fall campaign will include experience, leadership, victims' rights, gang violence, drug trafficking, young offenders, homicide investigations, grand jury use, crime prevention, domestic violence and staff morale. An environment that encourages latitude, training, authority and incentives is crucial to slowing staff turnover.

Kaplan, 43, a former Southfield school board president now living in West Bloomfield, points to his experience over Gorcyca, 34, a current Royal Oak city commissioner

OAKLAND WATCH



BOB SKLAR

with law offices in Bingham Farms.

A Macomb County assistant prosecutor for 10 years, Kaplan has prosecuted 150 felony cases before a jury, winning 80 percent.

As an Oakland County assistant prosecutor for two years until moving into private practice in 1990, Gorcyca prosecuted six felony cases before a jury, winning two.

Kaplan cites 13 convictions out of 14 homicide cases tried. None of Gorcyca's cases involved homicide. To combat juvenile offenders, Kaplan says he and his assistant prosecutors would work with county educators and officers to introduce novel crime-prevention programs.

Gorcyca underlines that he's well versed in the inner workings of the prosecutor's office, having served in virtually every division.

He prosecuted 60 misdemeanor cases at the district-court level. He vows to speed investigations and decisions on behalf of law enforcement agencies without compromising the rights of defendants and victims.

Who will be Oakland County's next prosecutor? Whoever does the best job of selling themselves and their ideas over the next five and a half weeks. Steve Kaplan and Dave Gorcyca are formidable candidates. Experience is important but intangibles are, too. Voters should make it their business to decide which candidate strikes the best balance. By the way, the deadline to register to vote is Oct. 7.

Bob Sklar is managing editor of our Oakland County editions.

MEMORY LANE

This week in history as reported in past editions of the Farmington Observer and the Farmington Enterprise.

■ **40 YEARS AGO — SEPT. 27, 1956 (ENTERPRISE)**

Bud Jones scored Farmington High's lone touchdown in the Falcons' 27-7 loss to Rochester in prep football.

Clarenceville's Dale Devitt ran for a touchdown, but the Trojans lost to Milford, 18-13.

Short item: "In a beauty shop, just the gossip alone would curl your hair."

■ **25 YEARS AGO — SEPT. 18-19, 1971 (ENTERPRISE & OBSERVER)**

The campaign, led by the Farmington Junior

Football Association, to underwrite sports and other extra-curricular activities going well, according to EJFA officials. So far, about \$21,000 has been raised. Sports and other activities were cancelled because of a millage failure.

■ **2 YEARS AGO — SEPT. 26, 1994 (OBSERVER)**

Some Farmington Hills residents want to recall their mayor, Larry Lichtman, and five other council members. But Lichtman, for one, has vowed to fight the effort.

The Farmington Hills Planning Commission rejected a plan to construct a call with a Super Kmart on 66 acres of land on the south side of Northwestern Highway, east of Orchard Lake. "I think it's too big," said Paul Blizman, commissioner.

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION: Did John F. Kennedy Jr.'s marriage deserve such intense media

Stan Litaky Farmington	Merry Beth Oliveto Fowlerville, Mich.	Kristine Haws Farmington Hills	Martha Suttien Farmington

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

Letters to the Editor

Bond Issue supporter

In response to Mr. Andich's recently (Sept. 19) published "Point of View" on Walled Lake Schools fourth election regarding the bond issue, let me comment on why we should support the raising of our taxes.

That is what it is all about, Mr. Andich, isn't it?

First of all, to suggest that the school district is seeking this money for unnecessary building and other enormous projects is absurd.

We are adding an average of 500 new students each year to this district. Classrooms are crowded, children are in portables, being bused to other areas, and we even are renting a school outside of the district to accommodate over crowding.

Secondly, to suggest the school board is holding the election on Nov. 5 (instead of Nov. 5 (general election) to snowball or encourage low voter turnout is propaganda.

We are all in different precincts and can not hold this election on Nov. 5. It is against state law. If allowed, I personally would like the election on Nov. 5 because 75 percent of our parents did not vote in the last election.

Thirdly, most of the districts you mentioned with better test scores have all passed bond issues or mileage increases. Also, they are not facing the state of crisis Walled Lake Schools are in now.

The bottom line is: Walled Lake Schools are doing an excellent job educating our students. You failed to mention our MEAP scores are improving each year.

We are a culturally-diverse community. The schools are progressively improving math, science and language art programs each year. (I believe you referred to this as reading and writing.)

We still offer exceptional art, music, and physical education classes.

Our students travel safely each day on school transportation. Mr. Andich when was the last time you visited a school or classroom?

If you honestly can respond to me that Walled Lake Schools are not improving each year and doing their jobs, then I apologize for my ignorance.

"Why do you suppose there are 500 new students each year? Because, people are moving here for the community.

If the bond does not pass, nobody is going to want to live here? Because, people are moving here for the community.

If the bond does not pass, nobody is going to want to live here.

Without a good school system, you have no value to your community. I would imagine that most senior citizens of this district would like to sell their home someday for a profit. Well, if the bond fails you better hope that

another senior citizen wants your home, because a couple with children will not. And, maybe Mr. Andich this does not concern you personally, but I am sure it will effect many.

The bottom line is: I live in a \$275,000 home, with three children attending Walled Lake Schools. I have one child in each level of education, high school, middle school and elementary school. I have no concerns for the education my children are presently receiving. But I am concerned if the bond fails that there will not be increasingly better education in this district.

Also, if the bond fails, I probably will pay for private education. Many parents will not have this choice, and will be sending their children to over crowded schools that will indeed not produce the test scores or prepare them for college.

Lastly, let me assure you I will not be selling my home for the value it's taxed at now, and neither will you.

Translated in to real dollars, paying \$278 a year for a property valued at \$100,000 is a lot cheaper than paying the taxes you are now for property that's not worth \$100,000.

There could be an on-going argument about the actual amount of increase to our taxes.

I have information that \$278 is incorrect. \$138 per year is more accurate. I doubt that the amount is the real issue.

Nobody wants increased taxes, but this is certainly a small price to pay for having a strong school system.

In the answer to better schools increased class size, double shifts, no athletic programs, bussing students out of the district, etc., etc., helping student to prepare sufficiently for the future?

Vickie L. Kahle,
Farmington Hills

More for bond issue

We are concerned parents and home-owners in the Walled Lake School District, who are joining the growing chorus of voters in voicing our strongest support for the upcoming Save Our Schools bond election.

If defeated, we face double-shifting of classes from 5:30 a.m. through 8 p.m., severe curtailment of sports and extra-curricular activities, more temporary barracks, and deterioration of housing values and neighborhoods, as parents emigrate to other school districts.

We cannot change the mindset of all no voters. However, we can vouchsafe the future of our talented teachers and children (with their rising MEAP scores) by voting YES in strong numbers. Our last bond failed by only 150 votes with an apathetic 25 percent turnout.

Quoting "Julius Caesar": "The enemy, dear Brutus, is not in the stars, but in ourselves."
 John and Paulette Baum,
 Farmington Hills

Farmington Observer

TOM BAER, COMMUNITY EDITOR, 810-477-5450
 TOM BYRD, PUBLISHER, 810-901-2537
 ROBERT SKLAR, MANAGING EDITOR, ECCENTRIC NEWSPAPERS, 810-901-2563
 MARY SCOTT, MANAGER OF CIRCULATION, ECCENTRIC NEWSPAPERS, 810-901-2548
 STEVEN K. POPE, GENERAL MANAGER, 810-901-2595

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 — Philip Power