

OUR VIEWS

Jacobs has earned a shot at Senate

When it comes down to making a choice for state senator in the 14th District, there's really no question which candidate voters should elect.

While Republican Marc Wilkins has virtually no political experience, Democrat Gilda Jacobs is a veteran legislator whose roots run deep in the district. Wilkins is something of a reluctant candidate; Jacobs can't wait to be in a position to have an even greater influence in Lansing.

Wilkins could have simply sat back and watched it all happen, but instead has made an effort to become more informed, and we applaud him for that.

Frankly, there's no question, given the way the new district has been drawn, that Jacobs will win on the November ballot. Most of the new 14th is comprised of her old stomping grounds, all heavily Democratic communities.

But there's more to our endorsement than choosing the candidate most likely to win. Jacobs is a proven leader, a strong advocate for local control and a "hands on" lawmaker. She has taken action on both personal and constituent concerns, championing legislation that opens medical records to patients and links schools and prosecutors in the battle to keep kids in school.

After a career of public service beginning at the county level, Jacobs has earned the opportunity to move from the House into a position of greater influence and less politicking. She has worked hard to serve her constituents to our east. We believe Farmington and Farmington Hills voters should give Gilda Jacobs a chance to serve them, too.

Burns, city deserve credit for openness

At a Downtown Development Authority meeting not too long ago, Farmington City Councilman Mike Harrison said to downtown activist Becky Burns, "Are you glad of all this wreckage? Are you glad you wrote that letter?"

The answer to both those questions should be a resounding "yes."

Burns submitted a Freedom of Information Act request for documents regarding the DDA's hiring of a new executive director, and the business community owes her a debt of gratitude for doing so. Her actions define the reason FOIA and "sunshine" laws were created: to keep government in the public eye.

Whether because of her actions or their own accord, we applaud city officials for finally opening the hiring process. It's possible this will cost them a few candidates, but compared to the value of public trust, that's a price worth paying.

Do your part to help end domestic violence

October is Domestic Violence Awareness month.

There is irony that the designation is meant to shed light on a problem that continues in large part because it is a "hidden" crime.

Much like sexual assault, victims often are left feeling that they somehow played a role in the violence. Oftentimes, they feel powerless to leave an abusive partner and remain trapped in a cycle of violence.

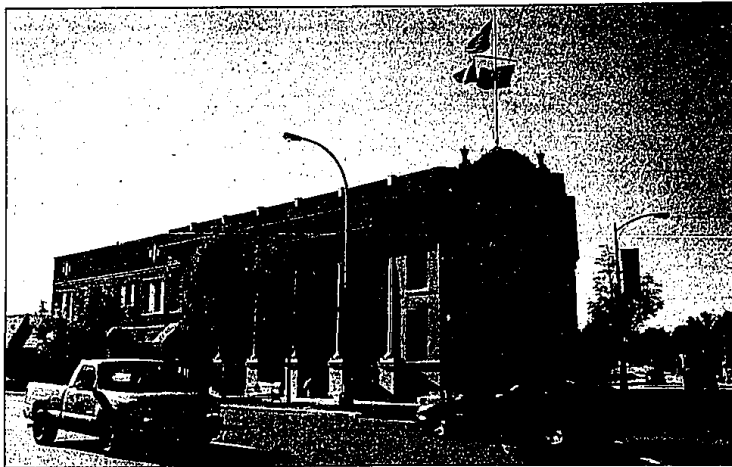
That's why organizations like HAVEN are so important, and need all of our support. HAVEN's mission - to eliminate domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse through treatment and prevention services across Oakland - can only be accomplished through public awareness and public action.

HAVEN relies on the time, talent and resources of volunteers and benefactors to carry on its fight. Two opportunities are available to offer a helping hand.

The first is HAVEN's participation in the Donate a Phone Call to Protect program to provide domestic violence victims with wireless phones to enable them to call 9-1-1 in the case of an emergency. Call (248) 334-1284, ext. 343 for more information.

The second takes place on Thursday, Oct. 12, when HAVEN hosts its annual Promenade of Hope fund-raiser at The Ritz Carlton Hotel in Dearborn. Both individual tickets and corporate sponsorships are available.

Thanks to the efforts of organizations like HAVEN and many others fighting the scourge of domestic violence, this dark cloud may one day be lifted for good, making awareness months a thing of the past.



BILL MAGUIER/OBSERVER

As candidates for Downtown Development Authority Director were interviewed at Farmington City Hall this week, the landmark Village Mall building was getting a new coat of paint.

LETTERS

Partisan politics

I feel it's important to respond to Mark Steckloff's letter from Sept. 5.

First, Mark is also known to some of you and all of me as Mr. Vicki Barnett (we all know her politics). Second, he's a precinct delegate for the Democratic party.

With these two facts in mind it is very disingenuous that he would speak out in public about events that occurred in this summer's Republican primary.

Sniveling Steckloff's opposition to Valerie Knol is not based upon a principled stand, but is rooted in his partisan politics.

Just remember Mark, elephants never forget.

Christopher M. Cummins
Farmington Hills

Knol's a go-getter

In her Aug. 29 letter Cheryl Oliverio calls for clean political campaigning citing as a bad example Valerie Knol's last minute antics of bringing up Terry Severs' troubles with making tax payments.

While seeming to be concerned with public sensibilities regarding clean campaigning, Cheryl Oliverio's letter turns from being a public service to become a vitriolic attack on Valerie Knol. The letter takes the opposite direction from what she calls for campaigners to follow.

I am curious. Why are Democrats concerned about what Republicans can say about each other? Normally Dems would sit back and enjoy, even egging them on. Why is Oliverio so full of venom?

Did - unexpectedly - the wrong person for Democrats to run against in the coming election win the republican primary? Is that the reason for Oliverio's vitriolic ranting? Could it be that Knol's fresh bloom of youth, her poise, being educated, knowledgeable and full of vigor and part of nobody's political system, only points out the baggage Aldo Vagnozzi carries?

That she won't be a rubber stamp for her party's leaders and its political PACs? Can Aldo say that?

I want a state representative that will work against tweaking the Prop. A amendment on home property taxes. There is only one meaning to tweaking - more taxes.

I think Aldo would follow the party line in all matters. From what I've seen of him all these years he seems to be a go along to get along guy.

Is that what the Farmingtons need in Lansing? Or a go getter, stand upper? Someone like Knol? Someone not looking for a last hurrah?

Tom Murphy
Farmington Hills

No disaster here

I am sure most of us would like to think we are irreplaceable, perhaps even indispensable.

And so it was with a chuckle that I read in the Observer's Sept. 5 editorial that the recent announced retirement of city manager Frank Laulhoff and Downtown Development Authority Director Judy Downey, the untimely death of John

Donohue, and my move to Farmington Hills created what "might be called a disaster" for the city of Farmington.

It's nice to be missed, but a disaster? Really? The last time I checked, the city hall is still standing, very ably serving its citizens with competent and caring public employees. Residents continue to offer their time and talents for the good of the community and local merchants are working hard to earn your support.

To be sure, a void has been created with recent departures, but to paraphrase... our community is greater than the sum of its parts. New faces will be seen and different voices will be heard at city hall, all for the better.

I am confident that these vacancies will be filled with people who share in our community's tradition of outstanding public service. Meanwhile, I think Frank and Judy would agree, we will miss our involvement with Farmington far more than we will be missed.

Bill Hartsock
Farmington Hills

Visit for dollars

Parishioners of Our Lady of Sorrows beware. Cardinal Maida's visit is for one thing and one thing only - money.

Isn't it ironic that the Catholic Church he represents can raise millions of dollars for a monument to the Pope in Washington but they have to close 10 local Catholic schools and many more nationwide because they don't have the money?

That is a pretty clear indication of the priorities we are being asked to finance. Not to mention the millions that are needed for the Cathedral in Detroit.

Our Lady of Sorrows has to go to the public school for help because the priorities there are marble, granite, stained glass etc. rather than a Catholic education for the children.

It's all for the glory of the hierarchy but neatly disguised as the glory of God. The hierarchy doesn't care about you or your children and God doesn't care how beautiful the house of worship is.

The Catholic Church has also paid out plenty for victims to be quiet about the pedophile priests. Catholics that is our money! Catholics have got to put their fears of going to hell aside and demand real accountability from the good ol' boy network.

Marie Morgan
Farmington Hills

Poll deals dirty

I recently received a telephone call from a polling company that purported to be conducting a "public opinion survey" of voters in the Farmington/Farmington Hills area.

However, as the pollster worked her way down the list of questions, it became obvious that this was not a legitimate voter poll, but rather a thinly veiled character assassination targeting Aldo Vagnozzi, former Farmington Hills mayor who is currently running for state representative.

The phone caller read a series of statements and then asked whether this information would cause the voter to vote for

Mr. Vagnozzi, against Mr. Vagnozzi or have no effect on the voter's decision.

Many of the statements contained blatant lies, insinuations and half-truths designed to discredit Mr. Vagnozzi.

Considering that his opponent in this race used similar telephone tactics in the primary, is there any doubt as to who is behind this abomination?

I am neither a Democrat nor a Republican. I don't even agree with all of Mr. Vagnozzi's positions; but Mr. Vagnozzi has had a long and distinguished history of service to his community and I believe he deserves better.

Diana M. Jacobs
Farmington Hills

Soccer irony

This past Sunday, a group of high school-age girls from Farmington Hills spent their afternoon playing soccer with another group of girls from Ferndale. The team from Ferndale was sponsored by the Farmington Soccer Club. The team from Farmington Hills was refused by the Farmington Soccer Club the opportunity to play in Farmington Hills.

On no less than five separate occasions during late spring and early summer, I contacted Kim Wong of the Farmington Soccer Club, advising that I have a returning group of girls, all Farmington Hills residents, all interested in playing in the Great Lakes Open Division as they have for the past several years.

Even though soccer tryouts for travel teams were weeks away, I was informed the Club was already set for both travel teams and coaches.

Fortunately, we found a friendly neighbor in West Bloomfield through the Lakes Area Youth Soccer Club.

The FSC Web site indicates that the Club includes representation from both City and School officials.

I wonder if the City representative is aware that an entire team of tax-paying residents were forced to go to West Bloomfield to play soccer. I also wonder whether the FSC officials are aware that high school girls from Farmington Hills have been denied an opportunity to play soccer by the Club, while sponsoring a team from Ferndale.

Ed Hogan
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.

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QUOTABLE

"It's time for the disabled community to fight, to have a blind person on a statewide ticket to address disability issues."

Attorney Richard Bernstein, candidate for Wayne State Board of Governors

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