

# County board tinkers with terms of art tax for November ballot

BY DAN WEST  
STAFF WRITER

Oakland County voters will decide the fate of a 0.5-mill property tax increase to subsidize 17 metro Detroit museums and cultural facilities on the Nov. 5 general election ballot.

Maybe. The 10-year millage will be on the ballot if the Wayne County Board of Commissioners and Detroit City Council agree with amendments to arts tax legal language approved by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners last Thursday.

David Doyle, a Lansing-based consultant who represents the 17 facilities pushing for the arts tax, said he remains confident, but not certain Detroit, Oakland and Wayne will come to terms in time to put this proposal before voters in November.

"We hope there isn't a problem, but we're not sure," Doyle said.

All three governing bodies must agree on terms that would create a Metropolitan Arts and Cultural Authority, a nine-member board with three representatives from each municipality.

This board would disburse tax dollars for cultural facility and museum programs if voters approve the millage.

At Wayne County's Aug. 1 board meeting and Detroit City Council's Aug. 2 session, each

board is to discuss language sought by Oakland County. Any changes require approval of all three boards. If this process extends several more weeks, the issue cannot go on the November ballot.

Considering last week's Oakland County resolution gained approval by a 13-12 margin, Commissioner Eric Coleman (D-Southfield) said he doubts his colleagues would ratify another arts tax resolution.

"I'd probably get killed if it comes back to us," Colonna said. "Some commissioners simply don't want it, but I feel the program should decide what they pay taxes for and not pay taxes for."

The half-mill levy would increase property taxes for the owner of a \$200,000 home by \$50 a year.

This new millage would generate some \$44 million annually to finance new education programs, facility enhancements and free student field trips to the 17 facilities, including the Holocaust Memorial Center coming to Farmington Hills, Cranbrook Institute of Arts in Bloomfield Hills, Detroit Zoo in Royal Oak and Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn.

A similar proposal was narrowly defeated by voters in November 2000, but Oakland County leaders exercised far more scrutiny this time around.

"Since we're paying 50.4 per-

cent of the tax dollars for this thing, we wanted to get something fair for our tax dollars," said Commission Chairman Tom Law (R-West Bloomfield). "I'm not saying I'm going to vote for this, but I wanted to make sure we gave voters the best possible product."

In the amendments, the county board wanted to make sure revenue from the new millage, if approved, doesn't subsidize reduced general fund commitments to the Detroit Zoo from the City of Detroit.

"This is supposed to enhance programs," Law said. "If the city takes general fund money away, the programs are sustained, but not enhanced, at a cost to Oakland County taxpayers." Commissioners wanted to appoint Sheriff Michael Bouchard, Pontiac Mayor Willie Payne and Bloomfield Township Supervisor David Payne.

Commissioners didn't like Patterson's plan.

"If people have a problem with the arts authority, they are going to complain to us, but we'd have no accountability," Law said. "We have to have some form of accountability."

dwest@oehome.com | (248) 901-2375

## Endorses Knol

I endorse Valerie Knol to be our next State Representative for the following reasons:

1. She is honest, intelligent and hardworking. Her personal life is above reproach, with no skeletons waiting to be exposed and embarrass our community.

2. Valerie is truthful, she will not lie for political expediency or any other reason.

3. More women should be encouraged to seek higher office. The record of women elected to public office higher than city council has been outstanding.

4. It is time to get some new blood involved in local government instead of recycling the same old names along with the same old baggage.

5. Valerie possesses that golden intangible simply referred to as "class."

6. Val has proven herself to be a leader, a fact recognized by the galaxy of endorsements she has received from citizens, elected officials and organizations.

Ron Oliverio  
Farmington Hills

## Blizman speaks truth

As we all know by now elections are being held on Tuesday, Aug. 6. There are so many people running and with so little time for us to find out who would be Mr. or Ms. Right, and so many candidates saying what they do in the community and what they are for.

Well, as a black resident who just happened to read these articles, I find it very interesting having just received the Rainbow Recognition Award and being very active on the Multicultural/Multiracial Diversity Committee, that some candidates spoke on being members and active or even a part of it.

I never met anyone that's in the running but Paul Blizman, someone that not only is a very active member but very much a part of this committee, who takes time to be compassionate on diverse issues.

Angie Smith  
Farmington Hills

## Sever didn't mislead

It is not misleading. It is the truth. Terry Sever and John Akouri live in Farmington Hills and Valerie Knol lives in Farmington. Two of the most often asked questions during the campaign have been, where do you live and what is your community involvement?

We have lived in both Farmington and Farmington Hills. After moving to Farmington Hills my husband (Terry Sever), who has owned and operated a small business in Farmington, has continued to be very active in both cities. He became President of the Farmington Jaycees, was Chairman of the Farmington Founders Festival, was a Director on the Farmington Chamber of Commerce and has coached softball or baseball in Farmington for more than 15 years.

We have donated to the Farmington Goodfellows, Farmington High School, the Miss Farmington Pageant and the Salvation Army. His community involvement began in 1976.

He has earned the title of community activist. It wasn't given to him. The Aug. 6 Primary is about qualifications and we need someone in Lansing who recognizes the needs of both Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Linda Sever  
Farmington Hills

## Larry's the future

I would like to thank Stanley Solvick for spelling Larry Leib's name correctly and for mentioning that our law firm has Larry as one of its members. We are really lucky to have him. Characterizing Larry as not being his own person, and being just the son of an "influential" lawyer, makes it obvious that Mr. Solvick has no idea of who Larry is, or what makes him tick.

Larry is the International Vice President of Sigma Alpha Mu (I'm not a member). Larry is a Mason and a Shriner (I'm not a member of either). Larry is an active Rotarian and Board Member (I'm not a Rotarian). He's a Farmington Jaycee (I'm

## LETTERS

not member). He's on the Host Committee of the Economic Club of Detroit (I'm not a member). Larry's the future. I'm at the twilight of my career.

While Paul Blizman is a good guy, Larry earned the endorsement of the Farmington Observer (and the Farmington/Farmington Hills Gazette, too) on his own merits. Likewise, Larry has earned the endorsements of Congressman Joe Knollenberg, Secretary of State Candice Miller, Former Attorney General Frank J. Kelley, County Executive L. Brooks Patterson, Prosecutor David Goreyca, Sheriff Mike Bouchard, the Michigan Association of Police, the Farmington Hills Firefighters Association, the Brotherhood of Carpenters, the Millwrights Union, Chief Circuit Judge Joan Young, the President of the Michigan District Judges Association, 39 Judges and over 450 local attorneys. They support Larry Leib because of who he is, what he has done and his potential, not because of who I am.

Jeffrey M. Leib  
Southfield

## An honest man

We have known Paul Blizman for many years and he is our choice to win the primary election for judge of Farmington and Farmington Hills.

We know him to be a volunteer in many areas of our community, including those organizations that are dedicated to children and families. He also has been active in the Rouge River clean-up, not a glamorous or headline grabbing activity, but one involving real work in the effort to restore our rivers and streams.

Paul Blizman is an honest man. He does not need to puff himself up or exaggerate the facts about himself in order to tell his story. We know he will be a great judge for our two cities, being firm and fair and listening well to every person who comes before his court. We urge your readers to cast their vote on Aug. 6 for Paul Blizman for the 47th District Court.

Carol and Bob Boyd  
Farmington Hills

# SWOCC offers candidate forum

Enic, meenic, minee, moel! Some voters use this formula for selecting a political candidate.

Not because they want to but because they don't know any other way to get to know the candidates beyond the election signs posted everywhere.

SWOCC Studios (Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission) has produced a special program "Candidates Forum 2002," whereby voters

## CABLE CONNECTION

can meet the candidates up close and personal. From judge to governor, hear first-hand their stand on issues, their qualifications, and how they plan to serve you.

Interviewed by the local press and the League of Women Voters, this is one program you won't want to miss. Watch Farmington's Channel

15 on Tuesdays 8 a.m.-2 p.m., Wednesdays and Saturdays 6-10 p.m., and Fridays 8-11 a.m.; Nov's Channel 13 on Mondays 8 a.m.-2 p.m.; Wednesdays 2-6 p.m.; Thursdays 10 p.m.-2 a.m., Fridays 6-10 p.m., and Sundays from 6-10 a.m.; and on Farmington Hills Channel 8 at midnight on Saturday.

The Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission serves Farmington, Farmington Hills, and Novi.

"Earning trust takes time. Good thing we've been around long enough to have done that." -Dave Lennox

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