

# Farmington Observer

VOLUME 109 NUMBER 40

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1996 • FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 100 PAGES

SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

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**OPINION**

**Go to court!** The O.J. Simpson trial has given us ideas. Why not let those cable TV cameras roll in the local courtrooms? /10A

**Letter rip!** As usual, Observer readers are not shy about sharing their opinions. /10A

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**Skating skills:** Precision skating teams from Michigan and the Midwest competed in Farmington Hills Saturday. /1C

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## Prutow bows out of race



Helen Prutow, the longest-serving member of the Farmington Board of Education, has announced she won't seek a sixth term. Already, two hopefuls have announced they want to replace her.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

While the Farmington Board of Education's most senior member bids adieu, a few candidates are already preparing their bids for her seat.

Helen Prutow, 55, has said she'll not run for a sixth term on the board. She'll remain on the Oakland Inter-

mediate School District board.

That leaves one open seat unchallenged as the term for board president Joe Svoke also expires. Svoke said he will run in the June 10 school election.

Two people — Priscilla Brouillette of Farmington Hills and Ellen Bouchard of West Bloomfield Township

— have taken out nominating petitions.

When incumbent Jack Cotton didn't seek re-election in 1993, nine hopefuls turned out.

Yet only two candidates vied for one open seat in last year's election after incumbent Susan Lightner decided not to run.

"Helen chose to announce fairly early," said Trustee Linda Enberg, who was last year's winner. "That should give people plenty of time to decide."

See PRUTOW, 7A



Helen Prutow not running

## A sparkling performance at the Ice Arena



Members of the Farmington Sparklers figure skating club spell out their affiliation Saturday at the Tri-State Team Ice Skating Competition at the new Farmington Hills Ice Arena. For a story and more photos, please see page 1C.

## A new DFBA springs into action

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

DFBA stands for Downtown Farmington Business Association, but in recent years the acronym could have been easily translated into: Doubt, Frustration, Boredom and Apathy.

From ashes of indifference, a new DFBA has risen. John Kanyo, owner of Something Wood, and other new downtown business has injected vigor and purpose into the group that had grown stagnant in recent years. Membership dwindled as some business owners wondered if the promotion work should be handled by the Downtown Development Authority.

The DFBA is planning its first ever Midnight Madness sale Friday, March 10, and is considering other promotional ideas such as having a Vegas Night.

A change in attitude has newcomers and veterans of downtown commerce feeling lucky.

"It's a kind of been, 'Show me what we're going to do,'" said Kanyo, who opened Something Wood in the Village Mall last year. "I tried to stress to people this is not a one-person thing. Everyone has to get involved."

Merchants selling sexy lingerie, comfortable shoes and organic coffee — as well as chiropractors offering spine readjustments — have spurred the resurgence.

Touch of Romance, Stride Rite Shoes, Grand Cafe and Cromwell Chiropractic are among many supporting the DFBA, Kanyo said. Some 40 businesses have paid dues, which is used for promotions.

DFBA was started in 1986 to promote downtown commerce. The Farmington Downtown Development Authority was formed the same year. In some people's eyes, their respective roles became blurred. DFBA develops promotional ideas, but so does the DDA.

That might explain why some members still send their DFBA monthly dues to the DDA by mistake.

DDA is government run; DFBA isn't. The DDA concentrates on concrete matters such as putting in \$2 million of streetscape improvements. That allows the DFBA to get solely

See DFBA, 8A

## Former city official will be missed



D. Keith Deacon

D. Keith Deacon, former Farmington Hills mayor and councilman and current chairman of the Economic Development Corporation, died Monday, Feb. 12, after collapsing at Detroit Metropolitan Airport.

Mr. Deacon, 69, was returning from a business trip to Oak Creek, Wis. He was moderator of the National Association of Congregational Christians.

"We knew he had heart trouble," said his wife, Lois. "He was scheduled for heart catheterization and was on medication. There was talk of replacing a heart valve. But doctors said he was OK to travel."

Mr. Deacon died at Ann Arbor Hospital of heart problems.

"For 15 years, he was a dear friend, extremely supportive of our community," said William Costick, city manager of Farmington Hills.

"He was a tremendous leader and

will be deeply missed. He was very compassionate and everyone respected him."

Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi described Mr. Deacon as a positive person.

"He always saw the bright side and the potential. He loved this community and he continued to give it his time and energy long after he left city council," said Vagnozzi.

Mr. Deacon served on the first Farmington Hills city council. He was the city's fourth mayor, serving from July 1976 to June 1977. He also served two terms as mayor pro tem: one from July 1975 to June 1976 and a second in 1979.

For the past 17 years, he had been a member of the Economic Development Corporation and had served as its chairperson since January, 1995.

Mr. Deacon took a particular interest in the economic development of

the city and the building of the roads in Farmington Hills. He was concerned about the way traffic patterns affected the residents and the business community.

Since 1989, Mr. Deacon had been committed to finding solutions to the traffic congestion at the M-5 (M-102) Grand River/Halsted/10 Mile interchange. Under his leadership of the EDC's community improvement committee, he encouraged the EDC to fund a \$90,000 preliminary engineering study of this project.

When federal money committed for the completion of this project fell through, Mr. Deacon spearheaded the request for demonstration grant money. To date, \$1.3 million has been advanced by the federal government for this project.

See DEACON, 2A

## Cities would rather live without residency bill

BY BILL COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

Farmington and Farmington Hills officials would like the State of Michigan to butt out of their business when it comes to residency requirements for city employees.

State Sen. David Honigman, R-West Bloomfield, is sponsoring a bill that would not allow city's to require employees to live within the city limits. The bill, being considered in the Senate, would still have to go to the House.

"It's immoral for the government to tell people where they can live," Honigman said Tuesday. "The senator cited cases where men and women could not marry because their jobs required each to live in separate cities."

"There are a million reasons why someone would not be able to live where they work, such as taking care of a parent," he said. "But cities like Farmington and Farmington Hills would be hurt by such a law."

"This type of law will directly increase taxes for our residents," said Farmington City Manager

**'This type of law will directly increase taxes for our residents. We would have to add people or cut services.'**

Frank Lauhoff  
Farmington city manager

Frank Lauhoff. "We would have to add people or cut services."

Lauhoff said Farmington's public safety officers serve both as police and firefighters. On any given shift there are three to five officers on duty. If a major fire or emergency took place, officers must be called in.

"We've tried to explain it to him (Honigman)," Lauhoff said.

Farmington and Farmington Hills do not have a residency rule for other employees, but they both do for police officers and firefighters.

"It's 25 miles within the city hall for police, and since last night (Monday), it's 25 miles for (full-time) firefighters," said Farmington Hills Personnel Director Dana Whinnery. "Paid-on-call (volunteers) must live within five minutes of their station."

Whinnery said other city employees do not have a residency requirement. The city has also negotiated an agreement that police officers can live in Milford, Highland Township or White Lake Township as well as within the 25-mile limit. "That was negotiated eight or nine years ago so that officers could find affordable housing near water," he said.

Whinnery said requiring other city employees to live in the city would not only hurt recruiting efforts to get top employees, but would probably run afoul of the courts.

"In some cases, requiring people to live where they can't afford to has been viewed as an impediment to employment resulting in job discrimination," he said.

See RESIDENCY, 8A