



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL BARKER

Arrive: Santa Claus made his arrival in Farmington Hills by fire engine. When he sat down to listen to what kids want from him, Cameron Jenkins gave him his most honest answer: "I want ALL the presents." Santa vowed to see what he could do.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BARKER

Entertain: The Farmington Community Chorus was one of the groups entertaining the crowd on an almost balmy evening last week when Farmington Hills made the holiday season official with its tree lighting.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BARKER

Welcome: Farmington Hills Mayor Nancy Bates welcomes Santa Claus to town. She told the crowd she hopes the candle in the city fountain will "stand like a beacon, a symbol of hope and unity..."

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a new, 20-foot-tall candle "which represents our commitment to peace and unity" in the city. Bates, in one of her first public ceremonies since being elected mayor earlier this month, expressed the hope that the candle - in the fountain at the corner of 11 Mile and Orchard Lake roads - will "stand like a beacon, a symbol of hope and unity for all."

Noting the holiday lights ceremony itself is a "time for friends and family to come together in the spirit of community," she reminded the gathering that "A city with light cannot be hidden."

"So we urge all of you to become beacons of that same spirit of hope and unity in your

own homes and neighborhoods, your schools and where you work - wherever you are."

The Rev. Suzanne Paul, co-chairwoman of the Multi-Cultural/ Multi-Racial Council, and students Carmen Krystniak of Mercy High and David Kinchen of Farmington Harrison also spoke before the North Farmington High School Choir sang "One Small Voice."

Then another switch was thrown, and the complex, which didn't feel much like the usual Thanksgiving-Christmas season due to temperatures in the 60s, took on the look as trees around the complex sprang to life with holiday lights of many shapes and colors.

'So we urge all of you to become beacons of that same spirit of hope and unity in your own homes and neighborhoods, your schools and where you work - wherever you are.'

Nancy Bates
-Farmington Hills mayor

Hills Community Chorus belted out "Let It Snow," "Frosty, The Snowman" and "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town."

The crowd then trooped over to the main fire station, where Santa heard the children's wishes and everyone had refreshments.

It all went over well with first-time attendees Sue Tepatti of Farmington Hills and children: Erin, 3, and Timmy, 2.

Although Tepatti said she thought some of the singing was a bit hard to hear, Erin got a kick out of seeing the trees light up, and Timmy told Santa he wanted a teddy bear.



Longtime: Mike Harrison (left) and Frank Lauhoff, Farmington city manager, are longtime members of the Farmington Exchange Club, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary in the community. The history of the club and its works have been documented.

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said Lauhoff, the club's current president. Today, of course, women are prominent members.

"The Farmington area was not yet chartered (in 1924)," noted Boegner. "Basically, it was a group of stores at the end of the Detroit corridor."

Then as now, the Exchangites meet and laugh over lunch, while managing to avoid the subject of their daily businesses. Fines are still doled out for being late to meetings or wearing the worst of ties, among other transgressions. Awful ties sometimes were confiscated, too.

"You never knew if you were going to go home with the same tie you came to the meeting with," Boegner said. Apparently, many tongue-in-cheek comments had to do with the guest speakers, including "Gee, he was so great I think we'll lose his name forever."

But, helping out the community also is as much of the club's fabric as gags and groaners. In the early years, according to historical records such as minutes of meetings, the beginnings of the Goodfellows and Farmington Community Concert Band started with the Exchange Club.

Until World War II, the Farmington chapter bounced around in search of an official focus, or mission. Early causes included



Keeping track: Paula Boegner is one of the historians for the Farmington Exchange Club.

the so-called women's aviation effort, from the likes of Amelia Earhart (who actually spoke at a national convention of the Exchange Club) to patriotism. Finally, the club opted to fight the abuse of children.

Various organizations that are dedicated to children continue to be the main beneficiary of Exchange Club fund-raising efforts. The majority of those funds are generated at the annual golf outing at Glen Oaks Country Club.

Lauhoff said 10 different organizations shared this year's golf outing pot of more than \$9,000. Among those groups: Farmington Youth Assistance, Farmington Families in Action and the Farmington Hills/Farmington

Foundation for Children, Youth and Families.

Another program is the Junior Exchangites, implemented in the 1930s as a way for high school students to talk to members about their post-graduation plans and to gain adult mentors at the same time.

That program has grown over the years, with public and private high schools in Farmington and Farmington Hills sending student representatives to the weekly meetings.

The club also sponsors local students to sign up for Boys State and Girls State, a camp at which they can learn all about the intricacies of government. "It's just being a good neighbor to causes children are involved in," Boegner said.

Other necessities for membership include having a sense of humor, remembering not to say anybody's last name at meetings (those who do are levied a fine) and treating everybody as an equal. Judges and high school students interact with ease, for example.

"Jokes are an important part of the equation," Boegner said. "It's (having) a sense of history and it's a sense of comfort level. ... But some of the people have 35 years of bad jokes."

T H E M E N ' S S T O R E

SAKS FIFTH AVENUE

Uncommon elegance. Oxford Clothes Part of our distinguished assortment of the foremost names in menswear on One in Troy.

Shown: Grey chalk stripe wool suit \$1875



The Somerset Collection, Big Beaver at Coolidge, Troy Fairlane Town Center, Dearborn