



Help: Donna Burt gets help on her income taxes from Iffy Smith at the Farmington Hills Senior Center.

Taxes from page B1

enue Service gave volunteers a four day training seminar. The Michigan Department of Treasury finished the weeklong schooling with a one day presentation. The program focuses on tax changes and helps keep the 14 volunteers up to snuff.

"This year the toughest part is capital gains," said Bob Wightman, the 76 year old volunteer coordinator. "Even if it's a small gain, there's two pages of calculations. It's time consuming."

Although there are two IRS retirees among the volunteer core, a strong accounting background is not a prerequisite.

"If they can do their own taxes, we can train them to do this," said Wightman, a retired engineer who worked for Michigan Bell for 25 years.

Milliken thinks what draws people into the center is "the fact that (tax form) instructions are getting more complicated all the time."

Fred Marinucci, a retired accountant and father of Farmington Hills Fire Chief Rich Marinucci, has been volunteering "about 10 years because I enjoy it."

Lifelong Farmington Hills resident Dorothy Morgan discovered the free service two years

ago. Tuesday she peered into the Wexford room to see if volunteer Rose Antonilli was available.

"I am very pleased with it," she said. "The volunteers are very nice. It's not a long wait. I'm very satisfied."

Jim Mather, a Detroit Edison retiree, is training this year to be a tax preparer next season. "A friend of mine does this work," he said. "I figured I'd give it a try. I'm getting on the job training. This is a good way to learn all the little things, the ifs, ands or buts."

Mather says he completed his own return using the Turbo tax computer program this year.

Preparers usually complete four returns per day.

"Some go quick, others take quite a while," said Wightman. "What's most amazing to me is the 85 or 90 year old who comes in here with their return all filled in and they just want someone to check it over. That's wonderful. That's the fun I get out of it."

Art Nicholas, former district controller for UPS in Oklahoma, figures this is a good way to keep up with tax changes.

"I do my own taxes and for family members," he said. "This is work that interests me."

The returns he completes for seniors run anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour and a half, he said.

Seniors interested in using the service should come to the activities center in Farmington Hills Tuesdays through April 14 from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Sign-up

sheets are located in the cafeteria. Volunteers are also on hand Fridays at the Farmington library through April 3, noon to 3 p.m.

More tax preparers are needed. Call Bob Wightman at 626-6198 to volunteer.

Chat room from page B1

newletters gets back to residents through their COHA representatives.

Another way COHA works to keep residents informed and promote voter awareness is through our "Candidate Nights." COHA hosts televised candidate debates, which feature a distinguished panel of questioners as well as live audience and call in questioning of candidates.

The second benefit of having an organization of homeowner and condominium associations is that it allows the voice of residents to be heard in places where it counts the most. COHA serves as a liaison between associations and the city administration and departments. We have representatives on city commissions and boards. This helps bring member input into policies, decisions and ordinances that affect residents. COHA has been an active advocate on hot issues such as oil well drilling, cellular towers, development in key areas like Orchard Lake and 14 Mile Road, and traffic and road improvement.

We also communicate with elected officials at the state and federal level on questions of importance to homeowner associations (such as, recently, federal legislation on local zoning, and state laws on liability of association board members.) We arrive at our positions on issues democratically, and then mobilize our resources to make our voice heard.

Currently COHA is finishing up a survey on development, in which we polled member and

non-member associations on their experience and views about development trends in the city. When we have compiled the results, we will make them available to the public and to officials. COHA also is exploring ways to strengthen zoning restrictions in order to control development.

By the way, our membership meetings are open and guests are welcome to attend. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of January, March, May, September and November, in the lower level meeting room at the public library on Twelve Mile Rd. Social gathering and refreshments begin at 7 p.m.; the meeting starts at 7:30 p.m.

In addition to reports and information sharing, (and often some lively discussion and debate), we typically have guest speakers. Recent speakers include our Farmington Hills city manager, advocates on the school millage proposal, the city's director of planning to talk about the latest development issues, and attorneys to discuss homeowner association issues like by-laws and deed restrictions.

If you are interested in learning more about COHA, come to our next meeting. Any homeowner or condominium association in Farmington Hills is welcome to join COHA. Just write to us at: P.O. Box 3417, Farmington Hills, Mich. 48333.

Andrew Nickelhoff is president of the Council of Homeowner Associations of Farmington Hills.

Fashion show April 15

A fashion show and luncheon sponsored by the Farmington Neighbors Club will be held at the Glen Oaks Country Club on Wednesday, April 15, to benefit the Rainbow Connection.

Spring fashions will be presented by Talbots, Laurel Park Mall. The event begins with a social hour at 11 a.m. followed

by lunch at noon. Cost is \$30 and the event is open to everyone.

The Rainbow Connection makes the wishes of children with serious illness come true each year.

For tickets or more information, call Ben at 474-3760.

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Visit our booth (#609 and #611) at the upcoming Michigan International

Women's Show at the Novi Expo Center, Thursday, April 30 through

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