

# Farminington Observer

Volume 20 Number 18

Thursday, December 21, 1978

Farminington, Michigan

64 Pages

Twenty-Five Cents

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## Mayor pro-tem loses bid for top city seat

By MARY GNIEWEK and STEVE BARNABY

A year-long battle to consolidate her political power base ended in defeat for Councilwoman Joanne Smith this week when she lost her bid for mayor to Councilman Earl Opperthausen.

Smith's defeat marks the first time in the city's history that a mayor pro-tem was denied the chief legislative seat on the seven-person council.

Although Smith received numerous commendations during the meeting from political supporters in the audience, it wasn't enough to overcome the ire of political opponents.

Opposing Smith's appointment as mayor were councilmembers Joe Alkateeb, Keith Deacon, Opperthausen and Joanne Soronen. Smith won support from outgoing Mayor Jan Dolan and Councilwoman Cathy Jones.

Deacon was named mayor pro-tem. The defeat came on the heels of a recall campaign which targeted Dolan, Smith and Jones for removal from office. The recall was led by the Council of Homeowners of Farmington Hills which opposed the three councilmembers' support of federal revenue funds for low income housing and special zoning for senior citizen housing.

The low income housing program was ditched by a majority of council earlier this year. The senior zoning issue, although passed in 1977, could go on the ballot in November as an advisory question.

Some residents expressed fear that the referendum vote will hurt the bond issue.

**UNDER THE SENIOR** zoning, RCE-1, mid-rise multiple units can be built on a maximum height of 60 feet. Homeowners Council leadership has opposed the zoning since before its implementation and has threatened court action for the last year in an attempt to remove the ordinance from the books.

But it was a coalition of the Homeowners Council, south end residents and city council opponents who insured Smith's defeat.

South end residents had combined with the Homeowners Council in the recall movement because of their distrust of the Community Development Block Grant Program, which would have placed low income housing in their neighborhood.

Leading the city council forces was Opperthausen, who has been a chief advocate of senior citizen housing throughout the years.

DURING THE HEATED three-hour

long debate, Opperthausen was accused of cutting a deal with the homeowner forces in an attempt to save senior housing plans. The charges were made by Aldo Vagnozzi, co-chairman of Citizens United for Farmington Hills. Smith also backed the charges.

Vagnozzi claimed that the homeowners agreed to withdraw their support from the recall movement and also to support the \$7.5 million bonding issue to build senior housing if Opperthausen's mayoral appointment was granted.

"Everyone agreed to the deal except the mayor pro-tem, those involved in the recall and the senior citizens," he said.

"I see what is happening here tonight as the worst example of what is wrong with city government."

But Opperthausen and his council supporters denied that any deals were made.

"The motivation behind this does not smack of Tammany Hall," Deacon said, alluding to the corrupt New York City political machine brought down in the 1890s.

The nomination was made in the best interest of the city."

**OPPERTHAUSEN'S FORCES** argued that his experience in city government, including a previous term as mayor, made him the more qualified candidate.

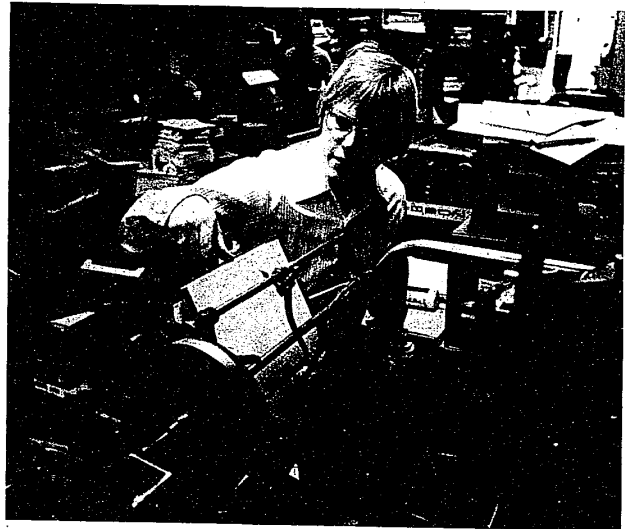
Dolan also stated she had made no deals or compromising principles.

"I think it'd be nice to believe there was no deal made, but there was," Smith said.

"It was offered to me last summer at the home of Cathy Jones. I said 'I'm sorry, I don't work like that.' You don't put something on the ballot for a referendum because some pressure group doesn't like it. I was called arrogant. I was challenged by the recall people."

"The deal was talked about in May by Alkateeb and Soronen. Deacon was also a part of it. Opperthausen said the question should go on the ballot. I don't blame him for denying it, but the deal was cut."

"I don't think low income housing is a bad thing. Go ahead and put me down for what I stand for. The three of us (Smith, Dolan and Jones) took our chances and it wasn't popular."



Terry Sever has found the combination of his local printing shop and community involvement are the keys to his success before the age of 30.

## Pursuing the American dream

## Businessmen climb fast

By MARY GNIEWEK

Success in the business world is a dream many pursue but few obtain, especially the young and inexperienced.

"The dream has become a reality for a handful of Farmington businessmen who've reached the status of the successfully self-employed. To boot, they've made it to that first plateau well before the age of 30."

Among them is a funeral home director, a real estate salesman and a print shop owner. Don't let them tell you they can't do something. They'll take it as a personal challenge to prove you wrong.

**BOB ROCK, TOM DUKE Jr.** and Terry Sever have all made solo climbs up the ladder of success. They attribute their burgeoning careers to loads of self confidence, driving ambition and a willingness to live through lean times.

Rock, 26, is a partner in the Thayer-Rock Funeral Home downtown. He plans to be in full control of that operation some day.

"Mr. (Howard) Thayer is 65. He needed someone to take over. This is a family-oriented business," he said.

Yet Rock is really a part of the family. "The Thayers' son married my step-sister," he explained. "I didn't get along with my parents, he didn't get along with his. Because of my problems at home, I came to live with the Thayers when I was 17. They were my guardians."

"When I was in high school, Mr. Thayer encouraged me to go to college and learn the profession."

**ROCK ATTENDED WAYNE State University's School of Mortuary Science.** He worked full-time at the funeral home during five years of school and obtained full partnership in May 1976.

He and his wife, Debbi, live in an apartment at the funeral home. The nature of the business requires him to be available for work seven days a week. Like the others, he doesn't consider his age a handicap.



Tom Duke recently ventured out on his own to try his skill in the real estate trade. (Staff photo by Harry Maunthe)

"Sometimes it's a little difficult. But as soon as they (the clientele) find out you're competent, it's OK. Professionalism and sensitivity are most important in this business."

Rock's advice to aspiring young entrepreneurs: "You need cash flow. If you open

**HOLIDAY DEADLINES**

Because of the holidays, the next two Monday editions of your paper will be delivered on Tuesday, December 26 and January 2. Our week is shorter so all advertising and copy deadlines for the issues of Thursday, December 28, and Monday, January 1, will be 24 hours earlier than usual. And the staff of your hometown newspaper extends to you and your family best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

## Small refunds pinch schools

The Farmington school district will be going into the last half of the fiscal year with administrators keeping a closer eye on the budget, after receiving less money than expected from the Oakland County Intermediate School district.

Farmington is reimbursed for the total cost of conducting special education programs open to students in the immediate district and in the surrounding areas.

The local district is reimbursed in part for special education programs which are open to students who live in district.

It is the reimbursement for the latter programs that has fallen short of what administrators originally expected.

The district was expecting about \$12,115 more than it received in reimbursements. Instead of receiving \$468,453 from the county, the district's check was \$225,338.

Instead of an anticipated equity for the 1978 fiscal year of \$216,771, the district's ledgers show \$33,650 less than budgeted expenditures, according to Superintendent Lewis Schulman.

While the smaller equity wasn't put special education programs into jeopardy, it will whittle away the financial cushion administrators were hoping to have against the effects of the Headlee Amendment.

**SINCE OCTOBER 1973,** the state has mandated that the districts provide special education programs.

School districts are eligible for money from the state and county to help them conduct these programs.

Originally, the state in 1975-76 pledged to reimburse 75 per cent of the allocated costs of the local programs over a membership allowance of about \$1,500 per student.

While the local district provided for the base costs, the state promised to pick up 75 per cent of the additional tab. But since that pledge, the state, Miss given Oakland County enough to cover 45.5 per cent of the promised 75 per cent.

Since inflation has hit education,

there is less money to pay the additional costs in the local programs. The county owes its \$17 million in taxes to pay for the center special education programs first, then to defray the costs of local programs, according to Al Shrodsree, of the county schools.

He said the programs are expensive.

"The handicapped cost five to ten times more to educate," he said.

With inflation, the districts will be forced to pick up more of the tab for the local programs, unless the system is revamped, according to Shrodsree.

## Hills eyes HUD, housing bond vote

By MARY GNIEWEK

Banking on the hope that it will be able to receive HUD funds, the Farmington Hills City Council decided Monday to proceed with an election next March 6 in which voters will be asked to authorize sale of \$7.5 million in municipal finance bonds for senior public housing.

The Council approved the measure by unanimous vote after it heard reports from Commission on Aging, Chairwoman Nancy Bates and others regarding HUD financing procedures.

Though not satisfied that the Hills would be able to receive HUD funds, Mrs. Bates urged the city to proceed with the election plans during further investigation. She has been investigating HUD regulations at the council's request for the past two weeks.

**MRS. BATES ENCOURAGED** the Council to attend a joint hearing with HUD and HISHOA officials in Lansing slated for late January. She said the city should be able to present HUD with its areawide housing plan at that time.

"We can apply if we meet the criteria, but we may not receive the funds," she said. "The application would be made through Section Eight of the HUD family housing subsidy. Five to 15 percent of the people who apply ever receive the funds."

Ideally, the city hopes to obtain

HUD funds to finance the multimillion dollar project. The council is asking voters to authorize the bond sale until rent monies begin to subsidize the project.

**PLANS CALL FOR** a 240-unit building on a 10-acre site at Drake and Freedom. Local residents over the age of 60 would be given top priority in the housing project which has been on the drawing board for three years.

Mayor Jan Dolan said the latest rent estimates in the Farmington area are \$294 for a one bedroom apartment and \$350 for two bedrooms. Rental allowance would be \$100 per unit per month.

Councilman Joe Alkateeb asked that the council's resolution to proceed with the election be put off until after the January meeting with HUD officials.

"Our relationship with HUD is not at an all time high. The project might be abandoned," he said.

"My concern is have we studied the project enough to take on a \$7.5 million project?"

**ACTING CITY MGR. FLOYD Cairns** said that even with the resolution approved, the city has six weeks in which to call off the election if such a decision is made.

"This is the first step. We want to get an application under way with the municipal finance commission. But we have until Jan. 15 to cut off the election."

## Ski, canoe in winter

A ski and canoe tour of the Proud The Recreational Center is being sponsored by the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department beginning at 1 p.m. Jan. 7.

After cross-country skiing into the recreation area, participants will canoe back to their starting point on the Huron River. The trip will last for about three hours. The minimum age is 14.

Registration fee with ski rental is \$7, and there is a \$25 fee for the class. To register, call Mrs. Foreback at 349-4106 or the West Bloomfield Center at 661-4100. The center is located at 6777 West Maple, two and one half miles west of Orchard Lake Road.

Pre-registration is recommended due to a limited amount of space. For further information, call 474-6115.

## Hovnanian joins distributorship

Armen Hovnanian of Farmington Hills has joined Living Inc. as executive vice-president.

Living Inc. is a wholesale distributor manufacturer's representative and service merchandiser serving retail drug, food and discount stores in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois.

Hovnanian, 48, is a registered pharmacist who worked for Cunningham Drug Stores, Inc. for 30 years. He was responsible for corporate operations including marketing and sales management for Cunningham's 160 stores in 11 states and the supervision of 3,000 employees.

## Class prepares parents

Henry Ford Hospital West Bloomfield Center is sponsoring prepared childbirth classes for six weeks beginning Jan. 13. The classes are limited to 10 couples and meet for two hours one day a week.

Class members will discuss what happens during pregnancy. Labor and

delivery techniques will be discussed. Pre-registration is required and there is a \$25 fee for the class. To register, call Mrs. Foreback at 349-4106 or the West Bloomfield Center at 661-4100. The center is located at 6777 West Maple, two and one half miles west of Orchard Lake Road.