

OUR VIEWS

Voters deserve better than 11th-hour attack

The mailing arrived in Farmington and Farmington Hills Friday and Saturday, just before the Aug. 6 primary election. With Republican Valerie Knol's committee identification, the brochure featured photos of her opponent Terry Sever, one topped with the familiar circle with a diagonal line through it and the other marked with a full-out "X".

The rest of the mailing was, for anyone who has paid attention to Sever's political history, a mish-mash of old news. Knol makes the point that the voters deserved to know about his history of financial difficulties, because fiscal responsibility is a very important issue, especially now.

If that's true, why didn't she make it a campaign issue weeks ago? Why drag out the personal attacks at the end of the primary campaign season and at a time when there was no opportunity for Sever to respond?

We're not going to argue whether he should have been a better businessman. Business failures and personal financial problems are a way of life in this country. Lots of people get into trouble and work their way out again. And yes, sometimes it takes 15 years to get back on track when you've been badly demoralized.

Perhaps with a little more experience and a shade more compassion for the human condition, Knol will understand that someday. What she should understand, having been involved in a number of political campaigns, is that last-minute attack ads don't do a single thing to promote the kind of high quality political discourse that truly helps people make up their minds about which is the better candidate in any election.

We agree with Knol that voters should be given the facts and allowed to decide. We don't agree, however, that the incomplete and incorrect information she provided gave them that opportunity.

This kind of 11th hour attack politics represents behavior unbecoming any candidate who wishes to serve the citizens of Farmington and Farmington Hills, but particularly Valerie Knol.

In a pre-primary interview on Christian radio station WMUZ, Knol professed her faith and her commitment to Christian values. She made a point of saying that while she might disagree with someone, she would always tell the truth about how she feels and she would always be consistent.

Is Knol committed to fairness and truth as she claimed or an ambitious, no-holds-barred politician who will lash out at another candidate using false information and unfair tactics in order to win a few votes? Frankly, up until we saw this brochure, we thought the former.

Now we're just not sure.

Only time will tell, and we urge voters to keep a close eye on her campaign between now and November.

We certainly will.

Local officials steel legislators

On Tuesday morning, local officials made a trek to Lansing to put some steel in the backbones of their state representatives. Their mission was to make sure that the state Legislature voted to overturn Gov. John Engler's veto of \$845 million in revenue sharing to local governments.

Just three weeks ago, the lame-duck governor created a firestorm with his veto. He argued that the state's precarious financial situation would only grow worse, if voters were to approve three ballot issues that are expected to be on the November ballot.

At the time the Republican leadership of Speaker Rich Johnson and Senate Majority Leader Dan DeGrow said that the votes were in place to affirm Engler's veto. That was before legislators heard from the folks back home.

Local governments have made it plain that they want their money, and they don't like the idea of the governor playing games with their funding to exert influence over voting on the proposals. Many communities are also facing budget shortfalls and need the state money to maintain such essential services as police and fire protection.

Engler blithely promised that he'd make sure revenue sharing funds were restored, if voters voted against the proposals. The veto smacked of arrogance and was rightly perceived as a form of high-handed blackmail.

We are not prepared yet to argue the merits of the proposals. But we don't believe that withholding needed state funding from local governments is a responsible way to conduct public business.

After hearing from home, the Legislature have voted overwhelmingly to restore the revenue sharing money. We salute the local leaders who put pressure on their representatives to represent the interests of their districts.

We also salute those representatives who stood up to their popular governor and handed him the first gubernatorial veto override in 25 years.

FARMINGTON Observer

Part of HomeTown Communications Network™

Jon Hubert
Community Editor

Todd Williams
Director of Advertising

Hugh Gallagher
Managing Editor

Tom Nerl
General Manager

Susan Rosiek
Executive Editor

Dick Agnolin
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.



Campaign signs of every persuasion stand at the northwest corner of Twelve Mile and Drake Road.

LETTERS

Soccer nightmare

I'm 18 years old and have been a volunteer coach for a Farmington Soccer Club (FSC) girls team for four years. The "Blue Steak" was a very talented group of girls. I coached them for the fall, spring and indoor seasons. The past three seasons they took either first or second place.

A SoccerZone manager, Todd Crawford, spoke to me about the Novi Ice, a select soccer club he formed. We were looking for a higher level of play, and a chance to improve even more. After working with Michigan State Youth Soccer Association (MSYSA), Mr. Crawford invited our team to play for his club. As a team, we unanimously voted for playing for the Novi Ice in the spring.

Later, Mr. Crawford found out, through a contact at MSYSA, that Bruce and Kimberly Wong of the Farmington Soccer Club were planning to file legal charges against him, me and all of the players on the Blue Steak.

Mr. and Mrs. Wong claimed that the team belonged to Farmington, and that we were under contract to play for FSC for the fall as well as the spring season. The parents and I were never made aware of this. It's never been stated on any registration form, and we are required to fill out new forms every season.

The Wongs forced Mr. Crawford to fold Novi Ice. Now my team had no place to play. I called and e-mailed Mr. and Mrs. Wong asking for my team to return to FSC.

A day later, they responded that they would respond with an answer in 72 hours. After three days, they agreed to let a few of the girls play on the other FSC U-13 girls teams.

They also informed me that I was suspended from coaching. On March 10, the parents of the girls and I had a meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Wong.

The reason they used for suspending me? "Special Club Rules: Coaches FSC will abide by any and all rules contained by the by-laws which pertain specifically to them. All members will abide by decisions made by the Board."

What law did I not abide by? I asked several times at the meeting, but to this day have received no response.

The next day, I requested an appeal of this decision both to FSC and MSYSA. Tom Faro, president of MSYSA, informed me in an e-mail dated March 11, that the best solution for everyone was for my team to play in the Lakes Area Youth Soccer League in the Great Lakes Select Division. FSC wouldn't allow this.

Later, I received an e-mail from the Wongs saying that they wouldn't deal with my appeal until April 10, well after the spring season began.

On March 24th, my suspension was rescinded due to pressure on FSC by MSYSA.

What my team and I went through was both unfair and illegal. I feel I was constantly lied to and taken advantage of. I feel they made it as difficult as possible for me to continue coaching.

Beth Diehl
Farmington Hills

Observer disappoints

How telling when one reads the Editorial Opinion of July 25, in which the Observer staff attempts to berate two judicial candidates into retracting their opinions regarding racial profiling in Farmington Hills.

It is always disappointing when the staff of the Farmington Observer showcases its true mission: that of chief apologist and lapdog of Farmington Hills administrators. What a shameful waste of a valuable community resource.

My wife and I recently had the pleasure of chatting with yet another candidate for the 47th District Court. It turns out that this front running candidate has been pondering the dilemma of what to do with police officers that come to court and lie.

Citizens that have expressed concern with the unholy alliance between certain judicial candidates and the police are asking the right questions. Pick up your phone, call the candidates and ask them the tough questions.

Bullying and intimidation from our city council and their cheerleaders at the Observer must be ignored. The 47th District Court does not belong to the city council, it does not belong to Chief Dwyer, and it certainly does not belong to the staff at the Observer and Eccentric Newspapers.

Why, then, are they all squealing like stuck pigs? The answer is simple. The 47th District Court is the independent citizen's court.

The status quo is about to change and that clearly does not sit well with the entrenched establishment or their apologists.

Mark and Jean Gordanier
Farmington Hills

Granholm for Governor

We are proudly supporting Jennifer Granholm for Governor because she is the best candidate running in either party. She is a fervent supporter of public education, Michigan families and yes, reproductive freedom.

Between us, we have spent eighteen years in the Michigan legislature defending reproductive rights and we would never support any candidate who was not unquestionably pro choice. No amount of negative ads or automated phone calls paid for by faceless committees will change Jennifer Granholm's position. She has been endorsed by Emily's List, Michigan NOW, National Women's Campaign Fund, Michigan Women's Campaign Fund, and the One Hundred Women organization. All of these groups insist on reproductive rights as a bottom line.

Jennifer Granholm has articulated well-thought out positions on all of the issues we care about (available at www.granholmfor.gov.com) and she provides the kind of fresh, creative approach to problems that Michigan so desperately needs right now.

Finally, and not least important, Jennifer Granholm is the Democrat who

has the best chance of winning the general election and helping bring more Democrats into office throughout Michigan. Those of us who want our states back after 12 years of conservative Republicans know that we need strength in the legislature as well. That's why Democrats running for Michigan Senate in swing seats are supporting Granholm—they know their chances rest with her.

This campaign is about all of our futures and the future begins on Aug. 6. Please join us in voting for Jennifer Granholm for Governor.

State Rep. Glida Jacobs
Michigan House Democratic Floor Leader
Maxine Berman
Michigan House of Representatives, 1983-1996

Buying election?

Last time I checked I didn't realize our political offices were for sale to out-of-town carpetbaggers. Sadly, that seems to be the case in our State Representative race.

Today I checked my mailbox and found a letter from the Grand Rapids-based Great Lakes Education Project on behalf of candidates Valerie Knol, who just happened to move from that city a few years ago. These special interests from the other side of the state are doing everything they can to buy an office for their hometown Hilary.

According to the Associated Press, the Great Lakes Education Project in this year alone has spent more than a quarter of a million dollars to help candidates like Knol buy their election. All this while honest candidates beat the pavement to win votes the old fashioned way.

Knol, who has only lived in our city a handful of years, apparently had no problem selling herself in exchange for their assistance.

It's hard enough when candidates like Knol bow to special interest groups, but it's even worse when they do it in a city that isn't even their home.

That's not the kind of representation I want in Lansing.

Chuck Kapko
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
3341 Grand River
Farmington, MI 48335

Fax:
(248) 477-9722

E-mail:
jhubert@oe.hometown.com

QUOTABLE

"It's often difficult to understand God's work."

Farmington Hills Councilman Jon Grant on the unexpected death of city attorney John Donohue