

## New Year Commissioners have lots to do

Now that the Oakland County Commission's first meeting of the year — more ceremonial, introductory and organizational than issue-laden — has come and gone, we urge the two commissioners of the Farmington area to roll up their sleeves and dig into representing their home area.



County Commissioner David Moffitt

We expect our commissioners, veteran David Moffitt and newcomer Terry Sever, to ensure swift implementation of the upgraded 911 system. Commissioners finally approved financing of the new system that will allow police and fire departments to better communicate in times of emergency.

Also of concern to the Farmington area is improved drainage to help prevent flooding such as the community experienced in August. While city employees are still investigating the causes of the flooding in neighborhoods, there has been much talk that part of the problem is what flows downstream from neighboring northern communities. We again urge Moffitt and Sever to take the time to investigate the community's problems and propose some solutions.

While we are in the midst of heavy snows, it's clear that the Oakland County Road Commission needs to direct a little more effort to roads in the Farmington area that are under county jurisdiction. There's no better time than in the middle of heavy snows for both

commissioners to ensure that main roads such as Orchard Lake are appropriately cleared and safe.

Community leaders are still talking about the need for a satellite office in the area that can provide services preventing residents from having to drive to Pontiac. In pre-election interviews Moffitt told us he believes there's no need for such an office, but rather a computerized system that allows residents to tap into and conduct business with the county. While that's a great idea, it must be remembered that not all residents — particularly senior adults — have personal computers. And there's nothing quite like human interaction, a necessary component if county officials are truly interested in bringing county government home.

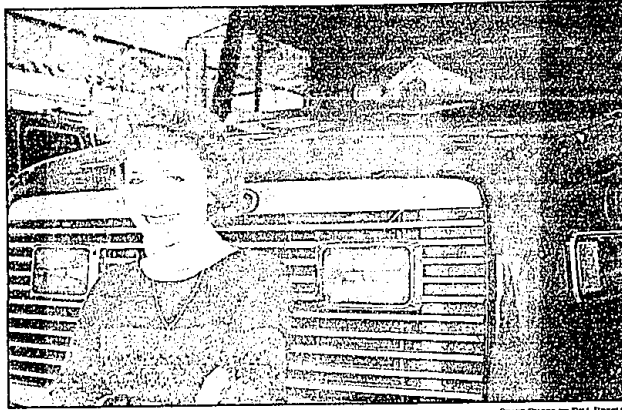
And finally, during every county election commission candidates do their best to drive home the point that county government is a stranger to the public. We fully expect Moffitt and Sever to bring government in Pontiac home to the people they represent. It will take more than just reporting to locality officials. The people want to know what is going on and how they may be affected.

We urge both county commissioners to do their best for their communities, to worry less about partisanship and ensure that the residents they represent are fully informed about their county government.



County Commissioner Terry Sever

## Congratulations



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DEARLEN

Kudos: Recognition goes a long way in a workplace. Here Kelly Monico, senior buyer for the city of Farmington Hills, poses in anticipation of receiving the Employee of the Year Award, which she was presented Monday evening.

## LETTERS

### By definition

My cousins had a cat that liked to swim in the ocean, came when it was called and was so atypical that they named him "Dog." Despite its name, however, Dog was still a cat. So too the members of the messianic group described in Ms. O'Donohue's recent article ("Messianic synagogue..." on Dec. 24, 1998) may call themselves Jews, refer to their spiritual leader as a rabbi and their house of worship as a synagogue, but that doesn't make their religion Judaism. You do your readers a disservice when you fail to point out that this group is not Jewish and not part of the Jewish community, despite their misleading terminology.

In fact, Jews do not believe that Jesus (or "Yeshua" as this group refers to him) was the messiah, nor do we believe that the Hebrew Scriptures were superseded by the New Testament, or the new covenant, proclaimed by the followers of Jesus. By definition, those who believe that Jesus was the "Christ" (messiah) and that a new covenant was forged with God through him, are Christian. This includes Loren Jacobs and his followers, regardless of what they name themselves. They may have Jewish roots, they may use Hebrew in their prayer or practice Jewish rituals, but that does not make them Jews.

The Jewish belief that the messiah has not yet come, and the Christian belief that Jesus (Yeshua) was the messiah, are mutually exclusive. It's a shame that rather than proudly proclaiming the central tenet of their faith, their Christianity, this group would represent the nature of their beliefs in order to mislead others. It's a greater shame that your paper participated in their deception.

Rabbi Dannel I. Schwartz, president

Rabbi Marla J. Feldman, executive director  
The Michigan Board of Rabbis  
Bloomfield Hills

to a client list. There is no proof that the customer gave his real name, or that the Madam didn't add some for her own protection. Once published, no denials will ever recover the blemished reputations.

Hank Borgman  
Farmington

### Improve bus service

The decision to open Farmington Public School the Tuesday after the Jan. 2 blizzard turned out to be a disastrous one. Horn blowing gridlock developed on 12 Mile near O.E. Dunckel Middle School. While school administrators sat down at central office drinking their coffee, the community was paralyzed by an under-shoveled driveway at the Dunckel school that reduced traffic to one lane. Sidewalks there had students wading in hip deep snow to the door. Most mornings about 150 parents drop their children off, but on this morning, there were more than 200 as temperatures dipped to minus 7 degrees and parents just gave up on the bus system.

The school bus policy dictated that K-12 students will walk up to three miles a day with the only exceptions being "unsafe walking conditions or physical disability."

Evidently our administrators and the school board don't get it. Today's students must carry heavy backpacks, often over perilously icy streets. Walking up to a mile in the dark on roads with no sidewalk to bus stops is also acceptable in the district's mind. As a result of the district's policies many parents have been boycotting the bus system for years, choosing instead to drive their children directly to school.

According to the school transportation policy written 18 years ago (during a gas crisis) the emphasis is on cost-effectiveness over efficiency. The policy reasons, "the cost and availability of fuel makes this posture mandatory." Today fuel prices are at a 35 year low and besides, buses use about the same amount of fuel as two automobiles.

Farmington schools transportation could do much to alleviate the congestion on 12 Mile Road, but first they must improve bus service, in order to persuade parents to allow their children to use it. Until the central office and parents learn how to communicate better, it's clear nothing will be accomplished and the transportation situation will continue to degrade.

Eric Borregard  
Farmington Hills

## Interesting problems posed

Mike Bouchard. Wonderful guy. Ex-cop. Everybody likes him. Probably make a good sheriff. Hip-hop-hoony.

But there are some interesting problems posed by an Oakland County panel's decision to appoint Bouchard as sheriff to replace the late John Nichols.

First, voters on Nov. 3 elected Bouchard to a new four-year term as state senator. He had to vacate his legislative office to take the new post. That means the county will have to hold a special election that could cost thousands of dollars. Ditto with campaign contributors.

We were unhappy with that situation in 1991 when Bouchard's predecessor, Doug Cruce, abruptly resigned four months into his new term to triple his salary as an insurance lobbyist.

The Cruce resignation left a bad taste in many folks' mouths. Now they have two bad tastes. Second, we again beat Oakland Republican leaders over the head with the fact that its top county leaders are aging. A clerk resigned in mid-term; the treasurer is in his 70s, so is the drain commissioner. Everyone knew for a long time that Nichols was ailing, and yet the Grand Old Party couldn't field a replacement in 1996. That speaks poorly for a county with so much governmental talent available.

Third, Bouchard clearly has changed goals. He had reason to believe he might be the lieutenant governor nominee in 1998 if Gov. John Engler had stepped down and Sen. Dick Posthumus had succeeded him. Now Bouchard would be unable to move up the

state ladder for four years.

Bouchard may be eyeing a different career course — county executive whenever L. Brooks Patterson retires.

Fourth, the Senate Republican advantage slips from 23-15 to 22-15 until Bouchard's vacancy can be filled. That is only a minor problem from the party discipline point of view.

Fifth, Bouchard was a leader in a law enforcement caucus and sponsored a constitutional amendment to bring back the death penalty after more than 150 years. From that point of view, his departure from the Senate is good. We continue to believe that the power to kill is too much power to give our law enforcement system. We hope voters will replace Bouchard with someone of more humane views.

Finally, we note that Bouchard's experience is as a suburban police officer with little in the way of executive experience. Yet he is a man who commands personal respect and may be a good bet to succeed as sheriff.

But we issue one warning to the new sheriff: When you get ready to leave or move up, Mike, make sure you have a qualified, clearly acceptable successor in place for the nomination.



Michael Bouchard

## COMMUNITY VOICE

### QUESTION:

How do you feel about the NBA lockout finally ending?



"I really don't see why the NBA players need more money, and how this is such a big deal."  
Greg Pozzek  
10th grader



"I think they shouldn't have had the lockout in the first place. They got paid enough money."  
Katy Murphy  
10th grader



"I really don't care."  
Lauren Wetzler  
10th grader



"It's about time. It's become too much about money and not enough about the game."  
Trevor Moore  
10th grader

### What are the rules?

The Freedom of Information Act was intended to protect individual rights, not to assist blackmailers. Marci Deverney's prostitution records are being evaluated by a newspaper to see which names might be revealed.

What are the rules? Which political party? How rich and important? Whose boss or parent?

A pen or computer can add anyone's name

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— Philip Power