

## Clarenceville

### Re-elect Boettcher and Silye

Two incumbents, Matthew Boettcher and Ronald Silye, merit re-election to the Clarenceville Board of Education. Each brings something different to the table when it comes to school board issues and each is seeking a second term.

Boettcher, an attorney, argues with emotion and fact to encourage voters to approve the sinking fund tax extension and expansion on the ballot June 14, noting that there isn't much margin of error in the district's budget and many items like boilers are very old. "I haven't heard anyone say there isn't a need, that the tax increase is too oppressive. I mostly hear differences of opinion over what needs to be done first," Boettcher said. He also wants graduates to aim higher.

Silye, an engineer, initially focused on bringing more hands-on work to the teaching of science. Now, his focus is on the continued improvement of the district, especially the NCA accreditation that is a measuring stick for outsiders to use in evaluating the district's schools. As for the sinking fund vote, Silye is realistic: "We want to make a school district that people will want to come to."

Challenger Sharon Simpson offers plenty of enthusiasm and a female perspective, which is lacking on the seven-member school board. She finds no fault with the board's decisions or plans. She did suggest better attention to grass cutting and, coincidentally, the board hired an outside contractor to do the job.

Both Boettcher and Silye can be credited for being part of the push to bring this sinking fund plan to the voters to try to accomplish more site improvements at a quicker pace than the current sinking fund plan. Their goals focus on keeping the momentum of improvement rolling. We agree, and endorse Matthew Boettcher and Ronald Silye for Clarenceville school board.



Matthew Boettcher



Ronald Silye

## Reflect on holiday meaning

Littleton, Colorado. Conyers, Georgia. Port Huron, Michigan. Trench-coat Mafia. Copycats. Bomb threats. Armed police patrolling the halls of suburban high schools. On Belle Isle, a high school "senior skip day" turns deadly when an "attack" by a high-powered water squirt gun is answered by fire from a 9-mm semiautomatic.

With construction projects across the state causing traffic to back up and tempers to grow short, police warn drivers to try to keep calm, worrying about more violent instances of "road rage."

A press release from a group calling itself the National Motorists Association carries the "warning": "Memorial Day travelers beware: Police are preparing their ticket books!" After considerable detail about how one should behave when stopped for a traffic violation, the release adds:

"The National Motorists Association goes to great lengths to help its members fight traffic tickets. It takes time and effort to successfully challenge a traffic ticket, but the rewards are many."

In this setting, Americans prepare to celebrate Memorial Day, a day set aside to honor American soldiers who died in wars to keep this country "safe for democracy."

One anonymous Memorial Day tribute begins:

"These heroes are dead. They died for liberty - they died for us. They are at rest. They sleep

**■ We don't mean to be negative, but we wonder what those fallen heroes would think about school bomb threats, drive-by shootings, road rage and armed police in school hallways. Is this what they were fighting for? Dying for?**

*in the land they made free, under the flag they rendered stainless ...*

We don't mean to be negative, but we wonder what those fallen heroes would think about school bomb threats, drive-by shootings, road rage and armed police in school hallways. Is this what they were fighting for? Dying for?

However you choose to celebrate Memorial Day this year, take a few minutes to think about what it means. Think about the soldiers who died defending their country. But even more important than them, think about what they were fighting for and dying to defend. They may have been a bit idealistic, but they didn't die to make us free to shoot each other.

Maybe if, as a society, we spent time thinking about what made this country worth defending in the first place, we wouldn't be so angry at each other today.

## Lend the Rouge an extra hand

The annual cleanup of the Rouge River has come a long way in the last 14 years and so has the river.

Thanks to lots of federal money, persistent and visionary county, state and local leaders and many dedicated volunteers, one only has to drive throughout western Wayne County to witness a changed waterway.

It didn't just happen overnight and there's still a lot to be done. That's why this year, on Saturday, June 5, Friends of the Rouge needs some 2,500 volunteers to remove log jams and debris from the Rouge and stencil storm drains at 20 area work sites.

This year's cleanup is different because it represents an effort to focus greater attention on the plight of rivers in southeastern Michigan. Volunteers from Friends of the Rouge, the Clinton Watershed Council, Friends of the Detroit River, and the Huron River Watershed Council will band together for River Day '99.

The core of River Day '99 in the Rouge River watershed will be the 14th annual Rouge Rescue river cleanup. Local sites in Livonia at Botsford Park, in Westland at Holiday Park Nature Preserve, in Farmington Hills, Canton Township, Dearborn Heights,

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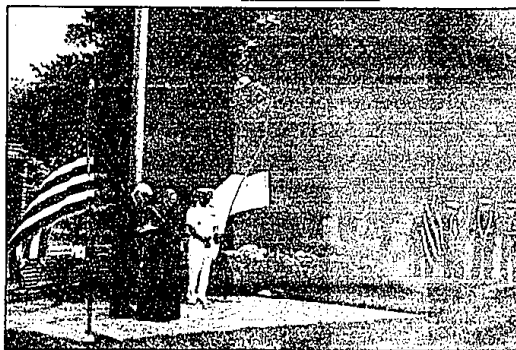
Redford Township, Plymouth Township, Northville and Oakland County Community College still need lots of volunteers.

Volunteers for River Day '99 get free T-shirts and more important they know their efforts do make a difference.

Keep the momentum for a cleaner Rouge River flowing. Take a few hours on Saturday, June 5, and help out.

For more information or to sign up, call Friends of the Rouge at (313) 792-9627.

## Memorial Day



In honor: It may be a day off from work for most. But it's also a day to take a moment to remember those who gave their lives for our freedoms and our ways of life.

## LETTERS

### Much already spent on sites

After reading recent articles pertaining to the two ballot proposals (in the Clarenceville School District), one could almost think no renovations have ever been done to our schools in past years.

Back in June 1985, the voters of Clarenceville approved 1/2 mill for the purpose of improving facilities in the district. It would keep our buildings going for the next 30-plus years.

In April 1989, the Wayne County Allocation Board was told we had started the projects to take our present buildings, equipment and facilities into the year 2015.

In June 1995, the voters passed two ballot proposals. The first was a 10-year (2005) \$4.5 million dollar bond issue. The second was a building and site sinking fund which would raise \$2.5 million over a 10 year period.

We only have four schools. Since 1990-91, \$455,335.25 has been spent on roofs.

Since 1996 we have spent \$200,335 for heat. Of that over \$80,000 was at Botsford. Another \$738,301 has been spent on electrical and now you tell us we are still using fuses?

We were told the board represents us and does what we ask. If that is true, who asked to do away with the tennis courts? Then there is the question of the money still owing for the removal.

Last, but not the least, I resent it when I go to a board meeting and I am asked, "What are you doing here?"

Denna Bame  
Livonia

### 'Yes' to site improvements

We encourage Clarenceville District residents to vote yes in the upcoming Sinking Fund Election. The administrators and school board members have demonstrated their conviction that a quality education is of primary importance for our children. We need to support them in this belief by making funds available for much needed site improvements so that money is not taken out of the general fund which is used to educate our children. We are very happy to be members of the Clarenceville family and support this program.

Bob and Sharon Simpson  
Farmington Hills

### Method questioned

Recently, I received a letter from Robert R. Maxfield, Superintendent of Education for the Farmington Schools. This blanket letter was a reference to violence in school and its potential to escalate in our own community, as it did in Littleton, Colo. While I applaud Farmington's initiative to direct attention to this issue, I question their method. I have

three children who are within Farmington's School District and all three have experienced violence in some degree at school.

I have always taken solace in the fact that my children have been the victim - not the bully. Parents of bullies have a more challenging road. Their children lack self-esteem and will artificially boost their confidence by abusing other children, creating a lifetime of emotional issues.

My response to my children has always been a passive one: tell your teacher, walk away. However, too often my children have indicated that the teachers and bus drivers have been negligent, either telling my children they're imagining it, or that they are making too much of it.

Obviously, this is the easy way out - ignoring the problem - making the victim even more of a victim by downplaying the seriousness of the bully's attack.

With thoughts of a recent personal experience at school, I applaud Farmington's interest in curtailing school violence. However, I wonder if we're approaching it in the right way. Shouldn't we be challenging the bullies rather than the victim's complaints?

Attempting to raise a child with American values and morals is unquestionably a challenging vocation, particularly when your child is faced with the reality that the rights of the bully are protected and the victim is penalized. I question whether these penalties which are enforced on the victim are through the schools' hesitancy to confront the bully or through intimidation by the bully.

Julie Beaubien  
Farmington Hills

### Thank you

Thank you very much for allowing our third graders to visit your establishment on Friday, April 23. The students returned to their classrooms with new knowledge about what makes a business successful. This new knowledge will be invaluable as the third graders embark upon opening their own businesses at school.

Making learning "come alive" for our students, with real life connections, is a goal that we try to achieve. Through your efforts, we were able to make that goal a reality.

Karen Farber and Carol Apol  
Third Grade Teachers at Highmeadow  
Common Campus

Opinions are to be shared: We welcome your ideas, as do your neighbors. That's why we offer this space on a weekly basis for opinions in your own words. We will help by editing for clarity. To assure authenticity, we ask that you sign your letter.

Letters should be mailed to: Editor, The Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington Michigan 48335. Or they can be faxed to 248-477-9722.

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— Philip Power