

## Community Corner

This week's question:  
If you could choose anyone to be president, who would it be?

We asked this question at a Mercy High School softball game.



"My daughter (Marcy) wants to run. I'd vote for her. She's got good ideas. She's said that since she was 4 years old."  
— Cholly Eastman  
Farmington Hills



"I'd give Ross Perot a shot."  
— Art Eastman  
Farmington Hills



"Paul Tagliabue. He's the commissioner for the NFL. I like the way he's created a common bond internationally on a level all can relate to."  
— Tim Thibodeau  
Farmington Hills



"The problem is trying to find someone idealistic enough to change things but realistic enough to get the job done."  
— Judy Thibodeau  
Farmington Hills



"I only think we should give a woman a chance."  
— Nancy Barrigan  
Farmington Hills



"Mo. I'd be the leader and be able to choose everything."  
— Jim Savaga  
Southfield

## 3 vie for 2 board seats

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Prout is married and has two children who graduated from the Farmington Public Schools.

Challenger DeVries, 42, is an engineer with Ford Motor Company. The married father of three has children in the district's elementary schools. He placed second in last year's three-way board race behind incumbent Susan Rannels.

DeVries plans to maintain his previous campaign philosophies which included fiscal issues and spending more money on instruction, but said school improvement issues and curriculum changes are also key. His strengths, he said, are that he's "knowledgeable," and "willing to work hard."

"We've got to make better use of the money we have," DeVries added. "With all we've got going for us, there's no reason we can't be the best."

WOOD CAN be found in the audience at nearly every school board meeting, which he called part of the "learning curve" he needed in order to run for office.

## 3 seats uncontested

There will be no competition in June for three seats on the Clarenceville Board of Education.

In the Clarenceville School District, the decision by school board veteran Richard Wood to step down means there will be no contest between the three candidates, incumbents Bulch Bowden and Gary Gasser and challenger Lisa Burr.

With three seats open, all will win a seat in the annual school election. Clarenceville includes the southeast portion of Farmington Hills.

Wood is stepping down after 27 years on the school board.

Currently a manager in the Southfield-based Devent Corp., a computer consulting firm, the 48-year-old has previous background in the manufacturing arena where he worked in a variety of areas including industrial engineering, purchasing, plant and facilities management and operations. He is married and has four children — two at East Middle School and two at Harrison High School — and calls education "an investment for the future."

Facing tough economic times in the business world has given Svoke experience, he believes will be an asset to the district. "How do you make those cuts and what do you look at?" he said. "Those are really tough issues that have to be faced."

The Farmington Public School District includes all of the city of Farmington, most of Farmington Hills, and a small portion in south-east West Bloomfield Township. In order to vote in the June election, residents must register to vote by May 11 at 5 p.m. at the district's central office.

By Casey Hens  
staff writer

The resignation of the Downtown Development Authority's promotions coordinator has prompted the city board to review once again its focus on promotional activities.

Coordinator Brenda Kellams Neler resigned her position from the Farmington agency effective March 27. It was announced at a DDA meeting Tuesday. No reason was given for her departure from the 20-hour-a-week job which she had held for 14 months.

The DDA has decided to job out its promotional activities for the new fiscal year which began April 1. They will hire an intern to handle the successful 10-week "summer series" of downtown events which Neler coordinated for the first time last year, and will seek proposals from public relations and marketing firms for handling the DDA's fall and traditional holiday promotion.

This is the third major change in the way the DDA has handled promotions during its six-year history, as it works to fine tune such a program. The board has put much emphasis on promotions

and maintenance projects as it looks to complete the major part of its physical streetscape work this year.

IN 1989, the DDA hired the Farmington Hills-based Hermanoff & Assoc. to handle promotions, then worked with a second firm on several promotions. Finally, the board decided to move in-house and hired Neler in January of 1991. The most recent change will give the DDA a chance to field new ideas and get different perspectives on the promotions, executive director Wendy Strip-Sittamer said.

"I'm not suggesting we change programs — just the way we handle them," Strip-Sittamer said. "I'm looking at a way to increase ideas."

DDA member Michele Jakacki, who is heavily involved in the DDA's promotional efforts, called the change is "an exciting way to go."

The DDA will use the \$12,500 budgeted for the previous promotional coordinator's salary to pay fees to others to coordinate the promotions; it was decided this week.

ALSO ON TUESDAY, the DDA board approved

\$150,000 for the fifth phase of the downtown streetscape project. The work will include sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, some sodding and other plantings. The project will include:

- Streetscape Improvements for sections of Grand River, from the portion already completed east to School Street on the north side and, on the south side, to the rear of the building which houses T.J. Maxx and other chain stores.
- Improvements to both the east and west sides of Grove Street — the street which runs south off of Grand River along the front of the T.J. Maxx building.
- Repairs to the library parking lot, which the DDA tore up while doing electrical work in the area. Money will also be spent to do some maintenance and repair work to previous phases of the project throughout town, as needed.

City planner Christopher Wzaczny said the work in the Grand River/Grove area would cost between \$120,000 and \$130,000 and the library and other maintenance would eat up the balance of the estimated budget.

The work to be done this year.

## Parents concerned with early school start date

Several parents of Farmington Public School students say they are upset with a tentative school calendar which would start the school year on Aug. 25.

The parents believe the starting date is too early, and would conflict with summer family activities. But school officials say the date is no earlier than in recent years, just that Labor Day falls on Sept. 7, later in September than normal. Superintendent Michael Flanagan also stressed that the schedule is tentative.

"Nothing that this school board has done has made me speak up like this before," said Diana Richmond, a parent who has children at Forest Elementary, Warner Middle School and North Farmington High School,

in a recent letter to the board. "Normally, school has started the Tuesday of the week before Labor Day. This year, it is two weeks before Labor Day."

Richmond said the majority of parents with whom she has discussed the issue said they are opposed to the starting date. The tentative date was reached in early March when collective bargaining groups and Farmington Public School officials met and came to an agreement on the 1992-93 school calendar.

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RICHMOND WROTE to the school board in mid-March with her concerns.

Other parents have contacted the Observer to make similar complaints. Shelley Glass said the new schedule not only causes scheduling problems with family vacations and

summer camps, but a "hardship" for parents. Another parent said the starting date would cause "unnecessary problems."

Ironically, the issue of the calendar was settled much earlier in the year than usual. School officials wanted to advise parents and students of dates in advance so that they could plan vacations and other activities.

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