

# EDITORIALS

## IT'S ABOUT TIME!

Time is running out on a couple of things so our message today is about time.

You still have a chance to register to vote at the registration office in your county seat for this year's primary election. A primary election usually doesn't shake many people up, and this year's is little exception . . . except for the fact that once again seats on the local John Glenn School Corporation Board of Trustees is included in this election. Registration is open until the deadline on April 4. To register to vote a person must be a citizen of the United States, a resident of the precinct at least 30 days before the primary, and 18 years of age by the general election on November 8. Seventeen year-olds who will be 18 by November 8 can register and vote in the primary.

The John Glenn School Board election this year has three seats being contested in Liberty, Lincoln and Polk Townships. Two candidates are seeking each vacancy, including two of the incumbents. In Liberty Township, both Diana Davis and Dave Gensinger are seeking the seat that will be vacated by Dan Patrick. In Lincoln Township Gene Knowlton is seeking re-election and is opposed by Bob Schaeffer. Polk Township finds Ben Smith challenging incumbent Niles Miller.

The School Board election is very important and you do not have to declare a political party to vote in it. However, you must be registered to vote in this election. Also, all voters of all four townships, including Johnson of LaPorte County, will vote for all three township seats. This is not a case where you only vote for your own township representative.

The election isn't until Tuesday, May 3, but registration runs through April 4, at the county voter registrations office or circuit court clerk's office, usually located in the county courthouse or county government building. So time to register is scarce, but there is still time to do so, but it must be done at the before mentioned places at this late date.

We will comment more on the upcoming School Board election in future issues of "The Independent-News" before the May 3 election. However, now is time for the first step, to be registered, or the rest means nothing.

Now it is time to talk about another time issue. Sunday is not only Easter, this weekend is the NCAA Finals, the week will see the start of the Major League baseball season, the Masters Golf Tourney will be played. Is there any question that Spring is here! And with Spring comes the time most of America re-sets their clocks to Daylight Savings Time. Here in our immediate area (except for LaPorte County), we stay the same while almost all of the rest of the United States "springs ahead" one hour.

Despite the fact that the time change doesn't show on our clocks, it does affect us in many ways. It isn't as severe now as it was in past years before Starke County opted to stay with the rest of Indiana as opposed to the Northwest corner which is so controlled by the Chicagoland area. The big change is the scheduling of events, both locally and nationally. Daylight Savings Time means for the next almost seven months, we will be on the same time as our neighbor, Illinois . . . we will be timed with Chicago and not New York, Detroit and our Ohio neighbors. Among the biggest items to change is television scheduling. Not just the soaps, the series, etc., but the news broadcasts in particular. We will now be getting our late news at 10:00 p.m. instead of 11:00. The evening news telecasts will vary a little also as they fall in around the three network evening newscasts in the 5:30 - 6:00 p.m. time slot.

And as a bonus, WSBT-TV has finally given in and will now air the Late Night With David Letterman immediately after the late news, or at 10:35 p.m., instead of the 12:05 start it had been getting. Due to his tremendous ratings in the first seven months, it was just a decision that needed to be made.

Don't forget these important events of this week. And be sure to change your clocks if you are among those who switch to Daylight Savings Time, otherwise, just remember that changes in scheduling will follow. And be sure to register to vote if you are not registered now!

Happy Easter!

## VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

### "Voters Need To Know"

I would like to present to you for your "Voice of the People" section, an article I presented to the John Glenn School Board of Trustees on January 18, 1994. I did the research and wrote the article because the newest member of the School Board was considering what she would do with the Urey Middle School issue.

I now see the need to print this article to let the voters know that each and every vote does make a difference, and that if they did not vote for the 4 eventual winners last time, or did not vote at all, not to

give up hope. The vote was a lot closer than some people would have you believe. Those 4 winners were the ones backed by a group of people that wanted to kill the proposed Middle School project. As of today, almost 2 years later, we are no closer to an educationally sound solution than we were when they took office.

Due to the recent public displays of what I felt was a misleading premise that "vast majorities" or "85% of the people of this community" oppose the building of a new middle school, I decided to gather the data necessary to shed some light on this subject. At this time I will not explain how or from whom I obtained the raw numbers, but will submit them to you on paper for your further review.

However I would like to relate to you some percentages I found after analyzing the raw numbers. One premise to these numbers is that Liberty and Lincoln Townships numbers were grouped together by the St. Joseph County Clerk's office, and given to me as such. Therefore, their numbers are grouped together in my findings.

The percentage of registered voters that voted in the May 1992 election were 41% in Liberty/Lincoln Township, 40% in Polk Township, and 67% in Johnson Township. When all voters were combined the percentage came to 42%.

The number of people that voted for the eventual winners of the May 1992 election School Board seats compared to the number of people who voted were 62% in Liberty/Lincoln Townships, 58% in Polk Township, and 56% in Johnson Township. With all votes combined the percentage was 60%. 10%, or 197 people, above a simple majority.

Now, because these people have been referred to as "vast majorities" and "85% of the people of this community", what I feel the most eye opening statistic is the number of people that voted for the eventual winners of the May 1992 election School Board seats compared to the population of our community, is 14%. Liberty/Lincoln Townships were 14%, 12% Polk Township, and 23% of Johnson Township. It would have taken another 6,058 people added to the 1,183 people who voted for the elected candidates to equal "85% of people in this community".

In conclusion, the number of students you are responsible for educating attending this school corporation outnumber the 1,183 people who voted for the elected candidates of the 1992 election by 570. Please take this into consideration when making any decisions as a board member because the 1,183 people are in fact a vast minority of the people in this community.

Jeffrey L. Johnson

### "Input Was Heard"

I would like to inform John Glenn School Board member Knowlton that his plea for public input is just a little bit too late. Two years too late in fact. Maybe he forgot that the voters voiced their "input" at the polls.

Just sign my name,

A Taxpayer Who Has Already Given "Input"

### "Voice"

On April 9th, St. Pat's will be holding their annual auction at the School. Last year I had to have two trucks to haul home all my purchases. This is a fun auction and it helps support a local school. The merchandise is of excellent quality. If you have something to donate, call Jerry Schmelitz. I had better clean up the farm so that I can buy more. I hope to see a large crowd there on April 9th.

I was approached by neighbor Mike, with a statement that I was disgracing the Township, by advertising for male turkeys and ducks. It seems that they think that I'm running a Fowl Sex ring. We finally found a seller for Goblette and Martha, at the Walkerton Sale Barn, Monday night. This bird is so highly intelligent, that he didn't know how to get down from his perch. Maybe he was just playing safe, trying to keep away from two wild females.

Sister Pat is still grumbling about our weather here. She can't understand the nice sunny weather in the morning then snow at night. I'm glad that she hasn't experienced a tornado yet. She's enjoying meeting everyone and seeing some of the area. We're taking her to Southern Indiana to see the Ohio River. Last week we went to see Lake Michigan. It was a nice windy day and the whitecaps were crashing. It was also cold.

My blue potatoes are going in on Good Friday. Now I need to find some purple ones..

It is nice to see the Dollar General Store busy, and it would be nice for these customers to check out the rest of the town. We have some pretty good stores in the town that would appreciate more business.

Easter is coming and I hope that all of you have a pleasant and serene day. I wish that the area would have a community sunrise service at the school again. We need to do more things as a community.

Have a Happy Dyngus Day.

Sincerely,

Nedra Williams

## BBB Warns Homeowners Of Repair Rip-Offs

Homeowners, especially older citizens, should beware of con artists who attempt to line their own pockets by pushing fraudulent home repair services, warns the Better Business Bureau of Michigan.

As warmer weather approaches, so do home improvement racketeers who prey on homeowners' concerns for the safety and upkeep of their houses. These thieves, often referred to as "gypsies" or "travellers", typically use scare tactics such as dire warnings that the chimney is about to crumble, the furnace is about to explode or the driveway needs to be sealed.

"The con artists prey on consumers' fears of imminent danger and then pressure them into signing away large sums of money before they can check out the offer," said Steve Sajko, director of operations for the BBB of Michigan. "Older consumers who live alone far from other relatives are especially vulnerable to slick-talking hucksters."

Most likely the house is not on the verge of collapse or in need of costly repairs, but home improvement con artists would like consumers to believe otherwise.

Among sales tactics that fraudulent contractors commonly use is offering an unbelievably low price for a repair job because the company claims it has "leftover" materials from another job it did in another part of town. "Legitimate contractors rarely order so much that they have enough materials to complete a second job," Sajko said.

Another practice is to use old motor oil as a driveway sealant, which looks good going on, but just creates a harmful mess. Or a worker may offer to fix a "crumbling" chimney with his "extra" bricks. In rural areas, con artists frequently offer to paint barns at an incredibly rock-bottom price using "watered-down" paint or install lightning rods of substandard quality.

If the worker is successful in conning the homeowner into hiring him to do the job and collects money, he may make a great display of beginning work, then ask for more money "to buy more materials". He then fails to return to finish the job, leaving the homeowner with a torn-up house and empty pockets.

"Home improvement companies ranked first in customer inquiries and second in complaints last year at the BBB of Michigan," Sajko said. "We encourage consumers to check with neighbors, friends, relatives and the BBB before making a costly home repair decision."

According to Sajko, homeowners can protect themselves by taking the time to get three estimates for the job, and not falling victim to high-pressure salespeople who charge higher than the going rate offered by reliable, established firms in Michigan.

"A homeowner should also get the actual street address for the contractor's office, even if he operates from his home," Sajko advises. Be leery of a contractor who insists on only giving you a post

office box number or his phone numbers. "A P.O. Box is fine for a mailing address, but the homeowner should know where the contractor's office is actually located," Sajko said. "That way, if a problem arises later, the consumer knows where to go to meet the contractor face-to-face to discuss things."

"And don't hesitate to check if that address really exists," Sajko adds. Complaints on file at the BBB show some questionable contractors have gone so far as to list the address of a campground or a telephone answering service as their own.

Homeowners should also check with the local or state building department to find out if the contractor is properly licensed, bonded or insured. "Some bogus contractors will say 'licensed and bonded' in their contracts, but that could mean something as simple as they have a driver's license and own a savings bond," Sajko warned.

And homeowners should never pay for an entire home improvement project in advance. Most reputable companies require one-third of the total payment (or less) as a downpayment, with subsequent payments after each phase of construction is completed. "Do not make final payment before the job is completed according to the contract and to your satisfaction, otherwise you've lost all leverage in getting the contractor to finish the job," Sajko said.

If sub-contractors are involved in the project, Sajko urges homeowners to obtain waivers-of-lien to make certain the sub-contractors are being paid by the primary contractor. "We frequently hear from homeowners with liens placed on their homes by sub-contractors who weren't paid for their products or services," Sajko explained.

According to Sajko, the majority of area contractors are reliable, honest and hard-working but homeowners are wise to check out any firm, not only for their own paycheck protection, but for the betterment of the local commerce. "Every dollar spent with a con artist is one less dollar spent with an established local firm, its sub-contractors and its suppliers," Sajko said.

The BBB has a tip sheet available, "Tips on Home Improvements". For a free copy, send a stamped, self-addressed business sized envelope with your request to: BBB, Attn: Home Improvement Tips, 207 Dixie Way North, South Bend, IN 46637-3360.

### SBA LOAN COUNSELOR

#### IN SOUTH BEND APRIL 19

As part of the U.S. Small Business Administration's outreach program, a loan specialist from the SBA's Indianapolis Office will be in South Bend at the Small Business Development Center at 300 N. Michigan Street, South Bend, on Tuesday, April 19. The meeting will begin at 1:30 and conclude around 2:30 p.m.

They will be discussing the SBA's various guaranteed loan programs as well as the Certified Development Company (also known as "504") program. The guaranteed loan is the agency's major financial program and consists of a guarantee of up to \$750,000 of a loan made by a local lender, usually a bank. The CDC program is a cooperative program between local lenders, area development companies, and the SBA to provide long-term financing for fixed-asset acquisitions.

Information on resources through the Small Business Development Center will be available. SCORE (Service Core of Retired Executives) will explain various counseling services and seminars they offer.

The seminar is free and open to the public. Anyone wishing to participate in this program on Tuesday, April 19 can register by calling Janet Teller at the Small Business Development Center at 282-4350.