

# Farmington Observer

## OPINION

33411 GRAND RIVER, FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN 48335

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1999

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### Public office Workshop could be catalyst

**E**ver watch or listen to any politician and say to yourself, "I can do that?" You probably can, if you just had the chance and some details. If you're interested in local public office, some area officeholders are willing to help you learn the ropes.

Farmington Councilwoman JoAnne McShane and a number of other suburban officeholders will serve as panelists for a workshop entitled "Me? Run for Public Office???" at 7 p.m. at Bloomfield Township Public Library. The workshop is co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters - Oakland Area and the Women Officials' network and the library.

Go to the workshop. Local government - whether it is city council, school boards, library boards - is a fertile training ground for citizens who are interested in public service. Local government is closest to the people and one in which most people - especially if something happens in their back yard - are interested in.

If you have any inclination toward running for office one day, the workshop will serve you well. Panelists, such as Farmington veteran councilwoman JoAnne McShane, will talk about how and why they decided to seek office, as well as how to prepare yourself for an election. They will also discuss the time commitment necessary for their respective offices and what it's like being an elected official.

Many people tend to paint all politicians with one broad, brush stroke of contempt and suspicion. Most elected officials truly consider themselves public servants, and some truly are.

Even if you are not interested in seeking office, but are nonetheless interested in gaining a perspective on why someone would serve on a local level, stop by. You are guaranteed to

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come away with some new thoughts, some new perspectives, and perhaps an understanding of what it's like to serve on a hot seat.

Public bodies need new people to get involved. Yet on the local level it's sometimes tough to get citizens involved in the political process. That's a shame because challengers in any election have the potential for creating new debate and bringing in new ideas. Challengers also keep incumbents - which any local community is full of - on their toes.

And if you are one of those who has some interest in local politics but abhor the thought of running for election, or don't know what is involved in running for election, the workshop will give you a good starting point.

No doubt if you want to be successful in politics, you must care about more than your ego and self-aggrandizement. It's hard to hide behind either.

Local officeholders have a stake in their communities and, by and large, seem more than willing and able to devote the time and energy. But it takes more than interest. You have to know what you are talking about, determine how you might improve your community, be pretty good at making sound, fair and reasonable decisions, and have a thick skin.

That's all pretty much in a day as a local politician. So if you have an inkling, let those who have gone before you lend you a hand. You've got nothing to lose.

**■ Under a bill sponsored by state Sen. Loren Bennett persons convicted of taking part in campus riot activity would be barred from that campus for at least a year.**

building? The answer is obvious - it would be impossible.

The legislature would be better off worrying about more important matters - such as public school financing, how to treat juveniles in the criminal justice system, campaign financing, among others.

Bennett's bill would substantially widen the penalties for convicted rioters liable for more than just the vandalism directly involved in the criminal charges.

Senate Bill 525 allows courts to ban anyone convicted of a misdemeanor from entering any Michigan public college campus for a year if convicted of a misdemeanor, two years if convicted of a felony.

The state House Committee on Criminal Law and Corrections amended the bill already approved by the Senate, to also allow courts to order rioters to pay restitution to local communities, colleges and schools for costs related to their crimes - which does make sense and is good public policy.

But overall, the penalties in the legislation go too far and should be blocked by the state House.

### Anti-riot bill is no solution

**S**tate Sen. Loren Bennett wants rioters on college campuses not only sent to prison for their crimes but also banned from all state public colleges and universities for at least one year.

The legislative proposal, while passing the lowest possible potential legal barrier, just doesn't make good public policy.

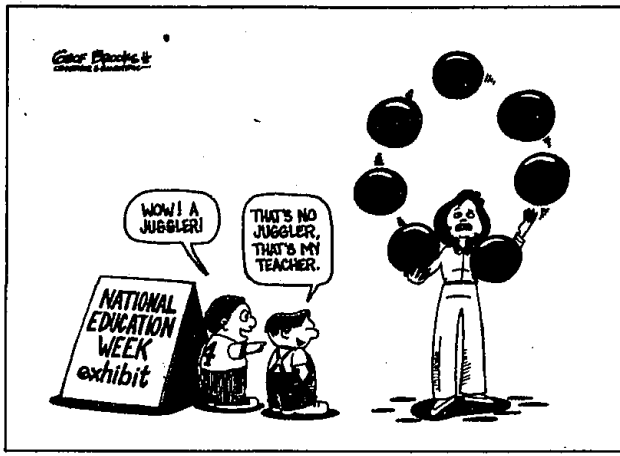
Certainly, the Observer isn't condoning wanton displays of public vandalism, but let's take a look at reality.

The Bennett bill is based on last spring's rioting on the Michigan State University campus after the Spartans basketball loss in the semi-finals of the NCAA Final Four basketball tournament. (Thank goodness the Spartans didn't win that semi-final or the championship - the damage could have been worse.)

While the image of TV newscasts showing students, nonstudents, passersby and others watching a couch on a public street being torched, it is a scene that rarely happens. For sure, there are outlandish displays of behavior on campuses following a sports event, but on a national or even a state level, these are very few.

Enforcement of the proposed new law would be a major problem. How would the municipal and/or campus police in East Lansing, Ann Arbor or any other public college campus ever spot a violator in stadiums housing as many as 78,000 (at MSU) to 111,000 (at U-M) or just walking down the street and passing a college

GEOFF BROOKS



### LETTERS

*Opinions are to be shared. We welcome your ideas, that's why we offer this space for your opinions. We will help by editing for clarity. To assure authenticity we ask that you provide a contact telephone number and if mailing or faxing a letter, please sign it. Letters can be mailed to Joanne Maliszewski, 33411 Grand River, Farmington, MI 48335, faxed to Joanne at (734) 469-2700 or emailed to jmaliszewski@oe.homecomm.net*

### Think about Jaycees

**P**icture for a moment the community of Farmington without the Jaycees.

Your first thought may be that it's not a big deal, just one less organization in the area making demands upon your time. Think harder.

Think about the senior citizens that won't be receiving gift baskets or the family in need who won't have a Christmas tree or Menorah with gifts to adorn them.

Think about the 10-year-old boy with leukemia or the 10-year-old girl with Erwing's sarcoma whose parents struggle for money to pay medical bills because there's no Jaycee chapter to hold fund-raisers to help.

Think about the accident victim who has no one willing to come and build a wheelchair ramp to help make his or her recovery easier. The teenager who takes her own life when she feels there is nowhere to turn because there is no Yellow Ribbon program.

Think about the abducted children who are never found because their parents didn't have access to KidCare ID packets.

Who would decorate the tree at Warner Mansion at Christmas or encourage the whole community to get into the holiday spirit?

Who would set up facilities dedicated to children who are inflicted with or affected by the HIV virus?

You may think the Farmington Area Jaycees have been around forever and there's no way that the chapter will ever disappear.

It can happen easier and quicker than you think.

The only way to ensure the continuation of this organization, which does so much for so many, is through the constant introduction of new members.

People move away, they turn 40, they have things happen in their lives which make it impossible for them to remain active members.

We must replace those members in order to continue the chapter.

Someday it may be you or your family who is in need of help. Wouldn't it be comforting to know that you can call on this organization and it will be there to help?

Please do what you can to ensure the continuation of one of our communities' greatest assets, the Farmington Area Jaycees.

Please become a member of the Farmington Area Jaycees.

For more information, please call 824-0341 or 477-JCCS.

Farmington Area Jaycees

### Apology offered

**I** would like to take this opportunity to apologize to our recent Oct. 26, 1999 Tag Days Concert audience for any mistake in charging for admission.

Most of the concerts and programs at North Farmington High School are admission by donation.

There has never been anyone turned away because they were unable to pay the admission/donation. North Farmington High School's Tag Days Concert has traditionally been a concert thanking everyone who donated money to Farmington Public Schools Tag Days held this year on Sept. 17-18.

Normally admission was through the "tags" given to the public on Tag Days. At NFHS for the past several years, free admission was granted to all who came to the concert.

Through miscommunication on my part, I apologize to anyone who was inadvertently charged admission at the door.

As we do not keep a record as to who paid for tickets, please call my office at 489-3545 for free tickets to our holiday concerts.

On our holiday concerts, the admission price for non-booster members will be something for a canned food drive or an admission/donation.

Any profits beyond the expenses of the concert and the canned food drive materials will be donated to the needy.

Everyone is welcome to attend our orchestra holiday concert at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 5, and our band holiday concert at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 9.

Both concerts will be held in the NFHS James F. Hunt Auditorium.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

Carl Gippert  
music department chairperson  
North Farmington High School

### COMMUNITY VOICE

#### QUESTION:

Do you think girls should be allowed to play varsity football?



"No, I really don't think they should play varsity football with the guys. Too many injuries as it is."  
Doug Bergeron, reading teacher



"I suppose they could."  
Brent Carlgren, 17, football player



"Yeah, they play in middle school. It would be OK. You'd treat them the same as the freshmen."  
Jim Kramer, 17, football player



"I think they should. Boys can. Girls should be able to. There's no difference."  
Stephanie Ponce, 12

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— Phillip Power