

editorial opinion

Four mills for Farmington

Farmington school district voters have three choices on the April 29 special election ballot. We recommend a favorable vote on a four mill tax increase as the best alternative available for the community and the school district.

No time in the recent past has been less favorable for a tax increase. In addition, increasing taxes is not necessarily the answer to all the problems facing the Farmington schools.

However, failure to support an adequate school district program may do irreparable harm to the community. The traditional excellence of the Farmington school district has been eroded by inflation and lack of public confidence.

IF THAT is not corrected, a facet of the Farmington community which has been an important and valuable part of its makeup will decline further. A desirable residential community must have a competitive school system to make it attractive to potential home buyers—and make the prices current homeowners paid worthwhile.

There are two millage questions on the ballot next week. The first proposition,

for four mills, is a better investment than the second two mill question.

Proposition one will allow small but significant improvements in the school district's program, which no longer equals, in variety of classes or depth of study, programs in neighboring districts. The second question means a program the same as this year's.

THE VOTE next week will be the third request for a school tax increase in the past three years. Taxpayer resistance to pleas for higher millage seems to stem principally from disenchantment with the school board and administration. Voters demand quality education for their investment of money and their children's time.

Quality education includes both a responsive board and a committed administration. However, the board and administration's job is to allow teachers to do the best job possible educating students. It is the teachers and students who are the backbone of the school district.

A tax increase, unwelcome as it is in economic hard times, is needed to keep the Farmington area's deserved reputation as a fine residential area.

Susan Averill writes

On the bright side of failures

There are always several different ways to regard anything, but when it comes right down to it, I prefer positiveness. It puts you in a oneupmanship position when you have to deal with a problem.

Or as somebody once said, it's not a problem. It's a challenge and an opportunity. An opportunity to be creative. To set things straight and maybe even build a strong foundation for another endeavor.

Well, take the millage for instance.

Nobody would deny that it seems to be an issue of critical importance in the Farmington school district. For some, it's a political issue, for others a financial question, and for still others it is a philosophical question of societal responsibility.

The issue is multi-faceted, and no one way of looking at it can produce adequate argument for passage or defeat. The millage proposals must be considered carefully from all angles before a responsible voter pulls a voting machine lever.

If nothing else, such consideration will provide you with ready-made answers to anyone challenging your decision.

Anyway, excuse me, I am digressing; let me get back to positiveness and its application to millage failure, specifically.

I have heard the point made that certain science books on the secondary level are out of date. That's undeniably true: "Someday, man will land on the moon," one of them reads, and it has only been six years since July 20, 1969.

Needless to say, if the millage doesn't pass, there won't be new and updated books. And some say even if the two-mill proposal passes, only nominal numbers of new texts could be purchased to replace worn and ragged ones.

BUT LET US peel back the exterior of the clouds and check the silver lining. Positiveness requires there always is one, you know.

School could become a challenge, an opportunity to pit your knowledge against those instruments of established author-

ity: books. Teachers could make assignments for students to comb thier texts for outdated facts and figures, bestowing awards on those who discovered the greatest amount.

Naturally, the students would also have to provide the correct information.

Farmington teachers might even some day be nationally recognized for their ability to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. With such an educational achievement, who could doubt that Farmington's fame would be spread far and near?

American school systems are touted in Europe as ideals toward which to work. To date, Europeans haven't been able to allocate as much money to education as Americans. But if the millage fails, Farmington may be among the vanguard in showing them what wonders may be accomplished with only minimal materials.

As I said, the benefits to the students themselves could be tremendous. Students would feel they had constructively contributed to their own education, thereby making the experience an active rather than a passive one, and everyone knows an active role makes more of an impression than passivity.

And even more valuable, students would be taught independence of thought. It would be graphically demonstrated that just because it's printed, it isn't necessarily the truth.

They would be taught to look behind bookish authority, and check printed opinions and facts against what they know or believe to be true. And it won't stop there, for if printed authority is suspect, so is any other kind.

Who knows? If Farmington students had the opportunity sooner, maybe Watergate and other political scandals would never have happened. At least not because of public gullibility.

So there it is for positiveness. And just remember, if the millage fails, opportunity knocks.

Eccentricities

by HANK HOGAN



200-year turnabout

Two hundred years ago last Friday, Paul Revere took his famous ride, and the American Revolutionary War began.

The reasons for breaking away from the mother country were not set down in writing until early the next summer.

The combination of the prose of Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence and Abe Lincoln's words in the Gettysburg address more or less sum up the American feeling of freedom, liberty and government of, by and for the people.

IT WOULD be well for all of us in the coming bicentennial year to re-read these documents to see what unjust actions are enough to take the gigantic step of revolution for independence.

It is too bad that our Presidents and Secretaries of State over the past decade didn't have time to re-read them because somehow we have gotten off the track.

Observation Point

by PHILIP H. POWER



Cut container litter

It's a modification of those old Burma Shave signs you used to see along the road:

Spring is spring;

Grass is green;

Where last year's litter lay is.

There's so much of it, now that the snow has gone. Along the street by the house, beside the expressways, around entrances to businesses.

Litter is ugly. It's expensive to clean up. And if you consider the natural resources of paper and metal and glass used in packaging, together with the energy required to manufacture it, throw-away litter is a terrible waste.

Which is why there is presently in the State Legislature a bill requiring the use of returnable beverage containers.

That isn't to say that all litter is from pop bottles and beer cans. But they comprise a big part of it; and because glass and aluminum do not decompose as paper does, the beverage containers are a particularly irritating and long-lasting class of litter.

THE ARGUMENTS against the bill are essentially self-serving.

1. Returnable beverage containers would cut jobs now being provided to workers making the endless stream of glass bottles and aluminum cans now being used. Probably that's true, but an Oregon State University study (where they have a ban on throwaway containers) indicates that any job loss was more than offset by increased jobs in trucking and handling sectors. In addition, a Western Michigan University economist who looked at the problem concluded that the net job effect of a returnable container bill in Michigan would be to increase jobs in Michigan by several thousands.

2. Making returnable beverage containers the

We are a Republic that believes in life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

We believe in self determination of government and the government must operate with the consent of the governed.

IF YOU look at our foreign policy, we have been pouring billions of dollars into countries that make no pretense of rule by the people.

Look at Cuba. We supported the dictator. What about South America? We always seem to be on the side of the generals.

China is supposed to be an example of supporting the majority view of the people involved, yet we ended up supporting a dictator on a small island and pretending that it was a powerful nation.

In Southeast Asia we got involved in a civil war and possibly delayed the people involved from making decisions about their own destiny.

Two hundred years ago we rebelled against what we thought was tyranny.

Why do we find ourselves supporting it now?

law would do little in reducing litter. False, evidently. The Oregon highway department found after the non-returnable containers were banned, highway beverage litter dropped 90 per cent. Other studies indicate litter reductions of the order of 60 per cent, which is still fairly good.

Evidently, the folks in Oregon are sufficiently concerned with saving money that they are willing to take their returnable bottles and cans back to the store for a refund; there is no reason to believe that Michigan people are any less thrifty.

3. Banning non-returnable containers would be an aggravation, especially for the retailers who have to put up with time lost at the check-out counter, and the handling charges. True. But on balance, is it in the public interest to make our land ugly and waste natural resources and energy in making returnable cans and bottles simply because of aggravation? I think not.

If retailers find their costs increased by such procedures, the solution is to pass them along to the people who buy such products, rather than forcing the people who do not to subsidize those who do via higher energy costs and litter clean-up crews along the roads.

THE ARGUMENTS are clear. They favor passage of the bill banning non-returnable beverage containers.

The many people in this area who are concerned about the environment or who just don't like the mess on our landscape can have a hand in helping out. Just write your state legislator (his or her name and address appear periodically in this newspaper) and make your views known.

If the people speak, most often the Legislature acts. When the people fail to speak, the lobbyists have their way.

From our readers

Figuring millage

Editor:

A question asked by many people and certainly of interest to everyone is, how much will the millage increase cost?

It should be pointed out that it will cost everyone in the Farmington School District something different. The figures are based on the individual's State Equalized Valuation (SEV) of his or her home. Taxpayers should first determine what their SEV is before attempting to compute their increase. The SEV found on homes is set by the state as one-half the market value of the home.

The example we use here is on a home with a SEV of \$20,000 (one half of its market value). The cost if the four (4) mill proposal passed would be \$80 per year. The cost if the two (2) mill proposal passed would be \$40 per year.

It should be pointed out that a "yes" vote on the four mill proposal and a "yes" vote on the two mill proposal would not mean an increase of \$120 but would mean an increase of \$80, because the two mill proposal is only effective if the four mills does not pass. The "Yes, Kids Count Committee" supporters of the millages reminds all voters favoring four mills to also vote yes for two mills. Again, because the two mill proposal is only effective if the four mills does not pass.

BAILEY

Yes, Kids Count Committee
—Farmington

Mr. Kanan and his staff are doing a commendable job in spite of the weaknesses in the system, and more significantly, in spite of the failure of our citizens to provide operating funds commensurate with the rapid rise in costs over the past few years.

We believe governing bodies in general have been lax in assuring a fair return for the tax payer's dollar but there comes a time when even the most severe crisis should recognize there is only so far the administration can go in turning the situation around. Seven years of squeezing is probably about as much as they and we can tolerate.

Our main concern is the continuing quality of the secondary schools. Certainly some of the so-called enrichment programs may be questionable, but most are helpful in building a well-rounded citizen.

We would hope that any future graduate who chooses to end his or her formal education at that point could finish in an attitude of hope and optimism rather than in an atmosphere of the depressing environment of overcrowded classrooms, disgruntled teaching staffs, skimpy educational materials and reduced curricula.

We have come to the conclusion that the most immediate thing we can do to help the children and our country is to vote for an increased millage. We would like our third child to have the same deserved advantage the others had whether or not she elects to attend college.

In spite of moving almost annually they were prepared for either option.

We feel it is necessary to vote for the four mills, but we also urge citizens to support the school board by attending the meetings to assure the most efficient possible application of the funds.

MR. AND MRS.
CHARLES L. CONE
Farmington Hills

Jaycees say 'yes'

Editor:

At a membership meeting held on April 8, 1975, the Farmington Area Jaycees resolved to publicly support

the "Yes-Kids Count in Farmington" committee's efforts to insure the passage of the four mill proposal on the April 29 millage election.

The Jaycees urge Farmington residents to vote and to be sure to mark their ballots "yes" on both the four and two mill issues.

NORR KELLER, President
Farmington Area Jaycees

Yes vote asked

Editor:

Relatively few powerful interest groups are committed to public education, so once again Farmington, along with many other districts, struggles for adequate school funds. Hopefully, we will soon change our archaic system of financing education. Until then I feel the most reasonable response is a "yes" vote on Propositions 1 and 2 on April 29.

CAROLYN RADER
Farmington

More Blarney

Editor:

A note of congratulation on your "Blarney Has Its Day" article on the 17th of this month.

The concluding with a proverbial toast in Irish was an authentic compelling note.

EOIN McKERNAN
President, Irish
American Cultural Institute

READERS FORUM

Letters must be original copies and contain the signature and address of the sender.

Limit letters to 300 words.

Farmington Observer & Eccentric

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