

For OCC trustee

These 3 would serve college best

Personal politics has plagued the Oakland Community College Board of Trustees for years. When voters go to the polls June 8 to fill three board positions, they will have a chance to put an end to that bickering. The Observer advises voters to look for candidates who ask questions, but who don't hold grudges. Candidates should be familiar with the district's history, but show leadership in looking toward the future.



Hoyniger

With that in mind, the Eccentric endorses challenger Rochelle Hoyniger and incumbents Anne Scott and Janice Simmons for the board.



Scott

Rochester Hills resident Hoyniger (pronounced high-nig-er) is acutely familiar with the district, since she is a student at the Auburn Hills campus. Moreover, she has been actively involved in OCC activities, and has even served as the student liaison to the board.



Simmons

She is interested in establishing sound programs and restoring stability to the board and to labor relations. She also promises to be an advocate for handicapped students. We're impressed with her enthusiasm and we're convinced the wants and needs of OCC students will never be far from her heart as a trustee. That is an important and badly-needed perspective for the board to have.

Scott and Simmons are our preferred choices among the three incumbents running for the board.

Both worked hard to support the college's

millage campaign.

Scott, a Royal Oak resident, chairs the Michigan Community College Association and said she started the business and community college alliance. She is critical of the budget, which she said has a 14 percent increase for administration costs. Scott also wants to work on labor relations and the way students are treated in the district.

Scott and Simmons, whose votes tend to mirror each other, split on the need for a tuition increase, with Scott voting against it. Simmons, who lives in Rochester Hills, favored the increase, but noted she had opposed other increases. We like Simmons' keen sense of the needs of students for support, redemption and technology; her determination to hold the line on finances; her desire to improve labor relations; and the perspective she brings as a health care professional to the college's nursing programs.

Board chairwoman Judith Wiser of West Bloomfield is the other incumbent in the race. She has done a mostly credible job as board chair in trying to calm stormy political waters. However, her recent, highly public differences with her fellow board members over scheduling a board retreat at a luxurious Birmingham hotel underscores our problems with her candidacy.

For our money, Wiser was right in trying to steer the board away from such a high cost retreat. But, as board president, she could have more effectively twisted arms to prevent it from happening. Failing that, she should have supported the retreat to keep the board — her board — from gaining such a public black eye. The problem wasn't of her creation, but a leader simply can't afford to grandstand.

There is no question that the board makeup needs to change. Rochelle Hoyniger, Anne Scott and Janice Simmons should lead the way.

Bill tries to put files off limits

If you have a suspicious mind, you would guess there is evil afoot in Lansing — and you would be right.

The House Local Government Committee is working on a bill to end the public's right to learn what kinds of teachers the local school employs and what kinds of administrators are running it.

It's called House Bill 5615, sponsored by lame-duck Rep. Bob Brackenkridge, R-St. Joseph. With four short words — "personnel files" and "medical files" — it would allow schools to hide such documents from parents under the Freedom of Information Act.

Parents fought a long, hard battle before the Michigan Supreme Court in mid-1997 said they have the right to see school employees' personnel files. Two unions — the Michigan Education Association in Saranac and the Lansing Association of School Administrators — filed suit to block release of the records.

The Supreme Court said no. The Freedom of Information Act for 20 years has allowed public bodies to withhold information of a personal nature where the public disclosure ... would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of an individual's privacy.

But that exemption applies only to "intimate or embarrassing details of an individual's private life," said the court. Bradley's file contained documents "pertaining to corrective or disciplinary actions, complaints filed, and

performance evaluations." As for the administrators, their requested records contained administrative performance reviews.

Meanwhile, we learn from the Auditor General's scathing review that public school academies chartered by Central Michigan University sometimes neglected to complete police checks on people before hiring them. HB 5615 would allow that information to be hidden not only from parents but from the Auditor General, too, we fear.

HB 5615's effort to hide "medical records" is a trifle troubling. Does it mean a teacher's visit to a psychiatrist? Or would it also cover the Wayne County medical examiner's autopsy of a judge who committed suicide? Is it an invasion of privacy for the public to ask whether a late, elected official was taking illegal drugs?

In an earlier case, the Supreme Court ruled it wasn't an invasion of privacy. Wayne County had to cough up the records and pay a newspaper's legal bills.

Those cases were argued over a period of years. Now the Legislature, acting stealthily during the budget crunch, seeks to undo the Supreme Court's work and rip up a statute that has stood for 22 years.

No. Don't let them sneak another secrecy measure through, the way they did in the December midnight hours of 1996. Tell your state representative to oppose House Bill 5615.

TURNING BACK THE PAGES

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

40 YEARS AGO — MAY 29, 1958 (ENTERPRISE)

The Farmington Township board wants to wait until after the Aug. 5 election on Quaker Town becoming a village until it makes any decisions on rezoning an area at Farmington Road and 12 Mile to commercial. If the vote were approved, the decision would go up to Quaker Town's board.

25 YEARS AGO — MAY 26, 1973

A delegation from Farmington High

School's traveling band earned a silver medal from officials of the Mexican International Music Festival.

2 YEARS AGO — MAY 30, 1996

A rollover accident in Farmington on Memorial Day left one dead and two injured, prompting reminders about the area's "Safe and Sober" campaign to boost seat belt enforcement and target drunken drivers in Farmington and Farmington Hills.

"Unplug your TV" was the campaign cry from the Farmington Community Library effort to promote celebrity read-alongs and summer reading clubs.

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:
 What advice would you offer graduating high school seniors?



"Eat lots of ice cream."
 Denise Woods
 Southfield



"Go to college and find work that pays well."
 George Allington
 Novi



"Go to college."
 Alison Bourassa
 works in Farmington Hills



"Make sure you have a good education and it helps to have a place to work, you know?"
 Tom Davis
 Farmington

We asked this question on Farmington Road near Grand River in downtown Farmington.

LETTERS

Webb has experience, ethics

Cathy Webb has served on the Farmington Board of Education for the last eight years. In that time we have seen the board make many positive changes. I am proud to say that my children attend the Farmington schools because I feel that we have the best district in the state. How can we not have the best district when we have people like Cathy Webb in our corner? The commitment and expertise of people like Cathy Webb is hard to find, and Farmington should consider itself very lucky. Cathy Webb is interested in improving our children's educational experience as well as developing their overall character. Cathy has the experience and the knowledge to take our school system into the next century. Cathy Webb should be elected to a third term.

Margie Anastasio
 Farmington Hills

Stick with best: Webb

When we have the best, why would we want to change?

Experience, integrity, respect, years of hard work for education and our community — these are but a few of the qualities that Cathy Webb has and reasons to vote for her on June 8.

Those of us who are privileged to know and work with Cathy realize what a valued asset she is to our schools and our two cities. Going to the polls is one of our most important and valued rights as American citizens. Remember to cast your vote for Cathy on June 8.

Tina Jensen
 Farmington Hills

Retain a proven leader

Focused, committed and dedicated to providing every child the opportunity to reach their full potential is how I see Cathleen Webb, school board trustee running for reelection to the Farmington school board. Cathy's ability as a fiscally conservative coalition builder while actively implementing a progressive agenda has served her well in her capacity as a board member.

Please join with me in voting on June 8 to retain a proven leader, Cathy Webb.

Jan C. Dolan
 Farmington Hills

Need to retain Inch

I'm writing in support of Jack Inch's incumbent candidacy for the Farmington school board.

I've known Jack since being a student in his civics class at Redford High School in 1963. I continued to follow his interest in supporting young people and education through his 13

years in the Detroit system and 29 years at OCC and his 20 years on the Farmington school board. He has been, and still is, a supporter of high school athletics, participating as a MHSAA official at cross country and track meets throughout the area.

All three of my children have been educated within the Farmington Public School system. Jack's participation on the board has helped maintain quality education. We need to retain him on the board.

George Adams
 Farmington

Prepared, proven leader

What a special time this is for Farmington Public Schools! As we "turn the century," this is an exciting and demanding time for our educational leadership. Which is why I am supporting Cathy Webb for a third term on the FPS Board of Education.

I have appreciated Cathy's commitment to our community as a parent volunteer and school board member. As a "cable TV school board watcher," I am amazed at the preparation needed to face the issues of our school district. As it regards curriculum and building needs, I expect experience and vision to guide decisions that will affect our district well into the 21st century.

Please join me in a vote for Cathy Webb, a prepared and proven leader, on Monday, June 8.

Cynthia Helleck
 Farmington Hills

Webb works hard

Monday, June 8 is a very important date to mark on our calendars. It is the day we will decide who will make crucial, life-impacting decisions about the education of our community's children. Every citizen should make a commitment to be informed and to VOTE.

The Farmington school district enjoys an excellent reputation as an outstanding educational system. Besides the value of quality education, the strength of that reputation has strong impact on our property values and quality of life issues even for residents who do not have children in school.

I believe it is wise to go with a proven leader, someone who has already demonstrated outstanding community service and has provided experienced leadership on the board of education for the past eight years. I am supporting Cathy Webb. Everything I know about Cathy is positive. She is hard working, honorable, informed and extremely capable. I hope you will join me in voting on June 8 and in supporting Cathy Webb. She will work hard for the future of our community's most valuable asset, the children who live here.

Nancy Bates
 Farmington Hills

Farmington Observer

DAVE VARGA, COMMUNITY EDITOR, 248-477-5450
 SUSAN ROSEK, MANAGING EDITOR, 734-953-2149
 HUGH GALLAGHER, ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR, 734-953-2118
 KATHY HIRSCHFIELD, ADVERTISING MANAGER, 248-901-2501
 LARRY GOSER, CIRCULATION MANAGER, 734-953-2234
 BARRIS M. DOWSON, JR., PUBLISHER, 734-953-2100
 STEVEN K. POPE, VICE-PRESIDENT/GENERAL MANAGER, 734-953-2252
 RICK PICCOLI, MARKETING DIRECTOR, 734-953-2150

HOMETOWN COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK, INC.

PHILIP POWER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD JAMES TOWAR, VICE PRESIDENT/EDITORIAL RICHARD AGHIAN, 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."

— Phillip Power