

The chosen two

They're filling big shoes

There are two pairs of extremely large shoes about to be filled in the city of Farmington. We hope the feet (along with the minds and personalities) of the chosen two turn out to be good fits.

Of course, we're talking about Frank Lauhoff and Judy Downey, who were picked recently as city manager and Downtown Development Authority director, respectively, in Farmington.

Lauhoff, the city's director of public safety since 1984, might at first seem to be an odd choice considering his long career in law enforcement. "Does he really want it (manager's job)?" asked a city-watcher.

Want it he did, and he was the only applicant from within. The city council created some controversy when it chose to limit its search to within city hall at first, but we're happy it stayed home.

Frank Lauhoff, from our viewpoint, has been a loyal, competent and caring public servant over the years. It's good when people like that can be rewarded.

Yes, he'll be replacing longtime City Manager Bob Deadman, equally competent and personable, and that won't be easy. There are bound to be comparisons at first.

But Lauhoff deserves the chance — and some time to break in his new shoes. "We cannot

comapre Mr. Lauhoff to Mr. Bob Deadman," said councilwoman Shirley Richardson. "He needs the time, just like Mr. Deadman needed it when he came on board."

Anyway, Lauhoff seems to have what's needed for the job. He's managed the largest budget in the city and he's negotiated labor contracts. And he seems to realize how important it is to keep abreast of new ideas and technology in his field.

Judy Downey, who comes to Farmington from Lapeer where she worked as a business recruiter for the DDA, also has a good act to follow. She replaces Wendy Strip-Sittsamer, who's now boosting Southfield's business district.

Downey, like her predecessor, seems to understand the importance of solid promotions to draw people to the downtown shopping area. She says she thrives on challenges, and that's what she'll get in Farmington, where people do a big part of their shopping in nearby malls.

But there is hope for the old main street (and adjacent shopping centers), and if Downey can continue the good work started by Strip-Sittsamer, we're sure things will improve.

Lauhoff and Downey . . . two key players on the Farmington scene. We wish them both good luck.

Revoke officeholders with 'B'

We must revamp the system of privilege that supports a very expensive and inefficient government.

Let's return to a "citizen-legislator" form of government, one that is more responsive to our needs and one that provides the opportunity for more to serve.

Vote yes on Proposal B. Recent revelations about the dangers of allowing incumbents to make a career in Washington or Lansing mandate term limitations.

The nation's founding fathers envisioned a government of "citizen-legislators," people who would serve their nation.

"They should 'return home and mix with the people,'" said Roger Sherman, a Rhode Island delegate to the U.S. Constitutional Convention.

Our representatives on both the state and national level have become career politicians who are far too removed from their constituents.

And because of the advantages incumbents have in keeping their names in the public eye and building a campaign war chest that few challengers can match, they are almost assured of re-election.

Despite a massive federal deficit, our elected representatives have continued to spend money we don't have in order to ensure their popularity at home — and get re-elected.

And if voter turnout is an indication, recent elections have not inspired participation in a democracy where the issue of who runs the government is truly at stake.

Our government has become stagnant. The same dreary ideas are dragged through the legis-

lative process by the same tired bunch. We need new ideas from a continuing stream of private citizens.

Three western states have taken steps to limit the terms of elected officials, and Michigan could join them.

California and Oklahoma have passed laws limiting terms of state office holders. Colorado has adopted a law that also limits the terms of the state's representatives to the U.S. House and Senate.

The Colorado model is the one before Michigan voters. The proposal would limit U.S. senators to two terms in a 24-year period, U.S. representatives to three terms in a 12-year period, state representatives to three terms, state senators to two terms and the governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state and attorney general to two terms.

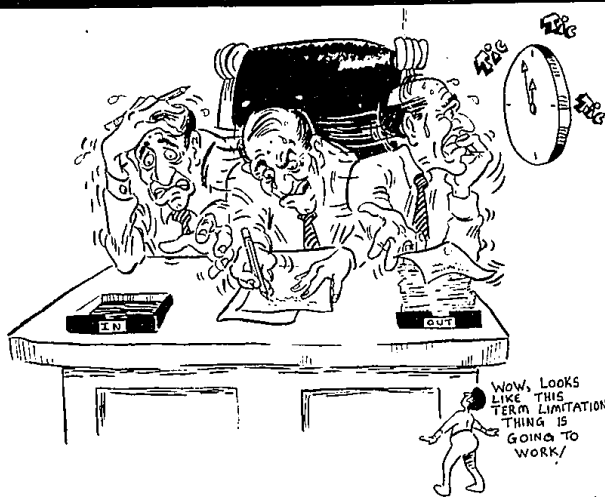
Precedent exists. The 22nd Amendment, ratified in 1951, limits the president to two terms.

Those opposed to term limits lament the loss of those senators and representatives with committee seniority, but the seniority system also breeds a government that meddles in administrative tasks rather than sticking to its legislative duties.

U.S. Rep. Jamie Whitten, D-Miss., has been in congress for 25 terms. He has seen nine secretaries of agriculture come and go during his tenure as chairman of the House Agriculture Committee. No administration will likely be able to implement a plan that does not have his seat of approval.

Congress is not supposed to set and administer policy. Term limitations will ensure that.

MARVIN TEEPLES



LETTERS

Concerned

We are very concerned about the process the Farmington City Council used to select a replacement for City Manager Robert Deadman.

The council's decision was hastily made after interviewing only one internal candidate. In this time of extreme public distrust and disgust with our political processes, it would have been prudent and politic to endorse open competition for this most important responsibility of the council.

James and Joan McGlinchey, Farmington

Look for union label

In the course of writing an article about "privatization," Tim Richard initiated a gross misrepresentation of the Democratic Party and unions. Referring to the Democrats,

Richard wrote that, "Profit is still a dirty word in the Union party."

Richard tries to separate the Democratic Party and unions from a respect of the profit motive.

Are unions against profits? If so, how do you explain that at Ford's Livonia Transmission Plant union workers, having the option of acquiring company stock, do just that?

As for Mr. Richard — look for the Union label, Tim.

Al Churchill, rank and file,
UAW-CIO, Local 182,
Ford Livonia Transmission

Opinions are to be shared: We welcome your ideas, as do your neighbors. That's why we offer this space on a weekly basis for opinions in your own words. We will help by editing for clarity. To assure authenticity, we ask that you sign your letter and provide a contact telephone number. Letters should be mailed to: Editor, The Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336.

Community papers are different

Newspapers like this one are called "community newspapers" by folks in the news business.

We're not like the big daily newspapers such as the Detroit Free Press and Lansing State Journal, which try to cover the nation, the world, Michigan and the region. Nor are we like the TV stations, which try to do the same thing using the medium of television rather than print.

Community newspapers are rooted in the local home towns they serve. They try to cover whatever goes on there, from the city council meetings to the 50th wedding anniversary of that nice couple down the street.

We try to be part of the community we serve. Often we have our office in town. We like to hire editors and reporters who live in the community. We believe that we can practice community journalism with a combination of objectivity and fairness and also a sense of responsibility to the community we serve and to our neighbors who often appear in our news stories.

This is hard to do. In fact, I think community journalism is the toughest kind, if only because lots of the people you run in to every day know just as much about the story you wrote as you do. And when you make a mistake, it's easy for them to charge into your office and chew you out face to face.

Here's an example of how we try to our job, contributed by Phil Sherman, editor of our newspaper in West Bloomfield. It describes the way we covered the dramatic murder of a local resident and the aftermath.

The young children of the victim testified at the trial of the accused. The presiding judge asked the media not to take their pictures.

Sherman wrote: "We saw no gain by putting a little boy and girl through such scrutiny after they had just watched their father die. We reported the story thoroughly without diving into the gruesome, sensationalistic tone the other media took, particularly when they snuck out to the side door of the courtroom and tried to snap pictures of the children."

"At the funeral, which took place in a church," Sherman went on, "several news or-



PHILIP POWER

■ We believe that we can practice community journalism with a combination of objectivity and fairness and also a sense of responsibility.

leave, when we did — quietly and peacefully.

"That's in contrast to the television camera team that was forcibly thrown out of the church for standing its ground, and the other camera team that caused the widow to break down crying when they chased her out to the hearse after the service."

Sherman concludes: "Through all this, we still managed to cover the story but in a kind, thoughtful manner."

"We ALWAYS consider the human angle when approaching a story, and ask ourselves if we would want someone covering our lives the way we plan to cover their lives. If the answer is yes, we go ahead. If the answer is no, we scrap the plan and come back with a more sensitive approach."

Sure, as community journalists we make our share of mistakes, some of them pretty bad. But we try our darndest to live up to the difficult standard of being both journalist and member of the community we serve.

And when we do our jobs as well and as sensitively as Phil Sherman and his staff, there's nothing that can compare.

Phil Power is chairman of the company that owns this newspaper.

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:

What are your thoughts on H. Ross Perot who has re-joined the presidential race?

We asked this question at the Farmington Hills Senior Center pool.



"It's a joke. He backed out before. He's not a dependable person."
Dorothy Montour
Farmington Hills



"It's ridiculous. I don't know what he thinks he's trying to prove."
Alma Miller
Farmington Hills



"I was never into politics. I never thought too much of U.S. politicians."
Ruth Olsen
West Bloomfield



"I never liked him. Why did he back out?"
Fran Ross
West Bloomfield

The Farmington Observer

TOM BAER, EDITOR, 477-5450

STEVE BARNABY, MANAGING EDITOR
JUDITH DONER BEHNE, ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR
DICK ISHAM, GENERAL MANAGER
MARK LEWIS, DIRECTOR OF ADVERTISING
FRED WRIGHT, DIRECTOR OF CIRCULATION
Suburban Communications Corporation
Philip Power, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
Richard Agninan, PRESIDENT