

# Opinion

33203 Grand River/Farmington, MI 48024 Robert Sklar editor/477-5450

16A(F)

O&amp;E Thursday, December 1, 1988

## Year 2000 Hills plan potentially valuable

CAN Farmington Hills become the most livable city in Michigan?

That's the question city manager William Costick hopes to answer through the newly unveiled Farmington Hills Year 2000 Plan.

He acknowledges that "much has been done to preserve the heritage and attractiveness of Farmington Hills" but that "more must be done if the quality of life is to be preserved and enhanced."

"In light of all the growth we're going through, and other changes in the community, we need to take stock of where we are today and where we want to be," he said. "This will give us a chance to look at ourselves . . . to evaluate the good and the bad."

No argument there.

Downside rejuvenation in many nearby communities — Northville, Farmington, Royal Oak, Rochester — underscores that public improvements indeed help spur private investment.

THE CITY council has pledged not only its support but \$15,000 up front to assure the Farmington Hills Year 2000 Plan is useful — not just another ambitious study destined for a dusty bookshelf.

Costick envisions a 15-member steering committee — representing business, government, community groups and the neighborhoods — developing a plan for the 1990s to achieve the quality of life residents desire.

Roads, sidewalks, solid waste, transportation, the environment, historic sites, child care needs, senior adult services, parks and recreation, community center programs, library services, user fees, crime prevention and land use are just some of the far-ranging plan's themes.

Costick foresees the steering committee and its six task forces examining public facilities and services, financial and economic vitality, beautification and environmental preservation, human services, leisure and cultural activities, and public safety.

At the very least, Costick says, the plan "will

**To its credit, the city council pledged not only its support but \$15,000 up front to assure the plan is . . . not just another ambitious study destined for a dusty bookshelf.**

tie all these things together, tell where we want to go and say how we'll get there."

During its year-long undertaking, the study team will prepare a long-term set of goals and objectives, then make recommendations for the booming city. The plan will be published next December.

THE STRENGTH of Costick's idea lies in its call for 90 task force appointees who represent a true cross-section of the community: the city, the chamber of commerce, the schools, community institutions, homeowners.

We urge the city council to shun politicking and base its 42 appointments on ability to contribute, not on political favoritism.

Meanwhile, residents who want to help shape the plan must submit a letter of interest in a task force appointment. An informational meeting will be Dec. 17. The last day to apply is Dec. 28.

Let's be honest. We who call the Farmington area home tend to take too much for granted. We don't live in a utopia. Good things just don't happen. They're invariably the product of good municipal planning and execution.

THE TIME seems right for a Farmington Hills Year 2000 Plan. But let's not go gaga over it just yet. The study team hasn't even been picked.

Amid the hoopla over the plan, let's remember that it'll be only as good as the dedication, diligence, foresight and enterprise of the task-force appointees.

That thought must be uppermost when the all-important appointment process begins.

## War toys Parents must take a stand

WOULDN'T IT BE nice if the hottest selling holiday gifts this season were peace toys?

As far as that goes, wouldn't it be nice if there were any peace toys at all, competing for a modicum of space with the GI Joes, the Laser Tag guns, and the many other toys that glorify and promote war and violence?

Shelves stocked with peace toys are about as likely an event as are stores and manufacturers listening to the demonstrators who protest annually about the glut of war toys and toy weapons.

A number of groups staged their third annual day-after-Thanksgiving demonstration at a Southfield Toys "R" Us store last week. The protesters likely don't expect war toys to become extinct just because of their efforts. But they do

**The big reason that stores try to sell so many war toys is because there are a lot of people who will buy them.**

hope to raise awareness about the toys, particularly among parents.

FOR THE most part, parents make the best target for their message.

War toys, toy guns, toy soldiers and the like are plentiful because people buy them. It is doubtful that is going to change, and it is doubtful toys are much to blame for much violence in today's world. After all, wars and brutality were around a long time before GI Joe.

But it is troubling to see the proliferation of war toys and toy weapons, their realistic appearance and their ubiquitous promotion during Saturday morning cartoon programs, which one protester described as "30-minute commercials to sell a variety of war toys."

But even after hearing claims of a ninefold increase in war toy sales since 1983, it is naive to place the blame for violence or the responsibility for toy buying solely with the commercial interests.

NO ONE said parenting is easy, but parents are in the best position to monitor television habits and to determine the type of toys with which a child plays. Most children will play war games, but that doesn't prevent parents from making sure their children know the consequences of real-life guns and bombs.

It would be nice if toy companies would refrain from cashing in on war toys, but don't hold your breath. Why should toy firms be responsible in an age when the federal government proposes to spend \$66 billion on Stealth bombers, a move hailed as a possible economic boom for Michigan should some of the deadly planes be based here?

Toy manufacturers should, however, be ashamed of making realistic-looking toy weapons. There have already been tragic stories of police shooting children who were pointing frighteningly real-looking toy guns. We could support legislation to regulate such irresponsibility — such as painting all toy guns orange, as has been proposed.

We thank the marchers who protest against the toys and hope their message gets through to parents. We also pray for the day when there aren't any real weapons for the toy companies to emulate.



Dawn Griffin (right) and 3-year-old daughter Stephanie found the Thanksgiving eve dinner much to their liking.

## Holiday eve dinner — 'This is a real blessing'

SOME WERE single parents. Others were seniors with a fixed income. A few were homeless. And many were Farmington Hills residents.

But none were lonely — at least for one very special evening. They were the guests of Liz and Bill LaKritz of Farmington Hills, their children Gaven, 12, and Elyse, 9, and several relatives and friends.

The occasion: a Thanksgiving eve dinner at the Knights of Columbus St. Francis Council Hall in Farmington Hills.

"This is a real blessing," said Lt. Jonathan Rich of the Salvation Army Farmington Hills Corps Community Center, which extended guest invitations and provided gifts. "A lot of people here attend our church," he added. "I know them very well. And they didn't want to be lonely for Thanksgiving."

"For them, Thanksgiving is nothing special. It's business as usual — trying to make ends meet."

THE HOLIDAY meal was a big hit in Dawn Griffin's eyes. A single parent, she attended with 3-year-old daughter Stephanie.

"It was real special being invited," she said. "The food is real good, and I've made some new friends."



Bob Sklar

That's exactly the kind of response Liz and Bill LaKritz hoped to elicit. This year, they decided they wanted to give something back to the community they've called home for 13 years.

"People are always thinking about themselves," said Liz, a parent volunteer at Warner Middle School and Forest Elementary. "It's a 'me' society. I want to do something to help people. I'm really thankful to be able to help."

"And I'm not talking about monetary help. I want to give time. I want to take that extra step. I also want my kids to be exposed to helping others."

Bill, a commercial real estate broker, has been active with the Goodfellows in Detroit for 15 years. "So I've been exposed to the problems that come along at Thanksgiving and Christmas," he said.

DON'T BE fooled, says Lt. Rich. The holidays can be one of the most

depressing times of the year. "Suicide rates are way up mainly because of loneliness — the big enemy this time of year."

The joy that Rich saw etched on the faces of the 80 guests last Wednesday, he said, "truly fits the mission of the Salvation Army."

John Smith had a poignant reason for attending. Divorced and laid off from a machine shop, the Farmington Hills man got to bring his three daughters: Jennifer, 6, Jacquelyn, 4, and Jessica, 2.

"I love them so very much," said Smith, who spent the day with Jennifer ringing the Salvation Army bell beside a red kettle outside Hudson's at Twelve Oaks in Novi. "I don't get to spend a lot of time with my daughters," he said. "I can't really afford to do a lot with them. But their happiness means a lot to me."

"That's why tonight is so special."

The smiles, warmth and thankfulness exuded by everyone who feasted on turkey, ham and all the trimmings, no matter what awaited them when they left the K of C hall, made it a special night for me too.

I felt privileged just to be on hand. It was a touching example of people brightening the lives of others — even if just for a few hours.

## Farmington readers' forum

Letters must be signed, original copies and include the address and telephone number of the writer. None can be returned. Names will be withheld from publication only for sufficient reason. Letters should be limited to 300 words in most cases. We reserve the right to edit them. Send letters to Readers' Forum, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River Ave., Farmington 48024.

## Garden much nicer than sod

To the editor:

I was dismayed to read on the front page of the Oct. 27 issue of the Observer that the Farmington Village Cooperative is planning to sod over Elizabeth Hatten's flower garden on the corner of Nine Mile and Gill.

Few people or organizations would have the questionable judgment to replace Mrs. Hatten's beautifully executed and lovingly cared-for garden with the mediocrity of sod. Perhaps we should be thankful the co-op did not pave the corner with asphalt.

The words and actions of the Farmington Village Cooperative seem to lack common sense on three grounds.

First, flowers add beauty to any property, and therefore make the property more desirable and valuable. This alone should endear the garden to the co-op.

Second, Mrs. Hatten will care for the planting and maintenance of the flowers herself. I suspect many Farmington Hills residents have observed her tirelessly planting and caring for many of the plantings around public buildings during the spring and summer. Her devotion to beautification through planting is quite inspiring to anyone who is aware of her selfless work.

Third, a flower garden in winter is not unsightly to this Michigander. It's a reassurance the blossoms and

fragrances of spring will return in a few short months.

It is a small thing to ask of the Farmington Village Cooperative to allow Mrs. Hatten to continue planting in this lovely garden, which gives expression to Mrs. Hatten's creative energies, increases the cooperative's property values, and touches those of us who simply pass by.

WILLIAM J. CROSSLAND,  
Farmington Hills

## Bake sale a success

To the editor:

Thank you for running the fudge cake recipe and mention of the bake sale to benefit the Farmington Community Center Oct. 20.

It helped! We had many requests for the recipe (using Weight Watchers exchanges) and sold out of all baked goods. It was "Better than good," it was great. All the final figures are not in yet, but we did meet our goal of raising \$500.

With thanks and appreciation from all of us at Weight Watchers.  
Wendy Rose,  
Weight Watchers  
Farmington Hills

## Day care view close to mark

To the editor:

Your opinion on home day care

Nov. 17 read well but you lost me at the point where you said, "Faxon argues that home day care operators who seek licensing from the state could discover they're breaking the law in their community and be forced underground."

I must take this time to come to the aid of Sen. Faxon and the mothers who have had this very thing happen to them in our city. Hopefully, Faxon's bills will prevent this from happening in other cities.

I agree the emerging issue of day care has not had the attention it deserves and, unfortunately, the issue hasn't been children but the eroding power of local officials and the right of a local community to self govern.

I do not feel we should fear Sen. Faxon's bills are attempting to remove our "Home Rule" but rather should reinforce our home rule in the future for the entire state and will be geared to meet the growing popularity and needs of the people of Michigan for home day care.

If his bills will require all people to be registered or licensed that offer home day care — or be fined — and will eliminate the possible proposed federal subsidized day care programs we will all benefit on income tax day!

You haven't seen disregard for the right of home day care to exist in residential areas since 1975 in this state, but you don't have the right to rent commercial space in your home. So don't worry about a Pandora's Box.

Our local officials will just have to get off the fence and grow with the times. You do good work — almost.

Margaret Precht,  
Farmington Hills



For three years parents have used the day after Thanksgiving, supposedly the busiest shopping day of the year, to protest against the sale of toys of violence.

## Observer & Eccentric Newspapers

Steve Barnaby managing editor  
Rich Perlberg assistant managing editor  
Dick Isaham general manager  
Richard Brady advertising manager  
Fred Wright circulation manager

Suburban Communications Corp.  
Philip Power chairman of the board  
Richard Agnien president