

Letters: Election 2004

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COUNTY CLERK

Haines makes office work unusually well

I just finished up another visit to the county clerk's office on Main Street and this time I promised myself I'd zip off a letter to The News supporting re-election of whomever is responsible. Simply put, the place runs like a top. A never-ending need for more and more kids' birth certificates seems to be the main reason for the numerous visits over the years, but there have been partnership registrations, election issues and passport issues, too. Unlike so many other government offices, I don't dread going there. The staff is pleasant, attentive and efficient. And the place is clean and well cared for. I am sure Peggy Haines gets a lot of help from the staff, but why anyone would want to change the leadership of something that seems to run so well, is beyond me. I really don't know about her opponent, nor do I care about her party affiliation. I just know the place "works" under Haines' watch. I encourage all voters to think about your experience with the clerk's office and vote accordingly.

Peter Fink, Ann Arbor

Kestenbaum would guard voters' rights

It is time to replace Peggy Haines as Washtenaw County clerk. I regret saying this, because I have known Peggy for many years, and she is a gracious and charming lady. Unfortunately, she has shown a serious disregard for safeguarding the political rights of all Washtenaw citizens, which is her most important job.

Just a few months ago, the Michigan Court of Appeals ruled that Haines had illegally invalidated hundreds of signatures on petitions to recall several township officials. In addition, Haines invalidated the petition signatures of some blind and handicapped voters, because they had been assisted in completing their petition entries. The right of recall is guaranteed in the Michigan Constitution. Haines seems to have been more motivated by bureaucratic convenience and rigidity, or by a desire to protect other elected officials, than by the need to protect voters' rights. To make matters worse, thousands of taxpayer dollars have been spent on legal fees defending Haines' actions.

Astonishingly, the spending continues, because Haines is still appealing the decision against her, even though it is too late to have the recall election.

I also know Lawrence Kestenbaum, the Democratic candidate to replace Haines.

I will be voting for him, because I know that he will make the protection of voters' rights his No. 1 priority.

Thomas F. Wieder, Ann Arbor

Haines represents best in public service

The voters of Washtenaw County have a wonderful tradition of re-electing our county clerk-register of deeds.

In all of the excitement of this election I urge you to re-elect Peggy Haines who represents the best in public service and dedication to integrity and accountability. Haines maintains her enthusiasm in keeping us informed on the services of her office and visiting every part of the county on a regular basis.

John W. Milford, Pinckney

Haines has always done excellent work

Peggy Haines deserves to be re-elected to the post of clerk-register of deeds. She runs on the Republican ticket, but I would recommend her if she were a Democrat or an Independent. Who knows or cares about her views on the controversial issues of the day? These matters do not affect her duties, and she keeps her views on these matters to herself. Haines' job is keeping vital records and making them available to the public. These records include deeds, mortgages, marriage licenses, birth and death records and court files. She began her career in this office over 30 years ago, became the clerk-register of deeds in 1990 and has always done an excellent job. I know this because I have been in the title insurance business since 1972, which means that we access these records and deal with her staff every day. Haines is truly a public servant who treats anyone who contacts her office as a VIP. Do yourself a favor and vote for Peggy Haines on the Republican ticket.

Ronald H. Fletcher, Ann Arbor

PITTSFIELD TOWNSHIP

Association supports GOP candidates

Because of the rapid growth we are experiencing in this community, decisions being made now will affect us for many years. Our next board will be casting votes on measures affecting the local economy, smart growth and public safety, to name a few of the priorities in the coming years.

The Pittsfield Township Board of Trustees can have a big impact on the quality of life for our families and the future of our community. It is important for a board to have basic values such as credibility, experience, honesty, integrity and responsibility to make a difference in the community. The Pittsfield Residents for Better Government represent just these values.

The members of the Pittsfield Township Clerical Dispatchers Association are pleased to offer their endorsement of these Republican candidates for the Pittsfield Township Board of Trustees:

* Bob Bykowski for supervisor;

* Nancy Carter for clerk;

* Cynthia Sidney for treasurer;

* Cathy Brown-Issel for trustee;

* Steven Handy for trustee;

* Chris Tressler for trustee;

* Debbie Williams for trustee.

The Pittsfield Residents for Better Government are bringing with them, their experience in business and management, which will serve the township well. Their many hours of volunteer work within the community exemplify their dedication to the community.

Philip J. Nowacki, Ann Arbor

Woolley should stay on parks commission

As a long time friend of Evelyn Woolley I know she is enthusiastic about parks. Whenever she travels, she visits and takes pictures of interesting family and handicap "accommodating" parks. But her favorite parks are in Pittsfield Township where she is seeking re-election to the Pittsfield Township Park Commission.

"Four years as a parks commissioner isn't enough," she told me, "especially when an important 2005 goal is to develop a site master plan for the entire Pittsfield Preserve as an entity. Even though it will necessarily be done in phases to take advantage of matching grants (hopefully) from the Department of Natural Resources that, (again hopefully) Pittsfield can afford to match, it will require a lot of creativity and imagination, and suggestions from the residents to make this work, so that each phase complements the next.

That vision certainly held true for Lillie Park, recently designed and developed by Evelyn and the other current commissioners, each phase as it was developed fitting itself so neatly into the previous phase that it flows seamlessly and naturally, yet offering many different park experiences from passive to active.

Evelyn doesn't want to waste all of this accumulated knowledge. Please re-elect Evelyn Woolley to the Pittsfield park commission on Nov. 2.

Ann Krimbacher, Ann Arbor

Current board has been undemocratic

As a Pittsfield Township resident I will be splitting my vote between party candidates. While I will be voting for Democrats Kerry-Edwards at the top of the ticket, I will be voting the Republican slate for Pittsfield Township offices.

The current board, running for re-election and calling themselves Democrats have acted most undemocratic these past four years. When running in 2000, they promised us a vote prior to spending taxpayer money for open space, and then once elected spent \$14 million without voter approval-more than the township's annual \$11 million budget. They promised open government but once in power they have ignored the residents, stifled debate - even to the point of not allowing a member of the board who was elected with them in 2000 to

speaking at a board meeting. Now they want to turn over lands paid for with taxpayer money to a private group. Residents please that public lands remain in public hands have fallen on deaf ears.

Compounding their deception, township officials have put out the red carpet to Wal-Mart and approved the building of a Supercenter in the township despite citizen protests because of traffic and safety concerns. Ironically, in 2000 this same group ran as preservationists and stewards of the land. The Republican slate of challengers is in reality bipartisan and interested in open government where residents are respected, land is preserved and tax dollars are properly managed.

Terrence A. Bertram, Pittsfield Township

Sidney is best choice for treasurer

This letter is to encourage you to vote for Cynthia Sidney for Pittsfield Township treasurer. Sidney has a track record of sound financial management during her 27 years working in finance at Ford Motor Company.

Additionally, she possesses the skills and the desire to encourage a full discussion on the issues facing township residents. She listens.

Cynthia will also make sure the most vulnerable among us are not left out as demonstrated by her prior service on the Washtenaw County Human Services Board, Washtenaw/Livingston Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Board, Family Independence Agency Board and Child Care Network. While I will be voting for Democrats Kerry-Edwards at the top of the ticket.

I will cross over to the Republican side to vote for Sidney and her Pittsfield Township slate. Her opponent, Christina Lirones, has shown a contempt for the voters these past four years. Lirones while running for office in 2000 promised us a vote before spending \$14 million of our taxpayer dollars on open space and then when elected said our vote wasn't necessary. She has ignored local residents and recently spearheaded the approval of a Wal-Mart Supercenter despite residents objections because of traffic and safety concerns.

Lirones has demonstrated not only is she not in touch with the electorate but also an arrogance that she knows what is best for us. For a true representative of the people, elect Cynthia Sidney.

Rebecca E. DeGeeter, Pittsfield Township

Township leaders are disappointing

As a resident of Pittsfield Township, I encourage my fellow residents to vote for new leadership in our township.

I am very disappointed in the current administration, which has neglected our police officers by failing to renew their contract after more than 20 months of negotiation. Meanwhile, our officers' pay is not competitive, and they cannot even afford to live in our township. Staffing levels also frequently drop to only three officers per shift to cover all of the 33,000 residents of Pittsfield.

Additionally, I am dismayed that the current administration has approved a Wal-Mart Supercenter to be built at the corner of Michigan Avenue and State Street, which will greatly add to the already congested traffic in that area. They did not even check with neighboring Saline to see how this would impact the city.

The last straw, however, was when I learned how our current leadership had harassed local businesses for flying too many American flags. After the tragedy of 9-11, and now at a time when our armed forces are in harm's way, this administration had the audacity to call flying our flag "overkill."

My dear neighbors, please join me in voting for a breath of fresh air in Pittsfield. Please elect Bob Bykowski for supervisor, Nancy Carter for clerk, and Cynthia Sydney for treasurer. Also vote for trustees: Williams, Handy, Tressler, and Brown-Issel.

Veronica E. Davis, Pittsfield Township

Hansen should be kept on parks board

I'm hoping and praying that the people of Pittsfield Township will vote to re-elect Loren Hansen for parks and recreation commissioner.

He has served the township for about 20 years and considers it an honor to serve the community in this capacity.

Hansen wants to keep the parks in the control of the parks commission and the township board and not to be put in the hands of an outside source.

The Pittsfield Preserve is an important part of the township and needs to be planned to meet the needs of township residents.

There is much to be done and Hansen is faithful and conscientious and will work with the residents of Pittsfield Township to see that goals are met.

Carole N. Hansen, Ann Arbor

Land deal benefited Walter, Lirones

Are you a taxpayer in Pittsfield Township? Christine Lirones, Pittsfield Township clerk, would like to thank you for the beautiful view from her backyard. You bought it for her after she was elected clerk in 2000. She and Jim Walter, supervisor, promised before elected that they would let township residents decide a major development issue through a referendum.

Once elected, they decided just to use your money and buy the land without referendum. I guess they didn't want to take the chance you wouldn't want to spend \$11.3 million (before interest) to increase Lirones' backyard.

Maybe you're just thinking of moving to Pittsfield.

Walter's suggestion for containing growth is that you live in a condo over Meijer (News, Nov. 5, 2000). There's room for the Wal-Mart Supercenter they recently approved, but they're not so keen on new neighbors who will block their view.

When Walter has been questioned about their lack of response to residents issues and concerns, he responds with a smug grin that if we don't like it we can just vote them out. Prior to her position as clerk, Lirones said farming the land has been a dream since childhood (News, Sept. 19, 1999).

Lirones and Walter only had one agenda when they ran for office and they've spent your money to accomplish that. Let's take Walter up on his offer and vote them out so Lirones can get back to farming.

Pat L. Marts, Ypsilanti

SCIO TOWNSHIP

Coy will be leader that township needs

John Coy will be a excellent addition to the experienced management team that has successfully lead Scio Township for the past 12 years. I had the fortune to work for Coy both as a Village of Dexter planning commissioner and trustee. Coy demonstrated his ability to successfully manage development pressures during his seven years of service in the village government. As a lifelong area resident and Scio Township business owner, Coy cares about our township and wants to continue to work to preserve our quality of life. Coy will provide a sensible and steady approach to Scio government. As a Scio trustee, John Coy will be a leader that our community needs.

James J. Carson, Dexter

Vote Democratic for team of trustees

We need a change of direction in Scio Township government. Our current Republican supervisor and board have failed to preserve our land. They have allowed developers a free hand to build thousands of homes at a rapid pace without providing the necessary police and fire protection. We have countless new families and not a single township playground. We are missing a much needed recycling facility, and we need sidewalks and bike paths so our children can safely go outside a subdivision.

The Democrats running for Scio office are leaders in the business community and serve on a range of boards at the county level. They will use that knowledge and those relationships to help Scio share expenses with neighboring townships; as well as the City of Ann Arbor and the county. They are a group of proven community leaders who will put the highest priority on the needs of our citizens. They will not put the needs of developers above our families.

They have been endorsed by John Hansen, state Sen. Liz Brater, Lynn Rivers, Congressman John Dingell, state Rep. Ruth Ann Jamnick, the Huron Valley Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO, U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow and Washtenaw County Prosecuting Attorney, Brian Mackie.

I strongly urge Scio residents to vote Democratic: vote for Charles Nielson for supervisor; Kathy Knol for clerk; and Jim Dries, Jean Ledwith King, David Nacht and Chuck Ream for the Board of Trustees.

Barbara A. Goodsitt, Ann Arbor

Democrats will help preserve township

I was a Republican Scio Township trustee from 1988-92 and continue to monitor developments in the township. The Republicans running for re-election in Scio Township stress their experience in office. In spite of their "experience," they have not shown the type of leadership that I envision for Scio. Specifically, I've been dealing with problems from a new development next door for three years.

I contacted township officials when buffer areas that were not to be disturbed were bulldozed. They did not respond to stop this bulldozing.

I contacted township officials when mud flowed from the site onto my property. They did not respond to stop the mud flows.

I'm voting for new leadership. I better trust the Democrats to be responsive to Scio citizens, protect Scio citizens from development, and preserve Scio Township.

Jan Gerson, Scio Township

Candidates realize greenspace needs

I would like to strongly encourage you to vote for the Democratic slate of candidates running for Scio Township Board of Trustees. These candidates provide a very positive vision for Scio. They understand the need for a park, greenspace and preservation of the watershed. The Democratic candidates also would like to see the recycling program brought back to Scio. These candidates understand that the master plan the board received nearly a decade ago called for all of this, but has yet to be implemented. These are candidates that understand Scio and care about the people and will not allow big development come in and ruin Scio Township. Thank you and make sure you vote on Nov. 2.

Margaret L. Sturgis, Scio Township

Team dedicated to sound planning

Scio Township is one of the fastest-growing townships in southeastern Michigan. The November election offers voters a chance to choose between Republicans who have spearheaded this astronomical growth, or Democrats, who are committed to a slow growth and preservationist approach.

While the Republicans claim to offer "experience" with their group of candidates, three of these individuals are newcomers to the seats they are seeking. The remaining Republican candidates offer "experience" fostering poorly planned development, urban sprawl, and a disregard for the environment.

In contrast, the Democratic team is dedicated and committed to sound planning and environmental preservation. Individual Democratic candidates currently are serving on the following boards: Huron River Watershed Council, Washtenaw County Planning Advisory Board, Washtenaw County Board of Public Works, AATA, and the Scio Township Zoning Board of Appeals.

Which type of experience is best for the future of Scio Township? We urge you to vote for Democrats Charlie Nielsen, Kathy Knol, Jim Dries, Jean King, David Nacht and Charles Ream on Nov. 2.

Michele G. and Paul J. Mooney, Scio Township

Support proposal to protect rural beauty

Voters in Scio Township have a unique opportunity to protect the natural beauty and rural landscape of their township by voting YES on Proposal J, the Scio Township Farmland and Open Space Land Preservation Millage. This proposal is a bargain because the cost of building and maintaining new sewer and water lines, new roads, and new schools to serve new residences that could be built on remaining open space in Scio Township would be far greater than the cost to protect that open space from development. The alternative to Proposal J's one-time, 0.5-mill tax hike for 10 years (equal to about \$6 per month for the average household) is much higher and permanent property taxes for Scio residents.

Because Proposal J would protect scenic vistas, park lands, and natural areas that ensure clean air and water for us and habitat for wildlife, the proposal is supported by most candidates running for office in Scio Township this election. Another plus is matching funds available from the City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt and County Natural Areas initiatives for dollars raised by Proposal J. This proposal is the way to preserve what we love about Scio while open space is still available.

Bruce A. Manny, Scio Township

YPSILANTI LIBRARY

Support Bolden for board trustee

I am writing to encourage residents of the City of Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township to vote for Shirley Bolden for Ypsilanti District Library Board trustee on Nov. 2. Many parents and their children in the YDL Community have known Shirley Bolden for years as their "Miss Shirley." There she was, greeting and welcoming patrons into the library; introducing children and youth to a lifelong love of reading through her regular storytimes, reading groups and library programs.

I have known Shirley Bolden, both as a YDL colleague and as a friend. She is committed to serving our community, resourceful, and knowledgeable about the Ypsilanti District Library. Shirley Bolden will bring to the Board, 29 years of experience as a former employee of the YDL, and her financial experience at Detroit Commerce Bank.

She served in many YDL capacities, over nearly three decades; interim children's librarian, head of the youth department at the Peters and Roundtree branches, developed youth outreach programs, organized the African- American author book club, and the mother-daughter book group.

Shirley has proven to be a valuable asset and staunch supporter of the Ypsilanti District Library.

We need her experience, leadership and her continuing commitment to serve our community. Please join my husband and me in voting for Shirley Bolden for Ypsilanti District Library Board trustee on Nov. 2.

Kathy and Harry Bidelman, Ypsilanti

Bolden is a voice for district's children

I am writing to remind everyone who is 18 years or older, to vote on Nov. 2. I want to encourage residents of Ypsilanti City and Ypsilanti Township to vote for Shirley Bolden for Ypsilanti District Library Board trustee.

I met Mrs. Bolden years ago when I started going to the Peters branch. She always greeted me with a smile and went out of her way to help me. She assisted me in locating my book and always provided me with other reading suggestions. When she relocated to the Whittaker library, I was so happy to see her at the customer service desk. She made the library environment pleasant.

I was sad to read the article in the paper, in June, announcing her retirement from the Library after 29 years for a new career in banking.

But then, when I saw the signs that said "Vote for Bolden for Library Board," I was delighted. I requested a sign to be put in my family's yard. Mrs. Bolden is a people person. She is a voice for children. She is the type of person that we need as a Board trustee. Mrs. Bolden needs to be a trustee on the Library Board. She can bring experience and knowledge.

I am concerned with my future and the future of Ypsilanti. One day, I hope to run for an office at the local level. I know that I am only 15 years old, but please vote for me by voting for Shirley Bolden.

DeVaughn Swanson, Ypsilanti

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