

Observers honored in SNA competition

The Observer Newspaper Group of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers has been honored with eight awards in the 1997 Suburban Newspapers of America Editorial Contest.

The Farmington Observer took third place in the "Best Local Election" category and a second place in "Best Coverage of Local Education/School District Issues" for its "Back to School" series.

Dave Varga is editor of the Farmington edition. Staff members include reporters Larry O'Connor and Tim Smith and photographers Sharon LeMieux and Bryan Mitchell. Katie McManus is the staff receptionist.

The Plymouth Observer took first place in Class A for "Best Breaking News" for the story on the 36th District courthouse fire. Plymouth Editor Joanne Maliszewski coordinated the coverage. Photos were taken by Bill Bresler and stories were written by Renee Skoglund and Joanne Maliszewski.

The Wayne County editions of the Observer also took first place in "Best Young People's Coverage" for "Life in the Sixth Grade," a story and photo project on students in local Observer towns. Staff members work-

ing on the project included Matt Jachman, Tammie Graves, Tom Hawley, C.J. Risk, Christina Puccio and Steve Kowalski. It was coordinated by Canton Editor Ted Schneider.

Another award for the sixth-grade project went to Tom Hawley, who took first place in "Best Feature Photo Story or Series" category for "Derek's Day," a series of photographs on the day in the life of a sixth-grader.

The Livonia and Westland editions took a second place for Best Sports Section. Brad Emons is the sports editor.

Photographer Tom Hawley received a second place in the Best News Photo category for "Clinton Rally," which appeared in the Garden City Observer.

Photographer Bryan Mitchell received a third place in the "Best Feature Photo Story or Series" category for a front-page picture entitled "Festival," which appeared in the Westland Observer.

In all, the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers took 26 awards in the national contest. The Observer Publishing Group includes the Farmington, Livonia, Plymouth, Canton, Redford, Westland and Garden City editions.

Knollenberg continues push for tax cut

BY GREG KOWALESKI
STAFF WRITER

■ 'The best thing is to cut taxes and to leave the money in your pocket so you can decide how to spend it.'

Joe Knollenberg
—congressman

This is not the time to go on a spending spree, even though the federal government is looking at a budget surplus for the first time in 30 years.

In fact, Congress should be considering further tax cuts. Those were the points stressed by U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg (R-Bloomfield Township) who addressed the West Bloomfield Rotary Club last week at E.G. Nick's restaurant.

Knollenberg represents the 11th U.S. House district, which stretches from Southfield to Highland Township and includes the Farmington/Farmington Hills area.

Back in 1993 Knollenberg was a first-term congressman. "I had no power," he said. Multi-billion dollar budget deficits were common and expected "as far as the eye can see."

But then came the Republican Contract with America and a bipartisan effort to reduce spending and revamp programs. The results have produced the first budget surplus since 1969.

"No one thought we would

get to the point of balancing the budget," Knollenberg said. "There's been a huge cultural change in Washington," he said. And there is a likelihood that the budget will continue to stay in balance.

"But where do we go from here?" Knollenberg asked. "Already people are talking about spending the surplus."

Knollenberg has other ideas.

"The best thing is to cut taxes and to leave the money in your pocket so you can decide how to spend it," he said.

To do that Knollenberg has introduced the Taxpayer Relief and Protection Act which, he said, would cut income tax rates by 5 percent across the board. The bill also would eliminate the so-called marriage penalty which occurs because married couples pay more taxes by filing jointly than they would if they filed separately as single per-

sons.

"It's a flaw in the system," Knollenberg said. In Knollenberg's proposal the standard deduction for married couples would increase from \$11,800 to \$13,100.

The bill also would move the tax filing date from April 15 to Nov. 1 to be closer to the election date. That way the memory of paying their taxes would be fresher in people's minds as they go to the polls, he said.

"There are a lot of tax cut proposals out there but I believe an across the board income tax cut makes the most sense at this time," according to Knollenberg. "It's fair. It benefits everyone who earns a paycheck and it stops the practice of picking winners and losers among over-taxed Americans."

Ted Radzilowski, president of Orchard Lake St. Mary's College, expressed his plans to support proposed tax plans

would eliminate the deduction for charitable contributions.

"We're scared," he said. About 15 percent to 20 percent of college's budget is based on money received from contributions, he said. And the college, being a private school, can't turn to the state to make up any loss.

Knollenberg said he wants to form a focus group to consider the flat tax and its ramifications.

"We want to open up the debate," he said. Nor is any action expected soon. "I don't believe any of this will come about quickly," he said. "If we move too quickly there will be some losers."

Knollenberg also fielded questions from the approximately 25 persons present at the lunch. He was asked how he was able to be sensitive to the needs of the people yet not compromise his own values.

"I try to be as reflective as possible," he said. And he has an open-door policy to listen to what anyone wants to say.

He also said he does not expect Congress to enact any campaign reform measures this year.

Construction materials for churches exempted

BY TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

Building contractors working on a church wouldn't have to pay sales tax on the materials under a pair of bills passed by the state House of Representatives.

The fight was brief but sharp. Lawmakers passed the key bill 85-17 with seven absent and set the first part of the package to the Senate.

"This has the same potential for fraud as the old law that was revoked," said opponent David Gubow, D-Huntington Woods. He referred to an earlier sales tax exemption for work on church property that the Legislature repealed.

"The contractor just fills out forms," Gubow complained, saying there was inadequate state regulation of the tax break.

"And it robs the state of \$8

million to \$10 million, with 70 percent of that coming from the school aid fund.

"Not only will it cut the school aid fund, but it will cost the state money to enforce," added Mary Schreier, D-Ann Arbor.

Replied Jessie Dalman, R-Holland, the bill's sponsor: "I would hate to think the religious community was trying to defraud the government. This (taxing materials used in religious edifices) is an inappropriate place to raise revenue."

Dalman added that materials used in public housing and hospitals also are tax exempt.

Scuffling at the small amount of revenue lost from the \$11 billion school aid fund, Dalman predicted that a related bill exempting public school construction will be "an even bigger hit" to the treasury.

Veterans from page A9

prove that he and other members of his squadron completed the missions and were deserving of the DFC.

It was even questioned whether Squadron 731 was ever in Korea. Using the Internet, the federal Freedom of Information Act, countless long distance phone calls, numerous ribbons for his printer and every military contact he could muster, Yancey succeeded in convincing the Navy that these men were overlooked.

"This squadron is like a family," Yancey said. "It's been a labor of love."

He gives credit to Masser for starting the effort with a letter writing campaign in 1979. "All I've done is assist," Yancey said.

Together, they learned that the squadron of 278 men earned

43 air medals, 72 gold stars and 14 DFC medals. Only the men in the squadron who could find their flight books to prove they had flown the missions had the necessary documentation to get the medal.

Tide turns

The tide began to turn in 1997 when Congress passed an act to waive the time limitation and the National Defense Authorization Act was signed into law by President Bill Clinton and finally these men were remembered for their heroism.

Family members at the ceremony were obviously proud. Fern Ray of Westland explained that she attends annual squadron meetings to represent

her late husband, William, the squadron's executive officer, who died in 1971.

"He would be so happy to see this if he were here today," Ray said. "Can you believe how long it's taken them to get these medals?"

The delay didn't diminish the effects of the medal for those who received them.

Ray DeGroot of West Bloomfield said: "I feel humbled considering the fact that I'm among many of the others who got the medals and to be included among them."

It's still a mystery why receiving the medals took so long. "We really didn't know why we didn't get the medal," Masser said.

Bob Blackmer traveled from

California to receive his medal. "This is a big thing as far as we're concerned. It's 46 years too late and no one can figure out why."

One explanation was that their commanding officer was supposed to submit the required paperwork, but he was killed in an airplane accident after returning to the U.S. For some reason the paperwork was never completed.

On Sunday, Jan. 18 the men were much more elated than embittered. "I enjoy bringing these people together," Masser said. "It makes me feel good that it's finally happening. It should have happened in 1952."

Read Sports

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"Advances in Prostate Cancer"
P. William McLaughlin, MD

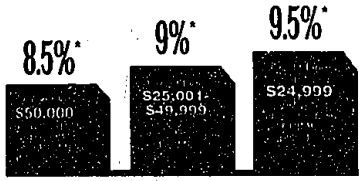
Thursday, February 26
"Hormonal Therapy or Chemotherapy for Prostate Carcinoma"
Howard Terebello, DO

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