

## OUR VIEWS

## Respect C'ville's hiring process

When popular Superintendent Thomas Tattan announced he was leaving for Waterford, Clarenceville school officials were left with a very large pair of shoes to fill. In their selection of a highly qualified candidate and their handling of the hiring process, they have demonstrated an openness and a willingness to listen to their school community. This is the way government should work.

Interim Superintendent Cheryl Leach has, in just a few months, gained support from administrators, staff and the families in this small district. We respect her dedication and enthusiasm for the job, which she literally altered her life's plan to accept.

More importantly, however, we applaud Clarenceville officials for giving the public a chance to talk to Leach and ask the kinds of questions people should ask of their district's head honcho. Whether people took advantage of the opportunity, officials couldn't have made it more convenient, hosting a kind of "open house" at a time when staff members and parents could attend.

They also opened up her formal job interview to the public, holding it at a 6 p.m. study session prior to their regular meeting tonight (Thursday).

Sure, it's easier to open up the hiring process in a small community, easier still when your choice is a popular one. But we would point out that any fresh air makes for a fine atmosphere, no matter where you live.

If all goes as planned, in December school board members will officially offer Leach a job for which she has demonstrated strong ability, in a district to which she has shown unwavering dedication. By agreeing to open herself to scrutiny, Leach has also shown parents and staff members the kind of leadership they can expect.

No matter what the outcome, she and everyone else involved in this process deserves their community's respect and admiration.

## Arts supporters need creativity

Supporters of a half-mill arts tax have a good idea why the ballot measure failed for a second time on Nov. 5.

Proposal K spokesperson Steve Hamp, President of Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village, acknowledged in post-election comments, "Voters had to make tough choices with the poor state of the economy."

That's true — and voters have made their priorities clear. Along with approving millions in state bond money to improve aging water and sewer pipes this time around, in August, voters in Oakland and Wayne Counties approved funds for SMART buses and Wayne County voters agreed to shell out more for special education.

It's not likely arts supporters will come back a third time. Hamp told a panel of Observer & Eccentric editors before the election that if Proposal K failed, the organizations involved won't come together again for what has been a failing effort to gain broad public support.

While we supported putting this measure on the ballot, we believe it's now time to put the arts tax to bed. The demand for public funding of essential services is already enormous; an anticipated billion-dollar state budget deficit will only put more weight on the shoulders of local taxpayers.

However, that doesn't mean the 18 organizations affiliated with Proposal K — Wright Museum of African American History, College of Creative Studies, Cranbrook Art Museum, Cranbrook House & Garden, Cranbrook Institute of Science, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit Historical Museum, Detroit Science Center, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Zoo, Henry Ford Museum/Greenfield Village, Holocaust Memorial Center, Meadow Brook Hall, Meadow Brook Theatre, Music Hall, Michigan Opera Theatre and WTVS Public Television — should stop trying to raise funds and rally support. They all rallied behind a political campaign, why not a private regional funding campaign? Are there ways these separate entities could cooperate to offer special events or membership deals that would encourage more patrons to support their efforts?

Every one of the organizations and local arts groups that would have benefited from this small tax contribute in tangible and intangible ways to our quality of life. Their success is critical to the revitalization of the Detroit metropolitan area, and we urge citizens to continue to support them.

More importantly, however, Proposal K supporters should do what they do best and respond to the challenge of continued funding...creatively.



Generosity is a way of life for many businesses and citizens in our communities, as demonstrated by Adrian Owens, owner of Papa John's Pizza. Farmington Area Rotary Club member Jim Fleischer recently presented an award recognizing Owens' support of a variety of worthwhile causes in the Farmington/Farmington Hills area.

## LETTERS

## Dear Mr. Power

Write about something new — as if the last election and all the ones before that did not "go too far." Where have you been? I say hurry for the advertising and the campaigns that pay for it. I am voting yes on Proposal 4. I grant you that it may not be the best proposal ever written; however, it is money slotted for stop smoking campaigns... The money is not intended to go toward "merit" scholarships.

Moreover, do you really believe that opponents of Proposal 4 have not "gone too far" with their advertising? Where is the concern over newspaper on the deleterious effects not getting these scholarships will have? What a hardship! Do you think these well-deserving young men and women may have to get a job? How horrible! If these scholarships are going to make or break a student's chance to go to college — then they and their parents are just so stupid that the kids should not even be allowed into college.

Please, enlighten those of us who started working at ages 14, 15, 16...and managed to get through college attending night classes, working full time and taking on any extra work we could find. Enlighten those of us who did not get a dime from mommy, daddy or anyone else.

Enlighten those of us who did not qualify for financial aid or had the door closed in our faces when we tried to get student loans. Enlighten those of us who not only worked but also had to take out personal bank loans to finish school.

Mr. Power, you write "...something like 3 million a year would go to three guys in Lansing..." You imply that all these big bad private entities are going to spend this money with no accountability. My question then is, just who or what is going to monitor the progress of the meritorious students should Proposal 4 get defeated? To whom will they be accountable?

Mary Sloan  
Farmington Hills

## Dear Chief Dwyer

It was indicated in the metropolitan newspapers that you're leading a drive to bring Texas to Michigan, i.e., restoring capital punishment to Michigan and destroying 150 years of a civilized criminal justice system.

Certainly you have a right to speak out on the subject, but as a taxpayer in Farmington Hills, I request you justify the use of taxpayer time on this project. It would be important that you answer the following:

1. Is the homicide rate in Michigan higher or lower than in Texas or any other comparable capital punishment state? Please provide a range of dates.
2. Are there any "scientific" studies which provide substantial proof that capital punishment is more appropriate than life without parole as a deterrent to first degree homicide?
3. Please be kind enough to provide evidence of studies that would provide the opposite conclusions referred to in your answer to question 2 above.
4. Is there any "scientific evidence" that

the death penalty actually stimulates homicidal tendencies in people?

5. In the last two years please indicate how many prisoners on death row have been found not guilty of the crime for which he or she was sentenced?

6. How many people in Michigan have been found innocent of the crime of homicide after spending years in prison? Please comment on the Eddie Joe Lloyd case which recently received publicity in the paper regarding an alleged confessed murderer who was innocent.

7. Do you favor executing individuals who have committed homicide as a minor under the age of 18?

Chief Dwyer, you certainly know that the answers to the above questions do not support bringing back the barbarism of the death penalty to Michigan. The issue is divisive and will not help in reducing the deplorable crimes of homicide.

Paul Rosen  
Southfield

## Election reflections

Another election has come and gone, and, as before, the same mantra about "doing your patriotic, democratic duty" was emphasized.

At first glance, this seems reasonable since the law, the lawmakers and the law enforcers that we choose have such a significant effect on our lives (taxes, education, regulations, zoning, etc.). But do we, the people, believe that the law should be limited, as Frederick Bastiat said, to being "organized justice" (defending and prosecuting theft, murder and fraud) or do we believe the law is a powerful tool with the possibility of doing so much "good"...if only it were organized and enforced the "right way"?

As long as we believe the latter, as most do, elections will always be critical since there are limitless possible ways of changing the law to collect and redistribute the labor and property of individual citizens for the "common good." With such a view of the law, it behooves every citizen to become politically active, whether it be for defensive (don't take that from me), offensive (give me my share) or altruistic (they should get that) purposes.

But if we subscribed to the former definition of the law, who could or would argue with a few rules that said, "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not kill" and "Thou shalt not bear false witness"? How important would elections be if the only function of elected office was to make sure these few, unanimous rules were enforced?

We've got a new mix of ideas in Washington and Lansing, Republican and Democrat, more or less in line with our individual ideas of the correct way to organize society. But not everyone will be satisfied with the plans implemented by these officials. In two years, times will dictate new ideas and new plans. Elections will require us, once again, to go out and vote "to protect ourselves," "to get our share" or "to help the disenfranchised."

Maybe I'm too simple minded, but I have a hard time regarding a constantly changing suite of laws reflecting the fickle views of the majority as justice when

Providence has provided all the timeless laws we need for a just society.

Jerry Smith  
Farmington

## Guilty as charged

Phil Power, in a recent column, criticized the nonpartisan Mackinac Center for Public Policy for objecting to the state of Michigan spending \$10 million of taxpayers funds (and undisclosed amounts of federal funds) to help the Nature Conservancy purchase 390,000 acres of Upper Peninsula land.

Mr. Power criticized the Center for having a strong reflex to support pure market-based activities.

To that I say guilty as charged. Mr. Power, as chairman-elect of the Michigan chapter of the Nature Conservancy, should be proud of his organization's accomplishments. Using primarily private funding, the Conservancy claims over 12 million acres of U.S. land under its protection.

We applaud that effort, and simply suggest that the Michigan chapter secure private funds for this project as well, rather than relying on already cash-strapped state or federal governments.

The reason the Mackinac Center favors free markets is that we take liberty seriously, and recognize the superiority of private action over central planning, even in environmental preservation. We share this belief with many environmentalists and scholars, including recent Nobel prize-winning economist Vernon L. Smith.

Mr. Power believes that he and Lansing and Washington politicians know how to spend our money better than we do, and I politely disagree. Our families have their own needs and interests, including environmental conservation. If Mr. Power wants to persuade us that his project is more important than ours, let him do so in the time-honored tradition of voluntary philanthropy, not with the force of government.

The Nature Conservancy has shown what private initiative can accomplish; they should continue in this noble tradition.

Joseph P. Overton  
senior vice president  
Mackinac Center for Public Policy

## 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

"Every event, every new face I meet, and every second is an amazing opportunity and a stepping stone of my life."

— Kelly Zander, Miss Farmington-Oakland County