

editorial opinion

Support millage

Farmington school district residents will be asked July 30 to vote on an additional four mills in operating funds for the district.

The effect of the millage on the taxpayer would be to raise the local school tax rate 1.6 mills in Farmington and three mills in West Bloomfield.

The increase in tax rate would be less than the full four mills because: (1) the district has reduced the levy for bonded indebtedness by one mill; and (2) the so-called "variable millage" has been dropped in Farmington and Farmington Hills, effectively reducing the rate by 1.4 mills.

THE FOUR MILL request combines a minimum of at least three mills essential to maintain the current operating level of the district, and additional millage urged by the school board for improvements.

These improvements include both additional programs, personnel and supplies for the district, and repairs for school buildings which have been delayed by past austerity programs.

State aid, which supplies a large portion of the funds for the local district, is distributed on the basis of a formula which reduces the benefit the local district receives from increases in assessments such as many homeowners have been experienced.

But many senior citizens have benefited from improved exemptions this year.

A defeat of the package will put the district in a precarious financial position this fall, no doubt necessitating drastic cuts.

Passage will result in improvements in what is already a fine program.

The millage deserves support.

Tough year on candidates

One result of the exposure of Watergate and its aftermath is becoming increasingly clear: This year may well be marked as the toughest in the nation's history on political candidates and politicians.

CERTAINLY AN interest in politics by citizens at large is welcome and necessary if we are to survive under our present form of government. Should this interest, however, turn into indiscriminate rejection of politics and politicians, we will have thrown out the baby with the bathwater. This danger has subtle implications. If

good men begin to shun the political arena because of an indiscriminate electorate, the result may be mediocre government by unimaginative politicians.

IT IS EQUALLY important to evaluate candidates on the state and local levels with interest and discrimination.

Citizens and candidates alike should shun the battle cry of "turn the rascles out." We urge voters to select candidates on the basis of ability to govern and not allow false issues to sway emotions.

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Eccentricities

by HANK HOGAN



The vote that counts

The state primary election will be held on Tuesday, August 6.

Up to this point we have been overcome with lackluster campaigns and the biggest local issue seems to be apathy.

What probably will happen is that the same old 19 percent of the registered voters will go to the polls and elect our public officials. Then, for the next two to four years the other 81 percent, some of whom will get to the polls in November, will complain about the caliber of government. Yet, they will be part of the cause of the state of government today.

In the state legislature of 148 seats less than two handful would be considered swing districts. The seats are either safe Republican or Democratic districts. That means the person nominated by the dominant party in that district in the primaries will automatically be elected in November. The same is true from the United State Congress down to our county commissioners.

SO, THE GUY who looks around with his chest in the air and says, "I have voted in every Novem-

ber election in the last many years . . ." if he hasn't voted in the primaries he has had very little influence on the course government takes.

One of the unfortunate things about Michigan primaries is that they occur in midsummer when people are taking vacations and are less interested in what is happening in the world.

SINCE THE general election doesn't occur until three months after the primaries, the voters are plagued with overlong, drawn-out campaign seasons.

Americans would do well to learn from other nations that the shorter the campaign season, the more people vote on the issues. Even politicians should appreciate the shorter campaign season because it would cut the cost of elections.

We have heard about Watergate and we have heard that there is a great desire to turn the rascals out and we have heard that there are many new, young faces that are idealistic enough to want to change the world. But, none of these things will come to pass if only the party regulars turn out at the primary.

Observation Point

by PHILIP H. POWER



More than one man

Father Theodore Hesburgh is president of the University of Notre Dame. He is also a decently-instincted, tough minded, articulate and challenging man.

His column in last week's Newsweek magazine says so much to the heart of our current problems of national leadership that I'd like to share some of it with you.

"We keep looking for a single leader on a white horse," Father Hesburgh writes. "It took more than a single leader to get America born. After the series of shocks we have undergone lately, it will take more than one man on horseback to get us back together as a nation that has to rekindle its pristine idealism, restore confidence and face its destiny with hope and renewed energy . . ."

"My thesis is that what will be needed is a congeries of leaders, the very best possible from whatever source, to get America back on track . . ."

"It is not that America lacks leaders — rather that most of them are avoiding Washington like the plague, and politics as well. Might not the next President — before he is elected and in order to be elected — let us know the kind of people he desires and can indeed enlist to share the momentous task that will await him on election?"

HE'S SO RIGHT.

In times of trouble, people instinctively turn to the over-simplified, seemingly final solution. A single leader — to cleanse and inspire us — is such a simplistic answer to our problem.

But no one man runs America, or can. In part this is because America runs itself through a strong and ancient tradition of vigorous and competent state and local government. In part, it's because no one man can possibly know

everything and make all decisions by himself. He needs a team around him, just as a quarterback needs a good defensive line or the president of a business needs a good organization.

The greatest damage that the tragedy of Richard Nixon's presidency has done to the country is to have driven away from public service the best and the brightest of our land. My sources in Washington tell me that there are over 250 top level posts in the present administration standing unfilled, not because a decision is needed on whom to appoint but rather because people of stature and integrity willing to associate themselves with President Nixon cannot be found.

(This charge will not be in the Bill of Impeachment that the House of Representatives will soon debate, but it is the real source for my own belief that the President should be impeached and convicted.)

FATHER HESBURGH set forth some criteria for the people he feels ought to be ready and willing to serve with our next President. They must be persons of unquestioned integrity and intelligence, imbued with the humanity that made this nation great, and not for the most part driven by overweening political ambition.

So, too, must be our next president, in order to attract such men and women. And our next president must also be free of the sordid preoccupation with the seizure of political power and paranoid terror of legitimate criticism that have so characterized the Nixon administration.

There is a vast reservoir of talented, decent, honorable Americans, never willing to ever to serve in the great cause of public service. The next president will be the person who can tap that reservoir.

From our readers

Why increase taxes?

To the Editor:
I know that millage increases for the benefit of schools is a highly controversial subject. Schools need money to operate but the taxpayer is becoming tired of accepting the unfavorable end of the stick.

Why is it now that the election is over and the mandate of the people is no increase in school millage at this time, does your paper favor an affirmative vote in the special election?

When the Michigan School Board Association and other special interest groups show some concern for the plight of the taxpayers of this state, perhaps these taxpayers will be happy to reciprocate.

I am referring to the Senate Bill #64, introduced by Senator Harry A. DeMasso which is an inspired bit of legislation to provide taxpayers with the assurance that any improvements or maintenance of less than \$4,000 in any tax year will not increase the cash value of their property.

According to a recent newspaper article, this bill has been stalled in the House Taxation Committee and Senator John T. Bowman says that no action will be taken on this bill simply because it is opposed by special interest groups, one of which is the Michigan School Board Association.

AT PRESENT, homeowners are penalized with additional taxes for showing pride of ownership, while the fellow who lets his place rundown is rewarded for his slovenliness and gets the tax break. Surely, the property owners must have some incentive to improve their property in order to prevent progressive slum conditions.

Until these groups discontinue their opposition to every bill which would relieve the burden on the taxpayer and eliminate some of

the injustices of our property tax laws, why in heavens name should property owners vote for millage increases?

Nick Day
Farmington
July 2, 1974

Buildings cause concern

To the Editor:

We, as other homeowners in the City of Farmington, are among its citizens who are concerned about the deterioration of some of the buildings in downtown Farmington. Particularly, we are concerned how such deterioration affects the business economy and property value of this and the surrounding area.

Joining the Farmingtonians who rightly cherish the small town atmosphere which once was Farmington, may we suggest that perhaps the city could work with the state in planning a re-routing of Business 96 to a location south of the city which would bypass the heart of downtown Farmington.

In mind was the utilization of a greater part of Freedom Road which appears to have ample expansion room on the North shoulder. Any widening of Grand River West and through the City of Farmington would serve only to magnify the traffic and parking problems.

The city fathers are now taking and should take the time to consider all aspects of sustaining and improving the City of Farmington for its grass root citizens.

It may well mean buying and razing some of the vacant, unusable buildings in existence in order to design and build an attractive business and professional mall with suitable and ample parking.

This would mean the city would have to seek funds through bonding or government subsidizing, but these appear to be the only feasible alternatives.

In the final analysis, the citizens of the City of Farmington must join with business and government in a co-operative effort to solve this problem.

Mrs. E. B. Rowe
Farmington
July 20, 1974

Resident 'appalled'

To the Editor:

On Monday evening July 8, numerous citizens attended a Bloomfield Township meeting to protest the proposed rezoning of a portion of property, presently zoned one-family residential, to accommodate a gigantic office project at Long Lake and Telegraph.

I was appalled by the treatment several citizens received from Homer Case. He was hostile and rude, telling one citizen to shut up and so embarrassing and intimidating another that she vowed never to come back to another township meeting.

The fact that Homer Case, reported to be the highest-paid supervisor in Michigan, would attempt to intimidate the very citizens he is supposed to represent, citizens expressing their point of view, should not go unnoticed by the voting public.

Start a write-in campaign, township voters, for another candidate for the August primary to dethrone "King Case." And come back dismayed citizen — to the public hearing on the rezoning is July 22. "King Case" does not necessarily know what is good for the township.

Sue Zeising
Bloomfield Hills
July 10, 1974

'At it again'

To the Editor:

For nine of our 12 years residency in the Wing Lake area, the Oakland County Road Commission was responsible for the maintenance of our dirt roads.

The service was minimal and calls to the commission were usually ignored. Then Bloomfield Township road crews took over and we have had dependable service including regular grading, sand and over ice, plowing, and calcium chloride for dust in the summer.

Now word has reached us that the Oakland County Road Commission is "at it again" in our area arbitrarily threatening to pave our roads.

THE GREATEST concern that we have is the preservation of Wing Lake. Bloomfield Township reports that sewers will begin to be installed in January 1975.

If the Road Commission forces paving we will be assessed for both roads and sewers. Which is most important for the lake?

It can only be assumed that the Oakland County Board of Commissioners plus the road commission is indulging in political hanky-panky — so what is new in Oakland County?

Betty Augustine
Birmingham
July 18, 1974

Absentee vote

To the Editor:

If you are going to be away on election day, Aug. 6, you can still vote in the primary by using an absentee ballot.

Absentee ballots are available for you if you expect to be absent from the community in which you are registered on election day, if you are physically unable to attend the polls without the assistance of another person, if you cannot attend because of the tenets of your religion, if you are an election worker in another precinct or if you are 65 years of age or older.

In order to get an absentee ballot, obtain an application form from your township or city clerk. The request for this form can be made by phone, by mail or in person. The completed form should be

returned to your township or city clerk, and you will then receive an absentee ballot. You may also receive an absentee ballot by way of a letter which contains the statutory reason for the application and your signature.

The deadline for receiving applications is 2 p.m. on the Saturday preceding the election. The absentee ballots may be received by the clerk any time from 75 days prior to the election until poll closing on election day.

The right to vote is an obligation, not a privilege, and your vote is especially important in these days of political crisis. Primaries are a crucial part of the democratic process, so do your part. If you cannot vote in person, then vote by absentee ballot.

Ronna J. Perlmutter
President,
Birmingham-Bloomfield
League of Women Voters
July 17, 1974

Story criticized

To the Editor:

The Observer & Eccentric could have done a much better job of reporting a fairly important story headlined "Manager may get pay raise . . ." which referred to a prospective 10 percent increase in the salary of Troy's City Manager Frank Gerstenecker.

Surely the taxpayers are entitled to more information than the Observer & Eccentric provided. The story's short, inconclusive nature was put back on an inside page. The account said that Mr. Gerstenecker is paid \$27,300 a year . . . and "has been city manager for four and a half years." But it did not say whether Mr. Gerstenecker had been hired at his present salary . . . whether he had received a raise each year . . . or provide any information at all which might be helpful to the Troy readers who, after all, pay the taxes which support both Mr. Gerstenecker and all Troy city employees.

The Observer & Eccentric quotes "an official" as saying that the Troy City Council would be "embarrassed" if more than a 10% increase were granted to the city manager because . . . "They realize no way can they pay the guy what they feel he's worth . . ."

Now — what kind of responsible reporting is that? The "official" is nameless . . . his language, if accurately reported, is that of a semi-literate sixth-grader. . . and the Observer & Eccentric does nothing to get further into a really important story.

The point is: Does Troy's city manager get paid as much as he should be paid? If he is unhappy, of course, he could move to another community if he were offered better pay. Cannot the Observer & Eccentric inquire into these matters . . . and do a thorough job of informing its readers?

Frank W. Rising
Troy

Roads graveled

To the Editor:

As a resident of Avon Township, I have attended many township board meetings.

I was present at the particular board meeting last fall when Mr. Earl Borden, as chairman of the Avon Township Road Committee, presented his report and proposal to gravel several roads in the township badly in need of improvement. After much discussion, Mr. Borden's proposal to spend the amount of \$50,000 specifically designated in the Avon Township budget for road improvement was passed.

As one who has benefited by this first gravel program in the township, in 15 years, I wish to commend Mr. Borden for his efforts on behalf of all Avon Township residents.

Freds M. Humstad
(Mrs. Norman A.)
Rochester
July 22, 1974