

Farmington Observer

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HELPING hand. A Farmington Hills florist helped with floral arrangements for George Bush's inauguration in Washington, D.C.

David Schroeter of Schroeter's Flowers & Gifts arranged centerpiece for the \$1,500-a-plate American Bicentennial Presidential Inaugural Dinner in the National Building Museum for 1,400 guests Jan. 16.

The five-foot-tall arrangements were pink, rose and white. Flowers were roses, tulips, rubrum lilies, snapdragons and heather. The tablecloth design was rose and white stripes.

Schroeter is a member of the American Institute of Floral Designers.

HEADS medical staff. Dr. Neil Basmaji, whose internal medicine practice is in Farmington Hills, is the new president of the 600-member medical staff of Providence Hospital, Southfield.

Memory lane

25 years ago:

• The Village of Wood Creek Farms climaxed a year-long program to update its zoning ordinance by formally adopting a new ordinance. Two developers who owned 80 acres on 12 Mile objected that the new law didn't include a multiple dwelling classification.

• The new Farmington Department of Public Safety director is Maurice D. Foltz, formerly with the Oak Park Safety Department and the Romeo Fire Department. — Farmington Enterprise, Feb. 6, 1964

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Thank you for your patience.

Alkateeb's beef with council boils

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Disgruntled Farmington Hills city councilman Joe Alkateeb's last-ditch effort to resolve concerns edging him toward resignation were met by angry words from his surprised colleagues Saturday.

"You all read the paper (Farmington Observer). And I guess (reporter) Joanne (Maliszewski) quoted me correctly. I said I am seriously, seriously considering resigning. I'm still feeling that way."

"But I am here as a last-ditch effort hoping, praying, asking, requesting that something be done about the problem," the veteran councilman

said at a council session Saturday morning.

Despite angry words between council members, Alkateeb, who said he had his resignation letter in his briefcase, did not announce whether he intended to remain and complete his four-year term or resign.

HE SAID that if "it gets to the point where I think my contribution isn't what it should be, I'll give it (the job) to somebody else." He said the "only fair thing to do" is to give the new mayor, Terry Sever, a chance.

Alkateeb admitted his anger and concern about the election of council officers in November. He also addressed Sever's intention not to re-

point planning commissioner Vincent Valvona, cleared in late 1988 of possible conflict of interest in rezoning matters for Seniors, at Drake and Freedom, in which Valvona is now a financial partner.

Alkateeb said he is concerned about what he considers undue criticism of the city from council members and residents coached by council members.

OTHER COUNCIL members did not let Alkateeb have his say without a few criticisms tossed his way.

Sever chided Alkateeb for remarks reported in an Observer story Jan. 30 about his possible resignation. "Frankly, the most disturbing

thing that has come out so far in this year, and very damaging for morale, was your article, Joe, in the newspaper."

"I think, for the record, you should tell us all what you mean by 'under-the-table-dealings.' To my knowledge, I haven't been involved in any. And if any of the council members are, I think we should all be privy to that information," Sever said.

Alkateeb said throughout the year, he has told council members that he's "disgusted with what's going on," particularly with undue criticism of staff and board and commission members and the council's attempt to remain "squeaky clean."

HE RECALLED the council's ap-

pointment of a replacement for former councilwoman Jan Dolan. "Here I . . . saw Jody Soronen boss her hand and nominate her boss (Jonathan Grant) to replace Jan Dolan and supported very heavily by (councilwoman) Mrs. (Jean) Fox."

In the December vote, Soronen supported Fox's nomination of Grant. Soronen is executive director of the Farmington-Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce. Grant is chamber president. Soronen did not comment.

"I FELT that was under-the-table dealings," Alkateeb said, referring to telephone calls between council

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Bertha Cunningham, co-owner of Jerry's Bookstore in downtown Farmington, prepares to close up shop last week. Saturday was the store's last day of operation.

Closing the books Downtown store owners say goodbye

By Casey Hane staff writer

Goos is that special atmosphere that only Bertha and Jerry Cunningham could provide.

Saturday was the last day of operation at Jerry's Bookstore, their downtown Farmington business.

The Cunninghams decided it was time to retire, and move up north to their 80 acres of farmland in the Upper Peninsula.

Both victims of polio, the couple were drawn together in the late 1950s and have operated their store in the old Enterprise building on Farmington Road, south of Grand

'I really have enjoyed this work here. I've just gotten hoarse trying to explain it (their retirement). Some people were crying; I didn't know what to do.'

— Bertha Cunningham

River, for more than 20 years.

"It's been over 20 years. We figure maybe it's about time," Bertha

said, as she counted down to the final day.

Customers to the green brick building have come not only from

the Farmington area, but from areas such as Birmingham, Canton and Brighton — and Bertha thanks them all.

Saying goodbye to regular customers "has been really terrible," she said. "My customers have been really kind to me."

THE BUILDING and its contents — a going business with all sorts of books — is for sale "by owner" through the Cunninghams, according to Downtown Development Authority executive director Wendy Strip Sittsamer. She has already di-

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Group probes nursing centers

By Casey Hane staff writer

State health officials have ended their investigation into the finances of a Farmington Hills-based regional nursing care organization. Meanwhile, a citizen watchdog group is pursuing concerns raised about the care centers.

Outstanding financial questions about the Care Centers of Michigan "have been taken care of," said James Buchanan, complaint unit chief for the state Public Health Department Licensing Division.

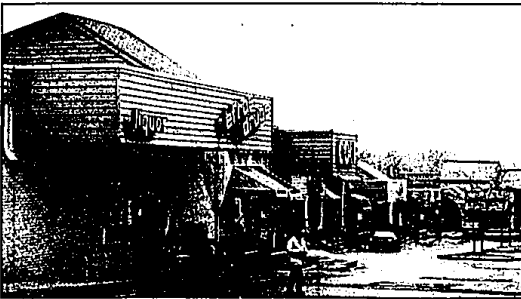
"We are not currently in the process of investigating their financial status. It had a ripple effect, but everything seems to be going OK now," Buchanan was referring to a situation last month, when the nursing care group had its cash accounts frozen by the Internal Revenue Service due to some back taxes. The situation was rectified; payroll to employees at all nine Care Center facilities was released.

The state was concerned that the financial situation may affect staffing and patient care. The nine facilities represent 1,450 nursing care beds in Oakland, Wayne and Livingston counties, including two in the Farmington area.

There were also two complaints filed from families who had not received money back from Care Centers, but that problem has also been rectified, Buchanan added.

MEANWHILE, CITIZENS for Better Care, a group that monitors complaints about nursing facilities, has corresponded with Walter Wheeler, acting director of the health department's Bureau of Health Facilities. It is also talking with state investigators about concerns at the Care Center homes, according to Mike Connors, regional director of Citizens for Better Care's Detroit office.

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

This westernmost section of the eight-year-old Mulrwood Square shopping center, on the northwest corner of Drake and Grand River,

would be demolished if the Bextak Building Co. moves ahead with its plans to expand the center into acreage adjacent to the retail center.

Center expansion plans spur concern

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Bextak Building Co.'s plan to add a supermarket as an anchor and expand the eight-year-old Mulrwood Square shopping center is not a universally popular idea.

"It's becoming a problem," said Stephanie Solomon, owner of Ernie's Deli, one of the long-term tenants in the existing center, on the northwest corner of Drake and Grand River in Farmington Hills. "I'm aggravated. We spent so much money with the renovation, and we weren't told they were going to expand."

After months of being closed for remodeling, Ernie's Deli reopened in October. But Solomon said she wishes someone would have

told her about Bextak's plans. "We started hearing rumors in the summer (1988)," she said.

Howard Elros, one of the owners of the Elros Drug Co., said he has not yet spoken with Bextak officials about any plans for expansion. "We haven't spoken to Bextak, so we don't know," he said.

Farmington Downtown Development Authority officials are expected to meet with Bextak officials today to discuss concerns about the planned expansion.

"We are trying to maintain an old downtown with historic buildings and independent retailers and the thought of additional retail in such close proximities is a concern," said

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