

CHAT ROOM

RUTH MOELMAN

Greece, Turkey offer great architecture

We sailed near the sites of the ancient world on a beautiful white ship to welcome in the new century. The year 2000 arrived seven hours earlier in Athens than it did in Farmington Hills. Lasers and fireworks erupted at the Acropolis where the ancient ruins have influenced the modern world for centuries.

Greek architecture was copied in Greek Revival style when Farmington was settled in 1824. The grand columns and distinctive style of ancient Greek architecture are evident in buildings around the world. In Greece and Turkey where we visited, they are still building Greek style using post and beam construction. This type of construction has been replaced here in the U.S. by other methods.

Part of dowry

Because so many buildings are partially finished in Greece and Turkey the method of construction is evident. We were told that some of these buildings take years to finish. Many are started when a daughter is born and finished as part of her dowry when she marries. They do not have American-style mortgages in those countries. The families must have the money up front.

When the ancient ruins were unearthed in the early 1800s, they seemed to follow a pattern throughout the ancient world. In Athens, Rhodes, Crete and Istanbul, a temple was built high upon a hill. In the ancient cities around the temple were gymnasia, public baths and markets. In Ephesus, a whole town was found where parts of the market, library and even a brothel were discovered.

The streets were made of marble because marble, so plentiful in that part of the world, is an inexpensive material there. The columns in the ancient sites were made of many different stones, rounded and piled on top of each other, then plastered over. Then they were painted.

Earthquakes and wars toppled these ancient cities even if they were high on hills and surrounded by protecting walls. In Crete the oldest city was discovered and the ruins were unearthed by Sir Arthur Evans, a British archaeologist, around 1900.

Ahead of its time

Four thousand years ago, in biblical times, the Minoan palace had modern indoor plumbing, beautiful frescoes and paintings on the walls. Water was supplied by a mountain spring and piped to the site. A sanitary system serviced the complex. The Minoans traded with the rest of the ancient world and their wealth was in great ceramic jars of oil, wines, grains and honey which were buried along with everything else in a great earthquake.

A lot of speculation has been made about the Minoan culture but the Minoan Language has not been translated yet.

In modern Athens, the city is surrounded by stone mountains so it can't expand outward. It is very crowded. A city originally of less than 100,000 is now inhabited by four million people. The streets are very narrow and traffic is a problem. Some individuals manage to scout through traffic on motorbikes which leave the slow traffic behind.

Our guide explained that Athens is a great place to socialize at coffee houses and restaurants. McDonalds are all over the city, as are Pizza Huts and American soft drinks. Unfortunately, there is extensive graffiti which was copied from American movies, according to one source.

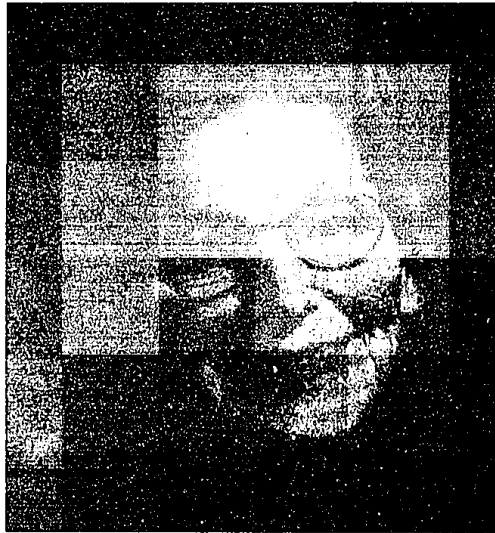
In Greece, they grow olive trees, some over 200 years old. They make olive oil and cure the olives. They also have sheep and goats and make beautiful wool garments and rugs. They make ceramics.

The Greeks have always been involved with the sea and commerce from the days of the city status to pre-

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Citizen of the Year

Jody Soronen is Jaycee's pick; active for decades



Citizen of the Year: Jody Soronen

■ From the Farmington Hills City Council to the chamber of commerce and countless committee posts, Jody Soronen has worn many hats.

By MARY RODRIGUE
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Jody Soronen is the Farmington area Jaycees Citizen of the Year for 2000.

For the longtime community activist, it's a case of the shoe being on the other foot. As executive director of the Farmington-Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce for 16 years, she oversaw the annual citizen selection process. The Jaycees look over that responsibility last year.

"After having been on the other side of it for many years, it was a nice surprise," said Soronen, who left the chamber last year. "I was thoroughly surprised. Why would I ever think I'd be eligible? They haven't run out of good candidates."

She was nominated by her predecessor, Carleigh Flaherty, current chamber president. That nomination was supported by several prominent members of the community, including Frank Lauhoff, city manager; Mary Bush, Farmington councilwoman; John Grant, Hills city councilman and members of the business community.

A 36-year-resident of the Woodbrook

Subdivision "when Farmington Hills was a township and not yet a city," Soronen is still deeply committed to a myriad of causes.

She's a member of the Farmington Public Schools Community Partnership Advisory Council, Woodbrook Homeowners Association, First Presbyterian Church, Farmington Exchange Club, and Farmington Hills Beautification to name but a few.

Council veteran

A three term veteran of the Farmington Hills City Council first elected in 1977, including two years as mayor, it would be accurate to call her one of the original movers and shakers of the community.

"Half the roads weren't paved back then - 13 Mile, Halsted, Drake. Now you can't get out of the subdivisions. All these people have discovered these wonderful northwestern suburbs."

"We watched vacant land turn into subdivisions, Northwestern Highway and Orchard Lake Road turn into commercial and office centers," she said.

She contends the thorniest issue was and continues to be water drainage.

"I don't know if all the building contributed to the big floods, but I know the city is still concerned with that."

Residents concerned about imposing businesses, tree removal from major intersections, street widening projects, sewer installation, Soronen saw it all up close and personal. She served as Farmington Downtown Development Authority Director in 1987-88. She was

Please See CITIZEN OF THE YEAR, B2

Former Miss Kansas joins local pageant

By MARY RODRIGUE
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The newest addition to the Miss Farmington Pageant Board of Directors is a former Miss Kansas, Jennifer Parks.

Parks, 24, moved to Westland from her home state last July to pursue a sports administration degree at the University of Michigan.

Ginny Morris, longtime Farmington pageant executive director, met Parks through a mutual acquaintance in the pageant industry.

"Ginny has a great organization here," said Parks. "She has invited me to many appearances and recently asked me to be on the board of directors."

"It's a neat experience for me to see how (the pageant) works in another state. It's interesting because I can look at it from a contestant's point of view. I'd like to see the girls grow through the process. Miss America throws opportunities at them. I'll be there to help them grab every opportunity and run with it."

"There's so much to take advantage of. I want to help the girls reach their goals."

Runner-up to Miss America

Parks was first runner-up to Miss Kansas, Tara Holland, in 1996. Holland was crowned Miss America in the national pageant in Atlantic City that year and Parks stepped into the role of Miss Kansas. She entered the Kansas pageant again last year and was third runner-up as well as winner of the Tara Holland Community Service award, which is endowed with a \$1,000 scholarship.

"I was one semester away from a broadcasting degree at Kansas State University when I changed to sports administration," said Parks, a Wichita native and the eldest of three daughters of Rick and Terry Parks. "I played volleyball two years in college and three sports in high school - volleyball, basketball and track."

Baton twirling is her major area of expertise; she's had 18 years training and has won seven national titles. She also has a dozen years of gymnastics experience. Parks hopes to teach baton twirling while in Michigan. She also holds a job as assistant to the chief operating officer for Coughlin Logistics in Taylor.

"Todd Lipa (director of Youth and Family Services) and Ginny Morris were among the first people I met here," she said. "They are really super. I went to the Picnic in the Park last summer and I met the current Miss Farmington, Leslie Reinhold."

While she was Miss Kansas, Parks had the opportunity to speak to 95,000 children in the state on AIDS awareness. That was her contest platform. All pageant contestants must have a social issue platform. Miss Farmington Leslie Reinhold's plat-



Jennifer Parks

form is eating disorders.

"We also talked about drug and alcohol abuse. The program is in collaboration with Kansas Childrens Service League and funded by the government. It's a good way to get the message into the schools," Parks said. "I could see something similar happening here."

Parks would like to break down the stereotypes about the Miss America pageant.

Promoting competition

"As a board member, I'm here to promote all the wonderful lessons to be learned through the Miss America pageant. Some people don't understand pageants. The social platforms the girls adopt, the personal growth they experience...it's wonderful. When Leslie (Reinhold) goes to compete for the title of Miss Michigan, she's really going to a glorified job interview. It's an opportunity for growth. Pageants are a lot of work physically and emotionally."

Ginny Morris calls Jennifer "our pageant ambassador." She recalls meeting her for the first time at Family Day in the Park last summer. It is one of the events co-sponsored by the pageant.

"She came over and started making cotton candy. She went to play with the kids. She fit right in immediately; she's very down to earth. We've kept in contact. She knows what it's all about. She has a lot of ideas and she's so much fun. She will be working with the contestants. We are very fortunate to have her here."

Good and fruity

Some dads give out cigars or candy to announce the birth of their child. Farmington chiropractor Brian Nocella wanted to go for something healthier. Like fruit.

So when his wife, Jacqueline, gave birth to their first child, Brice, six years ago, Nocella handed out bananas - crate loads of them.

"We wrote on the (banana) skin with felt tip markers 'It's a boy.' The ink came off on everyone's hands," he recalled with a chuckle.

Experience helped from the bugs out of the system. By the time the couple's fourth child, Blake, arrived last month, they had the fruit giving routine down to an art form.

Shiny red apples featured stickers with tiny colored photos of red-haired Brice with the words "The apple of our eye" printed with his birthdate, Dec. 16, 1999. At the Farmington Exchange Club where Nocella is a member, the apples served as dessert for the lunch meeting.

The years in between Brice and

Blake featured the arrival of two girls - Bailey, 5, who was heralded with plump little clementine oranges and Brianna, 2, who was welcomed with fuzzy peaches her dad picked fresh from the orchard.

"I'm in a health business. I had to find something healthy," said Nocella, whose chiropractic office is on Grand River west of Farmington Road. "Of course we had to rule out pineapples - they were too big."

After posing for a picture holding the fruits that announced their births, the Nocella kids, except baby Blake, started munching on their namesake foods.

"I love bananas," said Brice, a blond-haired first-grader. "I could eat 16 bananas a day."

Bailey likes her namesake oranges and all the kids like peaches, according to their mom. Will more fruit be added to the mix?

"Watch out in 2001; it's been one every two years," Nocella said with a laugh.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRIDGES

The clan: Brianna with peach and apple, Bailey with a clementine orange and brother Blake, and Brice with a banana.