

OUR VIEWS

Profiling charges should be clarified

It's one thing to stand up at a public meeting and make accusations. It's quite another to back up those accusations with the facts.

Hills resident Mark Gordanier, who quite often takes city officials and Police Chief Bill Dwyer to task, stood up at a late June city council meeting and claimed two judicial candidates had alleged racial profiling is done by members of the Farmington Hills Police Department.

But when we called Gordanier to ask him which two, he refused to identify them - or even to name the member of the Farmington Area Republican Club endorsing committee who asked the question.

One could argue, of course, that it shouldn't be any trouble at all for us to call all of the judicial candidates and ask about the comment. Of course, it's not.

But that's not the point.

When citizens stand up in front of a television camera and make damaging accusations, they ought to be ready to back up those accusations with some kind of factual information. Gordanier couldn't, because - as he should well know being a member of the Club's nominating committee - interviews are confidential.

It should be noted that Gordanier has also offered a \$10,000 reward for information regarding violations of the law by any member of the police department or city employee. Last year, he dropped a multi-million dollar lawsuit claiming a pattern of harassment by the fire and police departments, out of respect, he said, for our hometown heroes.

Endorsement committee chair Christopher Cummins did us the courtesy of verifying those statements were made; he also agreed to contact the judicial candidates in question, asking them to come forward.

Whether it's before or after the primary election Aug. 6, we hope they do. Again, this is a question of standing up for what you believe. Any political candidate, particularly a candidate for 47th District Court judge, who has knowledge of racial profiling and evidence that it occurs, ought to make it an issue, as a matter of conscience.

If this is simply a matter of drawing conclusions based on hearsay, local rumor or innuendo, those candidates should likewise recant. Repeating an explosive allegation as this, without the knowledge to back it up, is reckless and irresponsible, and certainly not behavior befitting someone who wishes to be a judge.

Either way, it's time for those who accused the Farmington Hills Police Department of racial profiling to take responsibility for their statements.

The men and women who risk their lives every day to preserve and protect the citizens of Farmington Hills deserve at least that much respect.

We urge yes vote on state proposals

Voters will decide on two state proposals in the Aug. 6 primary election.

Proposal 02-1 would amend that state constitution regarding the operations of the State Officers Compensation Commission, which sets salaries for governor, lieutenant governor, Supreme Court justices and members of the legislature.

Under the current law, salary increases approved by the SOCC go into effect unless rejected by two-thirds of the legislature. Though many legislators claimed they opposed last year's salary increases, there weren't enough votes to overcome the SOCC's decision.

Part two of the proposal places responsibility on the legislature by requiring that all SOCC salary and expense determinations be approved by a majority of the legislature.

For consistency part one of the proposal adds the Attorney General and Secretary of State to those covered by SOCC. We strongly endorse this constitutional change.

Proposal 02-2 eliminates constitutional restrictions on the investment of permanent and endowment funds and increases the allowed spending for state and local parks and outdoor recreation.

The proposal allows the investment of endowment funds of the Natural Resources Trust Fund, State Parks Endowment Fund and Veterans Trust Fund as provided by law, including lifting the restriction on investing in stocks.

The proposal increases the Natural Resources Trust Fund cap on assets from \$400 million to \$500 million.

The proposal has won widespread, bipartisan support. The Chamber of Commerce and conservation groups alike support this proposal as a common sense method to raise money for land acquisition and recreational programs through prudent investment strategies.

We join them in our support of Proposal 02-2 and recommend a yes vote on Aug. 6.



KATY BATOORFF / OBSERVER

Madeline Mackie, 4, of Farmington watches a motorcycle brigade of area Shriners who perform in front of judges at the Botsford Parade Saturday in downtown Farmington. Many children said they liked the several motorcycle brigades that performed in the parade.

LETTERS

Sever misleads

On my desk is campaign literature Terry Sever is distributing in our community.

A portion reads, "The major difference with the three Republican candidates is experience and length of service to the community. One other candidate and myself live in Farmington Hills while the third candidate does not."

Although the statement is not a lie, it was crafted to mislead. Valerie Knol (the third candidate) lives in Farmington which, like Farmington Hills, is part of Michigan's 37th House District.

Why would Sever mislead Valerie Knol of not living in the area? Doesn't he know candidates must live within their district?

Sever, a county commissioner, represents all the City of Farmington. It appears, however, that he really doesn't think Farmington is all that important. The Michigan 37th House District includes Farmington and Farmington Hills. If Sever doesn't think much of Farmington now, why would he change his mindset once in Lansing?

This Sever literature was designed to wrongfully discredit Farmington's Valerie Knol and is a slap in the face to all Farmington residents. This type of campaigning is not the way to public office.

While Sever is confusing and misleading the public about his opponents, Valerie Knol is working hard to let area citizens know what her goals are and where she stands. Her professional and volunteer work gives her experience and personal contact with the community.

Valerie Knol will represent ALL of the 37th District in Lansing.

Scott Freeman
Farmington

Supports vouchers

I am writing in support of the guest opinion put forth by Holly Giannola. The article was in reference to the Supreme Court decision recognizing the constitutionality of school vouchers. I wholeheartedly agree that this is a long overdue decision.

I, also, admire the Giannola family's decision to home school their children and had I the means to home school my son, I certainly would have chosen that path. However, being a single parent and unable to afford a private school, my son attends public school. Had a voucher system been in place, I may have had more freedom in deciding how my hard earned money would be spent in regard to my child's education.

Mrs. Giannola is correct in stating that the public schools are a hostile environment to the Judeo-Christian ethics. My son and I have many discussions regarding the secular humanism he is taught in school versus what Jesus taught. From science to English to health classes, humanism is the religion of choice in the public schools.

I would like to close by recognizing there are some Godly men and women within the public school system. They are people of high moral standards and I thank God for them. They are truly behind enemy lines, and my prayers are with them.

Thank you Mrs. Giannola for your brave and heartfelt editorial.

Carol J. Lucas
Farmington Hills

Chamber responds

On behalf of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, I wish to respond to comments raised as a result of the Chamber's candidate evaluation process, specifically to our reasoning in designating candidates Aldo Vagnozzi and Gilda Jacobs not qualified.

The Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce represents nearly 900 businesses including small, sole-proprietors as well as large corporate headquarters. Our mission is to serve as the community's leading advocate for businesses of all size and scope.

As the leading advocate for business, our interests are specific to reducing the tax burden on business, providing sound transportation and infrastructure to promote commerce, developing education standards which provide for a skilled and prepared workforce, as well as promoting a market-driven economy, sound fiscal policy, and orderly development.

As opposed to standards used by other organizations or the newspapers, the Chamber's focus is only on the degree or level of a candidate's "business friendliness," not any other standard.

Accordingly, our ratings are not intended to judge a candidate based on their skills or abilities. While the candidates may have the skills to effectively legislate, we feel that they must also have our interests at the forefront of their decision-making process.

Aldo Vagnozzi and Gilda Jacobs, candidates for Michigan State House of Representatives and Michigan State Senate, respectively, were given their rating only as it pertains specifically to their business friendliness.

Aldo and Gilda did not demonstrate that priority would be placed on the needs of the business community, and therefore our organization feels that the noted rating is appropriate.

Our quality of life is driven by the quality of our economy. Business growth and progress results in a vibrant economy from which all citizens will benefit. Those who place an emphasis on developing sound policy for the purpose of spurring and sustaining a healthy economy are those of whom the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce strives to put into office.

Andrew J. Hall III, Chairman
Governmental Affairs and Candidate Evaluation Committees
Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce

Endorse Blizman

My wife and I are startled by the glaring omission of Paul J. Blizman in your endorsements for the opening in the 47th district.

I have known Paul for approximately 40 years. I first encountered him during his undergraduate years as a history major when I served as a professor in

that department at Wayne State University.

Paul might well have gone on for a Ph.D., but his highly developed sense of pragmatic humanitarianism led him to study social work and for years he served as a professional in that demanding and rewarding profession. Paul Blizman worked at the W.J. Maxey Training School where he acquired an excellent knowledge of youthful offenders.

This skill is most important for a district judge. Paul also studied law at night, and after taking the bar exam has conducted a vigorous and successful practice based in Farmington Hills.

During his 20 years residence in Farmington Hills, he has engaged in civic duties from activity in his subdivision to serving on committees and commissions in the city. For example, he has been on the Planning Commission for 15 years and for the second time has become chairperson of that important body.

It is no surprise that a recent letter sent out to Farmington Hills voters endorsing Paul J. Blizman contained the signatures of four prominent citizens who served as mayors of Farmington Hills including incumbent Nancy Bates and Jan Dolan, who also had an outstanding career representing Farmington and Farmington Hills in the Michigan House of Representatives.

On the other hand, the Observer did endorse Larry Leib, who is most notable for his numerous campaign signs, many in inappropriate places. I am not bothered by Leib's youth or even the fact that he has not lived very long in Farmington Hills.

This newcomer, however, has not earned a place in public affairs by being active in local matters. By his own account, his chief professional achievement is a job in his influential father's law firm.

Starting at the top is not acceptable for this youth who like the Gilbert and Sullivan character got ahead by polishing the handles on the big front door of law offices - in this case Daddy's.

Fair-minded citizens of Farmington and Farmington Hills should rally behind Paul J. Blizman who has just received a rating of "Outstanding" from the Oakland County Bar Association. Paul is the best kind of idealist, a "practical idealist."

Stanley D. Solvick
Farmington Hills

SHARE YOUR OPINIONS

We welcome your letters to the editor. Please include your name, address and phone number for verification. We ask that your letters be 400 words or less. We may edit for clarity, space and content.

Mail:
Letters to the editor
Farmington Observer
3340 Grand River
Farmington, MI 48335

Fax:
(248) 477-9722

E-mail:
jhubbred@oe.homecomm.net

QUOTABLE

"Debate on public issues should be uninhibited, robust and wide open and...it may well include vehement, caustic and sometimes unpleasantly sharp attacks on government and public officials."

Justice William J. Brennan

FARMINGTON Observer

Part of HomeTown Communications Network™

Jonel Hubred Community Editor	Todd Williams Director of Advertising
Hugh Gallagher Managing Editor	Tom Nerl General Manager
Susan Rosiek Executive Editor	Dick Agnlin President
Jeanne Towar V.P. Editorial	Phil Power Chairman of the Board

Our fundamental purposes are to enhance the lives of our readers, nurture the hometowns we serve and contribute to the business success of our customers.