

**'As a community, we will need to take another look at how to fund the maintenance of our school buildings — soon.'**

**Cheryl H. Wilhoite**

# Your OPINION

**11A**

Saturday, April 4, 1998

FINALLY—I CAN CONCENTRATE ON THE REAL BUSINESS OF THE PRESIDENCY!



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## Today's mail: Area elections

### Karman, Woodward are best for Poynette School Board

A Poynette School District land issue meeting was held March 23, and land sale proponents couldn't convince a majority of voters present to authorize the school board to sell the land. After a citizen suggested looking at the land not as a new high school building now but as an investment for the future, a majority voted to keep the land.

At a March 24 candidates' forum, school board candidates William "Buck" Bender and Roxanne Brue answered a question about the immediate need for a new high school with a resounding yes.

Candidates Vern Karman and Art Woodward answered the question with a resounding no. They feel current and foreseeable space needs can be met with lesser expenditures by adding on to present facilities.

Vote for Karman and Woodward!

— George L. Bridwell, Poynette

### Verona School Board needs Behnke, Husted

Since a school board member should represent all constituents, without favoritism to any special interest, Ken Behnke and Jack Husted have proved themselves the best candidates for the Verona School Board.

As the only incumbent board member seeking re-election, Behnke brings valuable experience that is so irreplaceable on this relatively inexperienced school board. He knows how to run a school district, mediate the myriad issues that arise and maintain a tradition of high academic standards and

stringent school budgets. His lifelong residency in Verona also demonstrates commitment to the community.

The candidate for the Fitchburg seat, Jack Husted, has been a strong parent adviser on the Stoner Prairie-Savanna Oaks council. During discussions about school and district issues, parents have come to expect a questioning mind that values logic and fairness. What has most impressed me is Husted's passion for math and science excellence — a focus mirrored in national school reports.

Behnke and Husted would make strong Verona School Board members, and they have the record of service to prove it.

— Barb Gallogly-Turner, Madison

### For Verona town board Sheets, Enburg fill the bill

We urge town of Verona residents to vote for Steve Sheets and Manfred Enburg in the Tuesday town board election. Both men are well qualified to be on the board. Each will serve honestly and effectively on behalf of the town and its citizens.

Sheets has shown his commitment to his neighborhood and to the town in many ways, most recently as a citizen member of the Fitch-Rona Emergency Medical Service commission, where he has been involved in budget decisions, policy development and oversight responsibilities connected with providing high quality emergency medical service to the Verona/Fitchburg area. He informs himself on issues, seeks consensus and understands that open discussion and decision-making are essential to democracy.

Enburg has been on the town board for four years. He is thoughtful, fair-minded and a good participant in board deliberations and decisions. As an engineer, his contributions on road and bridge matters are especially valuable to the town. On these and other issues, he listens carefully to the views of others. He is willing and able to raise questions and seek answers for himself and others on matters of importance to the town.

— Jo Ann and Lloyd Bitzer, town of Verona

## Roof cost too heavy for crumbling schools

By Cheryl H. Wilhoite

On Monday the Madison Landmarks Commission rejected the Madison School District's proposal to replace the leaking roof of Randall Elementary School. The district's plan would have used a product that simulates the look of the clay tile installed in 1906 when the school was built but comes with a much more affordable price tag. The commission prefers clay tiles which cost nearly \$240,000 more.

The ideals behind historical accuracy and preservation are admirable, and Randall School parents and citizens have expressed their concern about the aesthetics of the school's roof. However, when so many of our city's 45 schools require repairs and rebuilding of the basics, historically accurate tiles become the icing on the cake, and in this case, the cake is slowly crumbling.

We have nearly half a billion dollars invested in our school facilities, one third of which were built before World War II. Some 70 percent are more than 30 years old. They are not faring well, in part, because budget choices have deferred needed maintenance further and further into the future.

Roofs leak, air handling systems do not do their job, fire alarm systems are faulty. At Allis Elementary School, windows were recently nailed shut because lead was discovered at a slightly elevated level in paint used on school windows, and the spring breeze could blow particles inside. Our young learners may feel somewhat less enthusiastic as the temperature rises in May and June.

Wilhoite is Madison school superintendent.



Wilhoite

### GUEST COLUMN

**'We cannot afford to provide historically accurate tiles on the roof of Randall Elementary School when we have school staff just hoping to protect library books from the water leaking from the roof above. When it comes to Madison's schools, we're back to the basics.'**

Cheryl H. Wilhoite

Imagine how we would feel if we entered a hospital for an important medical procedure and saw windows bolted shut, buckets collecting rainwater next to our beds and fuses blowing because the wiring system could not handle all the equipment needed to make us well. We probably would not be concerned with the aesthetic accuracy of the hospital's roof, and we'd likely seek services elsewhere. This is not an option for Madison's children, however.

In late 1996, an independent facilities audit recommended that the district spend at least 2 percent of the replacement value of its facilities, or \$8.5 million, on maintenance. At \$1.6 million, our district's facilities maintenance budget is one-seventh that amount. In the past we've borrowed money to supplement this amount, bringing our annual facilities budget to nearly \$5 million. The audit also recommended that we spend another \$2.4 million to cover maintenance deferred from years past, for a total of \$10.9 million in new funds.

Last year, Madison voters were asked to help support a \$6.9 million referendum that made a serious commitment to preserving our school

buildings. The School Board pledged to make \$2.4 million in budget cuts and re-allocate these funds to bring our building maintenance budget to the amount recommended by the audit. These cuts would follow \$13 million in budget reductions made since 1993 to keep our budget within state spending limits.

In 1996, some 82 percent of Madison residents surveyed said they would support a property tax increase to maintain our school buildings, but voters chose a different course in last year's referendum. In the meantime, our school buildings continue to deteriorate. The old adage "penny wise and pound foolish" is likely to apply here.

Today, it takes lead paint for a school building to jump to the top of the maintenance priority list. For some reason, we have very low standards for the buildings in which our children spend so much of their time learning and preparing for the future. Hospitals, on the other hand, can be closed for not meeting important maintenance standards. Prisoners can be released early when prisons are overcrowded and poorly maintained.

As a community, we will need to take another look at how to fund the maintenance of our school buildings — soon. Will we decide to support responsible investments in our educational infrastructure, or will we pay much more in the future for buildings nearly beyond repair? Will we send a message that we believe in our schools and our children's learning environments enough to provide safe buildings and an uplifting atmosphere?

We cannot afford to provide historically accurate tiles on the roof of Randall Elementary School when we have school staff just hoping to protect library books from the water leaking from the roof above. When it comes to Madison's schools, we're back to the basics. It's time to get serious about funding school maintenance before it's too late.

## Support for Madison school board candidates

### A classroom offers School Board picks

We are the Sixers, students in a fourth and fifth grade classroom at Lincoln Elementary School in Madison. For seven years our classroom has interviewed Madison School Board candidates. After our interviews we have a caucus, where we state our opinions about whom we should endorse. After the caucus we vote. To be endorsed, a candidate must get two-thirds of the vote.

This year, the Sixers endorsed Joann Elder for Seat 3 because she gave good, strong answers. She thought gay and lesbian families should be included in elementary curriculum. She believes in respecting diversity and has good ideas about how to do that. She has a long background in education.

For Seat 4 we endorsed Kaleem Caire because he feels strongly about African-Americans getting a good education and about the resources they need. He wants gay and lesbian families to be included in elementary curriculum. He wants art and hands-on learning in the schools. He doesn't just "talk the talk, he walks the walk" by being active in the schools.

For Seat 5 we endorsed Ruth Roberts because she welcomes all multicultural kids and wants the schools to be safe and welcoming places. She knows kids. She's a parent and a former teacher and principal. She thinks gay and lesbian families should be included in curriculum. She knows our schools because she goes to them.

— Cecilia Kress and Sol Kelley-Jones, for the Sixers, Lincoln Elementary School, Madison

### Ex-School Board members say vote for Roberts

We the undersigned eight former Madison School Board members urge a vote for Ruth Roberts on Tuesday for Seat 5. In only one year of School Board service, Roberts has demonstrated her ability to provide important contributions on complicated public policy issues under most challenging circumstances by consistently listening to all sectors of our diverse community. She has used her professional mediating skills to address effectively difficult issues on an often divided School Board. We believe she has earned a full three-year term.

— Jerry E. Smith Jr., Hermine Davidson, Mary Kay Baum, Barbara Arnold, Nan Brien, Anne Arnesen, Jim Fullin and Rebecca Young

## County Board candidates

### Business experience helps O'Loughlin candidacy

I urge voters in Dane County's 22nd District to support Dennis O'Loughlin for the County Board. His business experience and interest in local government and education make him a solid choice to serve this area for the next two years.

— Warren Buchner, former Dane County supervisor and town of Windsor clerk

### Elect Steinhauer to control county spending

Duane Steinhauer is an excellent choice for District 13 on the Dane County Board. He grew up on a farm near Mount Horeb and has lived in Madison with his wife and four children for more than 20 years.

This is his first attempt at public office. He understands the needs of the neighborhood. He wants to control spending because he realizes older neighbors are being taxed out of their homes and working families are struggling to get ahead. He acknowledges that most people are responsible enough to act in their own interests and they resent it when government imposes unnecessary restrictions.

Steinhauer's life experiences have taught him to be compassionate and responsible. He recognizes that a one-size government does not fit all. Steinhauer is clearly the better candidate for the 13th District.

— Thomas Johnson, Oregon

### Kesterson works hard; deserves re-election

I don't think a lot of people realize how much time a county supervisor spends on the job or how hard they must work on county business.

I know, from working on different community issues with Dane County Sup. Kevin Kesterson, 34th District, that he

spends between 15 hours and 30 hours each week, in meetings, on the phone or traveling for county business. Some of this time is because Kesterson has chosen to take on a much higher work load than many other supervisors.

Each supervisor usually serves on only one major committee. Kesterson serves on two. In addition to his appointment on the zoning committee, the last two board chairmen chose Kesterson to serve on the ways and means committee. He also is the chair of the UW Extension and the land conservation committees and has been appointed by the county executive all three of his terms to the lakes and watershed and cultural affairs commissions.

I once asked a county staff member why Kesterson was on so many committees and commissions compared to others. The answer? Because he is respected and trusted by the whole board. If it has his name on it, people know it was done fairly.

— Meg Nielsen, McFarland

### Becker brings deep experience to County Board

Jonathan Becker deserves re-election to the Dane County Board. Voters in District 11 (Madison's West Side) have given him five terms and his colleagues have named him board chairman.

Becker works effectively for children and the elderly. He opposes additional highway building that would simply bring more traffic into our area.

In land use, he has worked to maintain separate identities for farm land and green space, avoiding sprawl. He has served as chair of Wisconsin's Environmental Decade.

He favors merging the city and county health departments and possibly other departments of city and county government as well, for efficiency and economy.

He is a native Madisonian, an honors graduate of the UW-Madison, has been

### YOUR OPINION

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elected to the county board for five terms and deserves re-election Tuesday.

— Frances Hurst, Madison

### Heiliger gives superb service to 35th District

We strongly endorse Don Heiliger for re-election as the Dane County Board supervisor from the 35th District. It is evident that the almost six years as a prisoner-of-war in North Vietnam gave him a special quality and personal character we look for in our elected officials.

Heiliger has fought to keep the county taxes down. Six years ago he promised to lower the 20 percent annual increases in county taxes. Keeping that promise, his strong influence on the board cut that rate to less than 5 percent by 1996.

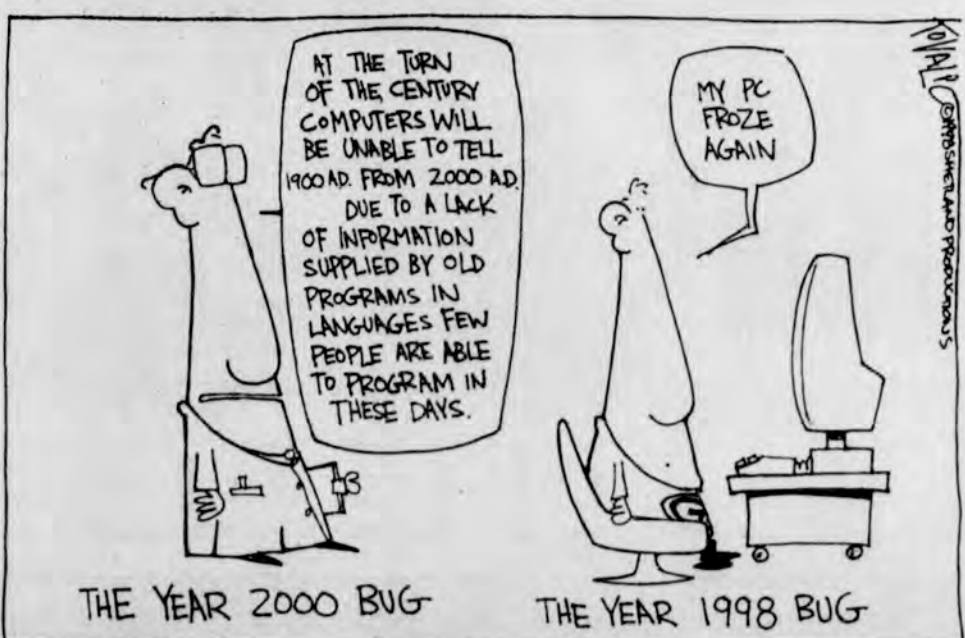
Heiliger is convinced that counties and local municipalities have a dual role in directing the future of Dane County. He stresses that ultimate control must be in the hands of local government.

We agree with Heiliger that we should make land use decisions to preserve farm land. He adds that we should take every action to assure we have farmers to work the land.

As chairman of the Personnel and Finance Committee in his second term, he introduced new methods of paying bills resulting in huge cost savings. He has a high set of values and honor developed from 30 years of serving our nation in uniform. "Serving his fellow citizens" is a trademark of Heiliger's.

— Joe and Karin Campbell, Stoughton

## Cartoonists tease technology



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