

## POINTS OF VIEW

## Carving a place in history

## Sculpture to cast spotlight on Farmington

**T**hank you for taking a moment to read about the Farmington 125th Anniversary Sculpture.

As you may recall, it was a year ago that the city of Farmington celebrated the 125th anniversary of its incorporation as a village. The historical significance of the anniversary was celebrated through school projects, civic organization events, business promotions and cultural programs.

At the end of the year, the celebration committee designated \$4,000 as seed money for a sculpture to commemorate the anniversary. A subcommittee consisting of Laura Myers, Beverly Papai, Shirley Richardson and myself was formed.

Artist Kegham Tazian, Art Department chairman at Oakland Community College and resident of Farmington Hills, was selected to do the work and fund-raising began.

The sculpture is nearly ready for casting. We look forward to a spring dedication at its site outside the east entrance

of Farmington City Hall.

The five-foot bronze sculpture will stand on a three-foot black granite pedestal. The outer shell of the sculpture contains five spiral forms, each representing 25 years of the anniversary.

At the base, within the spiral forms, is a globe of sculpted faces. The artist has made an effort to reflect the wide range of ages and ethnic origins represented in our community. With the blend of traditional and abstract art, each person who views this sculpture will no doubt experience a unique interpretation of the work.

Some will see a representation of the Potawatomi Indian settlement along the Shiawassee Trail or Farmington's link to the Underground Railroad; some will find in the faces a look of promise, pride, faith, strength and wisdom.

The making of the sculpture will be documented in film by Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Shelby Newhouse of Shana Corporation in cooperation with Grace and Wild Studios.

This film will be a resource for our

## GUEST COLUMNIST



NANETTE REID

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school system and community library. How exciting it will be to be able to share the experience of the actual casting of this work at the foundry and then having the finished piece within easy access outside Farmington City Hall.

At this time, \$15,000 of the \$20,000 necessary to fund the sculpture has been raised through private contributions. At the Benefactor level, donations have been received from Botsford General Hospital and the Farmington Artists Club.

Patrons include Detroit Edison Foundation, Douglas and Lemason Co., Heene-Sundquist Funeral Home, Metrobank and several residents of the Farmington community.

Among Donors are National Bank of Detroit and Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, Farmington Observer, Exchange Club of Farmington, LOC Credit Union, Bruce Lowen Chiropractic Clinic, Corian Carpet & Furniture, Corrosion Fluid Products Corp., Farmington Insurance Agency, Hermanoff and Asso-

ciates, and Williams, Evans and Glantz, among many contributors.

Support has come from Approved Manufacturing, The Backdoor Gallery, Hearts & Roses Inc., Warren's Country Corners and the Farmington Garden Club, as well as from clergy, council members, families, cablevision, government officials and educators.

Please feel free to contact me at 471-2676 with any questions you may have about this worthwhile project.

It is my hope that the 125th Anniversary Sculpture will be enjoyed by our families, businesses, their employees and the thousands of people who come to our community, and will serve as a source of pride as we celebrate future accomplishments.

Checks can be mailed to 125th Anniversary Sculpture, Farmington City Hall, 23600 Liberty St., Farmington 48335.

Nanette Reid, a Farmington resident, is chairwoman of the 125th Anniversary Sculpture Committee.

## Farmers catch huge break if Proposal A passes

**U**sually I answer readers' questions about Proposal A in the news columns.

But last week one question called for both facts and opinion, which I held with supply.

I live in Detroit and own 19 acres on Buno Road (Milford Township). I see a bias in this school finance reform plan against a person who owns agricultural property.

Count them, and you will find agribusiness people have many advantages over their city and suburban cousins under the new school finance laws.

Not only do agri-business people get the lower residential property tax rate (6 or 12 mills) on their homesteads, but they also get it on contiguous and adjacent farmland that is unoccupied — the business part of their property.

They will pay the full 24 mills only on non-contiguous land and on land they rent to someone else.

Contrast this with the treatment given city folks:

■ The small-town Main Street merchant who lives upstairs from his store

pays 24 mills on the downstairs portion of his property.

■ The college-town widow who rents a couple of rooms to students gets the homestead rate only on the part of the home she occupies.

The students' quarters will be taxed the full 24 mills.

All along, agri-businesses have had special advantages.

Remember the Robin Hood act in which property taxes on city and suburban commerce and industry were to be shared?

Rural districts would take a share of city and suburban business taxes, but farmers wouldn't have to share taxes on agri-businesses, which are considered residential.

The school finance reform movement was fueled on the farm.

Remember that comparison of poor districts spending \$2,500 per student while rich ones spent \$9,000?

The poorest districts were all in the farm counties of The Thumb. Many poor districts' problems could



TIM RICHARD

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have been alleviated by consolidation — sharing of taxes and administrative costs. Give Midland County farmers a cut of the Dow plant by making a countywide district.

Give Berrien County farmers a cut of the nuclear plant's taxes by consolidating the rural districts around Bridgeport.

Two state senators who suggested such a common-sense solution got burned.

Suburbanite Jack Faxon of Farmington Hills and city man John Schwarz of Battle Creek learned the hard way that small town politics are extremely important to agri-business people, and consolidation is hereby, even if their kids got better-run and better-financed schools.

Well, the Robin Hood law was tied up in court, and now we have a reform plan that shares all property taxes statewide.

It's a whopping victory for agri-business.

The cap on assessments in Proposal A will benefit lakefront homeowners,

but we tend to overlook its special benefit to agri-business in growth corridors.

Assessment growth would be limited to 5 percent until the agri-business person sells to an industrial park developer or mega-mall.

Such are the facts. You also asked for an opinion.

Not content with these advantages, agri-businessmen are demanding that all farm property be taxed as residential — even disjointed pieces, even farms owned as investments, even rented farm land.

The Farm Bureau endorsed Proposal A but got a concession from Gov. John Engler (who was raised on a farm) to support amendments giving the agri-business lobby everything it wants.

My opinion is that any further picking of the public pocket by agri-business would be immoral and selfish beyond belief.

Tim Richard reports regularly on the local implications of state and regional events.

## U-M flower and garden show brings spring a little bit closer

**W**hen I was younger, winters didn't seem to go on this long.

There was hockey on the pond, with hot cocoa afterward. I looked forward to the occasional snowstorm, if only because there would be skiing afterward. And there was always a fire in the fireplace and a warm spot to sit and read.

But this year, it seems winter has gone on forever. Here we are at the beginning of March, the snow is still on the ground, and the deep frost is still freezing the water pipes.

Worse, the flower and vegetable catalogs start fluttering through the mail at this time of the year. Looking at the bright pictures on the newest rose or thinking about planting strawberries take on a certain fictional quality when it's below-zero outside.

Coming up, however, is a good reality check: The Flower and Garden Show, sponsored by the University of Michigan's Matthaei Botanical Gardens, will open March 24 for four days at the Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds east of Ann Arbor.

I've been to past shows; they're fun and they make concrete the assertion that spring is coming.

This year's show will feature an acre of professionally designed landscapes and more than 500 horticultural and floral design exhibits. For those who are serious about their gardening, there is also a Standard Flower Show produced in cooperation with the Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan.

The show also benefits a very good and very under-reported cause, the Matthaei Botanical Gardens. Located on an enormous piece of land given to the U-M years ago by former Regent Frederick C. Matthaei, the gardens started out as a fairly standard academic collection of greenhouses and research plots.

But with Patricia Hopkinson's arrival as acting director, the place started to get with it. New gardens were planted, this time with the interests of the average Michigan gardener in



PHILIP POWER

mind. Adult education classes taught pruning, plant identification and garden design. This year's perennial sale will offer 25,000 plants in early May, and wildflower tours and nature walks happen throughout the year.

The gardens adopted a new statement of purpose: "We aim to contribute to a better quality of life for the world community by maintaining a living museum and plant sanctuary where a dynamic interaction of scientific, educational and aesthetic pursuits can take place within the context of a world-class university." A Friends organization was launched to raise money. Birmingham's Frederick Matthaei Jr., son of the original donor, has continued his family's tradition of generous giving.

So if you want to get a jump on spring, get a few gardening tips and at the same time give support to a good cause, you might want to check out the Flower and Garden Show. I'll see you there.

The Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds site is located at 6055 Ann Arbor-Saline Road, just off I-94 south of town. Tickets can be purchased at the door. For information on the show, call (313) 998-7002; for information on the botanical gardens themselves, call (313) 998-0741.

Phil Power is chairman of the company that owns this newspaper. His Touch-Tone voice mail number is (313) 933-2047, Ext. 1880.

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