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Observer names general manager



Steven K. Pope, a newspaper veteran of 21 years, has been appointed general manager of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

The appointment was announced Friday by Richard Agninan, president of the Suburban Communications Corp., parent company of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

From 1988-93, Pope served simultaneously as corporate vice president of Media News Group and as vice president of circulation and production of the Houston Post. Media News Group is a Houston-based publisher of 80 daily and weekly newspapers throughout the United States.

He previously held senior-level circulation management positions with daily newspapers in Santa Fe, Long Beach, Tucson, and Denver.

Pope currently is a newspaper consultant who has been serving as associate publisher of Metro Times, a Detroit-based weekly alternative newspaper.

"I'm extremely pleased that Steve will be joining us," said Agninan. "He emerged as our top candidate after a long and intense national search and has an outstanding record in newspaper operations."

When Pope assumes his position on Jan. 3, he will be responsible for the individual Observer and Eccentric publishing groups, as well as the central marketing, business, production, human resources, and computer operations of O&E Newspapers.

Pope succeeds Richard M. Brady, who has served as interim general manager since March. Brady will return to his post as corporate vice president of sales and marketing for Suburban Communications.

"Dick Brady has been wearing two hats for 10 months," said Agninan. "He agreed to serve as interim general manager until we found the right person for the permanent position. But Dick didn't think or act like a substitute. He brought his experience as a newspaperman to bear on the reorganization strategy that the O&E undertook last year."

Agninan credited Brady with building momentum for the strategy to "bring the O&E Newspapers closer to their readers and advertisers." He furthered the goal of distinguishing the Observer Group and the Eccentric Group from each other so that each would meet the needs of its respective market.

Agninan said Pope will continue to implement the community growth strategy developed last year.

Pope and his wife, Carolyn, will relocate to a community within the O&E Newspapers market shortly after Pope assumes his new responsibilities. The Popes have two daughters, Brandie, 13, and Susan, 10.

Schools keep steady on MEAP



BY SUZ BUCK STAFF WRITER

The MEAP results are in. Farmington Public Schools scored higher in math and science and lower in reading than last year. Overall, though, scores remained relatively the same.

Overall, though, scores remained stable, officials said.

The MEAP is a state-mandated program which assesses all public school students in grades four, seven, and 10 on the Michigan Essential Skills of reading and mathematics and in grades five, eight and 11 on basic skills in science.

MEAP results allow year-to-year comparisons for districts, counties and the state.

"We expect that Farmington will continue to grow and demonstrate strength," said Judy White, assistant superintendent for Instructional Services. "We believe that we are a strong district. I hope next year, I'll be standing here going, 'Yeah.'"

In reporting the results, a statistically significant change is considered 5 percent or more from year to year. District performance is represented by the percentage of students meeting the highest state standard.

Three levels

There are three levels of performance, satisfactory, moderate and low, said Carolyn Mahalak, coordinator for Evaluation, Assessment and Special Projects.

"We are pleased to see continued progress in math and science," said Superintendent C. Robert Masfield. "Our efforts in this area have paid off. We are disappointed in the district-wide decline in language arts."

Through building by building assessments, instructional decisions

See MEAP, 4A

Pine-full choices



Tree notes: Betty McRuer of Farmington Hills peruses the Christmas tree selection at Steinkopf Nursery on Farmington Road. Steinkopf is one of several places that have branched out, selling Christmas trees.

Officials pledge key to gridlock

BY BILL COUTANT STAFF WRITER

This time they are really going to do something about gridlock — at least at the congested interchange of Grand River, 10 Mile and M-5.

Officials from Farmington, Farmington Hills, the state Department of Transportation and elected representatives joined businessmen in a celebration of sorts at a luncheon Friday at the Holiday Inn on 10 Mile, a few hundred yards from the very interchange.

"We're here to celebrate today's event," said Farmington Hills City Manager Bill Costick.

Costick was one of many officials who have been trying to get money to rework the interchange for many years. And although Farmington Hills will receive \$1.3 million for the engineering and other preliminary

TRAFFIC

work on the "dysfunction junction," officials believe that this time, it won't be stopped short.

"We've gone from mudlock to gridlock and now to unlock," said Pat Nowak, MDOT director. "We will make sure this project gets done."

Nowak's words of determination were not lost on businessmen and others in the room who have seen proposals shot down before.

But this time the project has political support, according to Congressman Joe Knollenberg, who helped push the project through.

"This project has merit, not pork," he said, adding that although the \$1.3 million is just a start to the \$10 million needed for the two-phase project. "The camel's nose is under the tent."

And with his appointment Dec. 7 to the powerful House Appropriations Committee, Knollenberg could have a big say in infrastructure projects.

"I will take this project front and center," he said.

Former Hills mayors Keith Deacon and Robert McConnell, who are vice chairman and chairman respectively of the Economic Development Corporation, joined Nowak in recounting the long history of frustrated efforts to improve the interchange.

See GRIDLOCK, 5A

Resident asks: What's story on mystery articles?

BY SUZ BUCK STAFF WRITER

Sol Rosaman, who went to his newspaper box on Wednesday morning to retrieve his paper, also found seven sheets of photo-copied articles as a bonus.

Someone had duplicated various

articles that criticized public education in general.

Rosaman, a Farmington Hills resident and retired linguistics professor with no children in Farmington schools, wonders who the sender is and why he or she didn't leave a contact name. School district officials

wonder too.

The compilation is called "Special Sports Edition: Quality First! Farmington's Voice For Academic Excellence."

Some articles also include the publication's name. Basically, the articles make several assertions:

- Athletes receive pats on the back; scholars don't.
- School officials seem to make decisions based on the belief that no child is smarter than any other child.
- Girls, particularly, face gender bias.

See MYSTERY, 5A

IN THE PAPER

TODAY

House calls: Three Farmington Hills students at Detroit Country Day will be part of a choral group that will perform at the White House Tuesday. /2A

Happy trimming: Downtown Farmington property owners will see a reduction in their special assessment next year. /3A

TASTE

Holiday delights: Caviar is a delicacy that's attracting new attention. / 1B

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Drum beat

North Farmington High School percussion ensemble will have a special performance 7:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 12, in the school auditorium, 15 Mile Road, west of Orchard Lake. The program is in preparation for the group's trip to Chicago to perform in the 1994 Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic Dec. 15. The ensemble was selected to perform at the clinic on the basis of an audition tape. For information on Monday's program, call 429-3545.

Book 'em

For the fourth straight year, the Farmington Musicals is raising money by selling Entertainment books. Each book contains hundreds of two-for-one discounts for dining at such

FARMINGTON FOCUS

places as the Roman Terrace II, Joe Muer's, and Machus as well as family dining, sports events, theater, dry cleaning, salons, cruises and hotels. The musicale is selling the books for \$40 and a portion of the sale will go toward paying the group's music scholarships. To order books, call Betty Walter at 661-0707.

Sunday service

Farmington Hills Post Office, 32455 W. 12 Mile Road, announces its extended holiday hours, which include being open 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 12. The post office continues to be open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday

and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. For information, call the Hills post office at 653-3910.

Chamber luncheon

Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce will have its annual holiday luncheon 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 18, at The Botsford Inn, 29000 Grand River, at Eight Mile Road. North Farmington High School Choir will provide the entertainment.

Social hour is 11:30 a.m. followed by lunch at noon. Admission is \$15 for members and \$20 for nonmembers. For information, call 474-3440.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River Ave., Farmington 48335, faxed to 477-9723 or dropped off at the newspaper office.