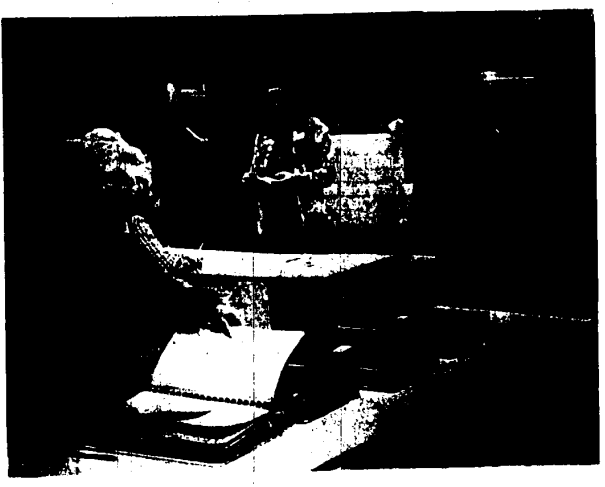


editorial opinion



2 views:
election blues

Farmington School District voters turned out in record numbers for a special millage election April 29. At Monday's school board election, though, the turn out was about five per cent of those registered. Observer & Eccentric photographer Harry Mauthe took both pictures at Farmington Junior High about 6 p.m. election night. Monday, only election workers were at the polls. In April (Right), lines stretched all the way around the gym.



Voters sat this one out

When Farmington's new school board begins closing schools because of declining enrollment, only five per cent of the parents in the district will have a right to complain—only five per cent of the registered voters cast ballots Monday for the school board.

Most observers were predicting a light turnout because of the effort which went into the April 29 millage election. Campaign workers sat out the school board race after putting forth for the millage.

The voters, also, decided to sit this election out.

SCHOOL DISTRICT elections usually produce small voter participation, although school board decisions probably affect residents more than any other local government.

That trend appeared to have been reversed in Farmington in April. A record number of voters cast ballots in a special election.

Now, the promise of that election has been dimmed by a five per cent turnout. The most important outcome of the April 29 election—the demonstration of interest Farmington-area residents have in their schools—has been cast into doubt.

FOR IF RESIDENTS don't bother to vote for a school board member, will they bother to visit the schools their children attend? Will they provide the parental assistance required for schools to do a good job?

Will the Farmington area have the benefit of their knowledge and participation in community projects?

The Farmington area has lost some of the community feeling which was generated in the millage drive. Now that five per cent of registered voters have decided an election for them, it's up to those who didn't vote to show they're still interested in the Farmington community.

Your ecology calendar

Ecology-minded persons who wish to save cans, bottles or newspapers for recycling may use these facilities:

To prepare glass, thoroughly wash the containers, remove all metal caps and rings from the glass and separate the glass by color.

To prepare cans, clean only. Paper need not be removed.

Newspapers should be tied in bundles with heavy string or rope or secured in heavy paper bags.

- FARMINGTON—A glass recycling center operates on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon at the west end of the Farmington Hills city hall parking lot. The city hall is at 11 Mile and Orchard Lake.
- SOUTHFIELD—in the old city of offices, 28000 Berg Road at Ten and One-half Mile, one block east of Telegraph.
- LATHRUP VILLAGE—At the Public Services Building, 19101

Twelve Mile Road, adjacent to the high school. Newspapers are collected 10 a.m.-3 p.m. by volunteers the first Saturday of each month.

• GROVES ECOLOGY CLUB—Bundled or bagged newspapers and cardboard will be collected from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Friday and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday the second week of each month at the high school's front parking lot.

Eccentricities

by HANK HOGAN



Ridiculous parking hubbub

There is presently a dispute in some local courts about parking violations. Usually, local law says that there is a presumption if a car is found illegally parked that it was parked there by the owner of the vehicle. Hence, if no one pays the parking fine the municipality seeks a warrant for the arrest of the owner of the car.

In the United States a man is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. This local type of law flies in the face of this presumption.

IN THE STATE of Michigan a person cannot be arrested by a police officer for a misdemeanor (minor crime) unless the crime is committed in the presence of the officer.

Judge Carl Ingraham of the 48th District Court has refused to issue warrants for the arrest of owners of cars involved in parking violations unless the officer has personally seen the alleged criminal parking the car. This is a good law and the judge is correct.

The municipalities are up in arms because threat of arrest is the most effective way of coercing people to pay their fines.

THE RIDICULOUS part of the hubbub is that illegal parking shouldn't be a crime in the first

place except possibly where traffic is impeded or near such things as fire hydrants where the rights of others are involved.

It is non-violent, doesn't effect the safety of others and is a waste of police time in enforcement.

Parking, especially metered parking, is the using of municipal space for a consideration. It is a type of space rental. We stopped throwing people in jail a long time ago when they didn't pay their other rents.

WE HAVE MANY such statutory crimes such as this that take up so much police time they don't have enough time to do their real job, which is protecting citizens from harm.

Some municipalities even have laws that make it a criminal offense not to return library books on time.

A recent presidential commission suggested that all non-violent acts that do not involve or harm other people be decriminalized so that effort could be mobilized against more serious crimes.

I think that we should certainly start decriminalizing purely commercial ventures such as not paying rent for parking spaces and library books

Observation Point

by PHILIP H. POWER



The man and the senator

The only guys I know who ever call him Senator Philip A. Hart are on newspapers or the wire services, where the style rules require the full, formal title. To everyone else, he is decent, thoughtful, concerned Phil Hart—who happens to be a United States senator.

That's the real point behind the near-universal regret that greeted Phil Hart's announcement last week that he had decided not to run for another term in 1978. The stature and quality of Phil Hart the man never got lost behind the political needs accompanying his long office in the Senate.

In this respect, Phil Hart offered blazing contrast and soft-spoken indictment of nearly every other major politician in the land.

HE OFFERED something else too, to those who believe in the importance of the political process in the management of our affairs: Living proof that a politician can be overwhelmingly successful without coping out as a human being.

In this, Phil Hart gave cause for hope to countless men and women, of both political parties, who took his career and his personality as a role model and who concluded from inspecting his record that even in these times it was possible to be a good politician and a good man at the same time.

In evaluating his career, some newspapers in this area said Phil Hart was a nice guy and had been a good senator and all that, but that had he been a little tougher or a little more ambitious he could have made it to the vice presidency or even higher. This misses the point; Phil Hart has been a great senator precisely because he has been prepared to reject the notions that winning is the only thing and that the higher you go, the better you are.

WHEN THE history of the politics of the past decade is written, I suspect we will find that Phil

Hart will have been a man in public life with a content and a style ahead of his time.

He was one of the first to get into consumer issues; I still remember the laughter he created when he counted the cherries inside the frozen pie and compared that with the huckously inaccurate picture on the package. He was one of the earliest to point up the danger of our increasingly concentrated economy, in which fewer and fewer firms control more and more of the resources, and to then detail just how damaging a development this is for fair and full competition.

He was one of the first politicians to make public self-deprecation not merely a pose of humility but actually a method of helping educate the public into the realities of politics. He was one of the first to understand that political speeches are not just occasions to stir up the troops but, in fact, an opportunity to use quiet talk and good language in the service of inquiry.

PHIL HART talking with a small group of people is a remarkable experience, for it reveals so much about the man and the senator.

Groping for just the right word, listening to others with his hands pyramided and then gently working up a point with long fingers, hesitating, making his case with care and precision, saying he doesn't know when he doesn't, Phil Hart is one of the few politicians with whom you can have a conversation rather than listen to a monologue.

He decided not to run in his own way, with care and honesty, and after considerable deliberation. The decision is in character with his career, and it leaves me with a mingled sensation of admiration and regret.

Phil Hart has served us all very, very well, as a senator and as a man.

From our readers

Meadow Brook Hall

Editor:

I was appalled to read both the article and your editorial comment regarding Meadow Brook Hall in the Observer and Eccentric issue of May 22.

I think that both do a great disservice to Mrs. Wilson's memory, to the hall, and to the community.

I knew Mrs. Wilson well for a number of years through efforts involving use of the hall for the benefit of scholarship funds for Oakland University. She frequently spoke of her love of the hall and her fervent hope that it would remain a living, viable entity after her death.

Mrs. Wilson was a warm and generous woman, but she was also very pragmatic. She knew the value of money, and the cost of maintaining such an edifice as Meadow Brook Hall.

In my opinion, in spite of the stilted wording of her will, she would fully approve the present use of the hall, and would appreciate the novel and innovative ways and means used by Don Elms and his staff to share the beauty of Meadow Brook Hall with the community and still guarantee its perpetuity.

MRS. R. JAMISON WILLIAMS
Birmingham

wise, the board members wouldn't exhibit this silent reluctance to respond to the community.

At the public hearing on school closings held at Barnum Junior High, the Barnum Ad-Hoc committee challenged the very consideration to close its school. Point by point, the committee used the board's own criteria for school closings to show why Barnum should not have even been considered for closing.

In fact, the board's 19 criteria for school closings became 19 reasons for retaining Barnum Junior High as a vital source for education and community stability.

However, when the board members were asked to respond to the statements and questions of the committee and citizens, their response was "we will answer your questions after all the school hearings have been completed."

To date, the official response is "whereas" and "it is the will of the voters" and 19 "the it resolved" statements which answer none of the questions addressed to the board by the community.

The board members have failed to respond to the needs of the community as a whole and more specifically, the City of Birmingham. Their actions are underserving of the public's trust and they should be subject to recall.

urge your support of the petition drive to recall the members of the Birmingham Board of Education.

TIMOTHY B. SPRINGER
Birmingham

Michigan was demonstrated recently by the leadership of 38 Democratic and Republican members of the legislature in introducing a tough, comprehensive political reform bill into the legislature.

This bipartisan group of legislators has pledged to fight for enactment of this bill without weakening amendments by summer recess.

Senator Daniel Cooper and Representative Joseph Forbes played central roles in the development and introduction of this bill. Without their determination and commitment, Michigan would not be on the verge of enacting the best political reform law in the land.

The voters of this area are to be congratulated for having the wisdom to elect people with the courage and vision of Senator Cooper and Representative Forbes to represent them in Lansing.

But it is not enough to thank them for their initiative in advancing the cause of political reform. They will need our support in the form of letters to other legislators to fend off the pressure of special interest lobbyists seeking to kill reform.

We must show these public spirited legislators like Senator Cooper and Representative Forbes that when they fight for us, we will fight for them.

DOUG ROSS
Executive Director
Michigan Common Cause

In favor of recall

Editor:

Is it so unreasonable to expect a response to questions asked of the Birmingham Board of Education? Questions relating to the recent decisions on school closings have been raised by responsible citizens.

These same questions have been avoided and left unanswered by the board members. This shunning action indicates to me that the decisions in question are indefensible. Other

Legislators thanked

Editor:

At a time when public confidence in government has dipped so low, it is more important than ever that conscientious men and women in public office act to restore citizen trust.

That such men and women exist in

READERS FORUM

Letters must be original copies and contain the signature and address of the sender. Limit letters to 300 words.

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