

# Doing nicely at 90: Media legend Osgood marks birthday

By Aileen Wingblad  
special writer

**T**ALKING WITH Farmington Hills' Dick Osgood is like chatting with a dear old friend.

He's warm, enthusiastic and candid with his memories of years past and his hopes for the future, and has an ease about him keeping the mood low-key. And he seems humble almost to a fault.

Osgood, longtime WXYZ radio personality, author, history buff and one of Farmington Hills' more seasoned citizens, turned 90 years old this Tuesday.

He celebrated the milestone at his son's Indiana home, sharing the spotlight with his youngest grandchild, 1-year-old Timothy Chase Osgood, who also has an April 16 birthday.

"It's probably better to forget I'm 90," Osgood said. "Of course I'm conscious of it — but I wake up each morning and wonder how I've made it so long."

While Osgood casually relates some favorite experiences of his vibrant and enviable career that began in theater and moved into radio (he spent 34 years as broadcast host, actor, newscaster and critic), he says he doesn't really like to focus on his yesterdays.

"I'm not one to live in the past. I have memories, but I don't dwell on them," he said.

**INSTEAD, THESE** days Osgood spends most of his time at his home in the Franklin Knolls subdivision reading, charting investments, gardening and helping his wife, Anne, with domestic chores.

Osgood describes Anne as his "child bride." She's 80.

"I'm glad to help her... glad to be able to do it," Osgood said of his nightly dishwashing duty, a chore he volunteered for upon retiring from WXYZ in 1971.

"Besides, it's my main source of exercise in the evening, hopping up during commeri-

## know your neighbor

cals while watching TV to run into the kitchen," he said.

In obvious good health ("My doctor says I'll be around to see the new century"), Osgood even hand saws his own firewood.

"I am quite busy. And I really do sleep well at night, too," he added.

There is also a spiritual side to Osgood, who begins and ends each day with meditation, and reads the Bible or studies East Indian philosophy daily.

"I need to have faith in something," he said, adding that it was "God's working" which led to his long, successful and "wonderfully fun" media career, that brought him face to face with thousands of movie stars, musicians and other entertainment legends and earned him a host of awards and commendations.

**SO WHAT OF** the changes in radio that Osgood has witnessed over the decades?

While he says that talent today is just as strong as when he was in radio, Osgood says the business end has undergone definite transformation.

"In the beginning, radio was a scientific wonder. Then it was a rich man's plaything. After that it became show biz — and show biz just took over."

"Now it's a money deal," he said. "It's all numbers and it's all about how much a station is worth. It has lost some of that show business taste."

What he does find entertaining, however, is the Oprah Winfrey TV talk show, which he makes a point of watching each afternoon.



Dick Osgood, who celebrated his 90th birthday April 16, stands with his wife, Anne, in the kitchen of their Farmington Hills home.

SHARON LEMJEK/staff photographer

# Cities want power back to review school site plans

By Casey Hans  
staff writer

City officials say it's a matter of local control.

Both the Farmington and Farmington Hills city councils have asked the state to repeal a section of a 1990 law that took away the cities' power over site plan approval for school district buildings, and gave it to the state school superintendent in Lansing.

Local officials say although there are no problems between city and school government in the Farmington area, they are concerned about the issue nonetheless. "Local governments can mandate what is best for their communities better than the state — they (the cities) are the ones who have the entire interest of the cities at heart," said Farmington Hills Councilman Ben Marks, who raised the issue with fellow council members and also at a recent joint meeting between the Hills City Council and Farmington school board.

"I don't think the school board should be excused from having to adhere to the local ordinances of their community."

Marks said he is also concerned because the law takes away the public's right to be advised of site plan reviews and public hearings on school projects.

**BOTH COUNCILS** adopted resolutions at their meetings April 15 requesting amendment of Public Act 159 of 1990, returning the right to reasonably control school property to local municipalities. The resolutions support House Bill 4122, which would amend the act and return site plan approval to local governments.

The cities of Novi and Oak Park have passed similar resolutions.

The 1990 state law gives the state superintendent of schools "sole and exclusive jurisdiction" over review and approval of school construction or remodeling plans for all district buildings, including those not used as instructional facilities.

The Farmington Hills resolution states "this act (PA 159) confuses local authority in the issues of zoning, water and sewer taps, public right-of-way permits such as curb cuts and sidewalks, sign ordinance requirements, soil erosion and water runoff control."

**FARMINGTON** takes a similar stance.

"Although Farmington has had a good relationship with the local school district pertaining to building construction, I believe the broader issue is that the school districts are the only agency exempted by law, from the site plan approval process," said Farmington city manager Robert Deadman in a report to council.

Deadman said last week the cities need to review such plans, especially large ones, because they need to plan for sewers, roads and public safety issues surrounding these projects.

Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi said he had talked with Farmington school officials about the matter. "They're not happy with it, but my understanding is we have to do what's best for the city," Vagnozzi said.

Farmington school board members have asked the administration to update them with background and current information from the Michigan Association of School Boards on the issue.

"Even though we have had a good relationship with our two cities, that may not always be the case," board President Susan Hemeis said.

**SCHOOL TRUSTEE** James Abernethy said he is concerned about the situation, but had yet to see copies of the legislation or city resolutions.

He said school districts are concerned with a process that may delay a sometimes-tight timeline on school projects.

"I am not saying a school should be exempt from a site plan review," he added. "What I have a problem with is the pace of review which exists in many communities."

The law was changed last summer just as the school district's new elementary, Hillside, was being completed, district architect Ron Aten said.

Despite the law, the Farmington district continues to inform both local cities of renovation and building plans to both cities, said Don Cowan, director of building and student services.

"We've taken the position we want to keep them informed, just from a courtesy standpoint." Staff writer Joanne Maliszewski contributed to this report.

# More review set for Hills report on rules of conduct

By Susan Buck  
staff writer

Council watchers voiced their initial impressions of a recently-released report on rules for the conduct of Farmington Hills City Council members.

The 16-page report, plus examples of rules of conduct from other communities, including Novi and Southfield, stem initially from questions council members have had over conduct of their colleagues in 1990. Drafting a report on rules of conduct was discussed and assigned at a city council goals setting meeting in January.

"I would hope that we wouldn't rehash the past," said councilman Terry Sever.

Specifically, council members have been concerned about an apparent breach of an executive session resolution by former mayor Jean Fox and Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi who contacted representatives in the governor's office and Gov. James Blanchard himself to resolve the conflict between the city and Boys Republic.

The resolution prohibited discussion about the then-pending lawsuit against the social service agency on Nine Mile.

**THE REPORT** also stems from concerns about the appearance of conflicts of interest, allegations that some council members have tried to exert undue influence over members of boards and commissions and the

dissemination of information by council members on staff executive session.

Council members' conduct is dictated by state law, the city charter, the city's code of ethics and Robert's Rules of Order, which govern procedures at official meetings.

Council members have the choice of adopting new rules for themselves, amending the city's code of ethics, forming a new ethics committee or reactivating the committee that formed the first ethics code.

Council watcher Lucille Hempel walked the council through the history of the council's efforts to study ethics among its members. The ethics issue goes all the way back to 1988, Hempel said.

Hempel does not want the former ethics committee revived because citizens were not part of that committee. She also wants the council to study disclosure provisions.

"When you're talking about disclosure, you're not simply talking about one issue," said councilman Larry Lichtman, who drafted the report.

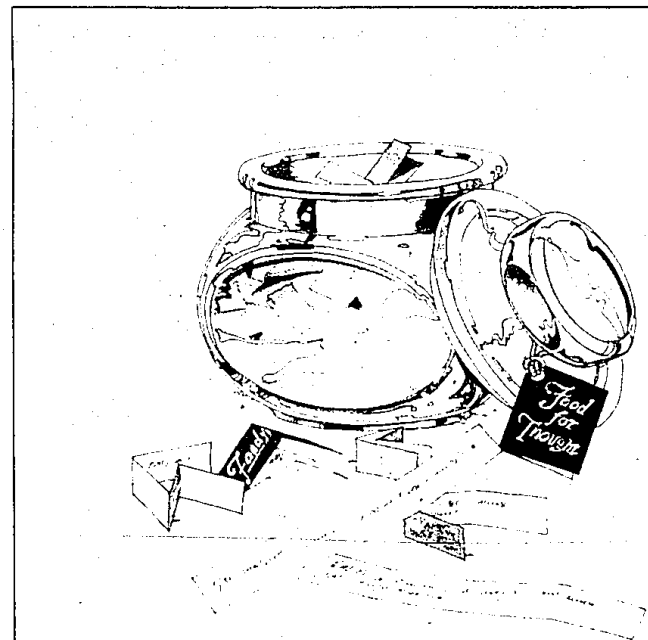
**COUNCIL WATCHER** Masha Silver is opposed to any changes that would limit public debate. She also criticized the report because it contained no recommendations. She also complained that the report, at times, seemed to her, be more intent on limiting public debate instead of the council's actions.

It takes some time," Ludwig said. "I've got to believe that eventually we'll be successful."

Psychic Carol Verroon said she and another psychic, who goes by the name Diana, of Farmington Hills had similar feelings about the third-floor room as they touched the bed, floor and drapes.

"The description of the man, the age of the man... we seem to concur on," Verroon said. "It's pretty interesting."

Romantic police say they have received hundreds of tips but have no suspects.



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# Slain woman's husband hires psychics to scan room

**AP** — The husband of a slain Northwest Airlines flight attendant hired two psychics — one of them from Farmington Hills — to scan the hotel room Tuesday where his wife's beaten and raped body was found.

There have been no arrests in the death of Nancy Ludwig, 41, whose

body was found Feb. 18 at Hilton Airport Hotel near Metropolitan Airport. She was bound and gagged, with her throat slit.

Her husband, Art Ludwig, 59, of Minneapolis said during his visit Tuesday that he was searching for clues and won't give up until he avenges her death.