

Merry the Farmington enterprise & observer

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Next 2 Editions On Thursdays

Observer Newspapers offices will be closed the next two Mondays, Dec. 25 and Jan. 1, for the holidays.

The next two editions of your hometown paper will be published on Thursdays, Dec. 28 and Jan. 4. There will be no edition on the weekend of Dec. 30.

Deadlines for the next two editions will be pushed back one day, to Tuesday, for news and general advertising. Classified ads will be accepted until 11:30 a.m. Wednesday.

The building at 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, will be closed today (Dec. 23) but the circulation department will be open next Saturday, Dec. 30.

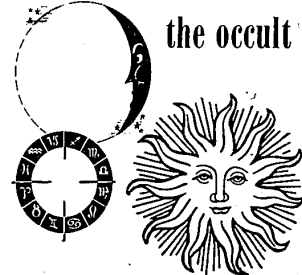
County Budget

The Oakland County budget was approved recently. How is the new financial plan going to affect local communities?

Flyer Killed

A Farmington man was killed in a plane crash near Metropolitan airport recently. The FAA is still investigating the cause of the tragedy.

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the occult and things that go bump in the night receive full treatment in this weekend's edition of FOCUS: Suburbia

Don't miss this interesting section with its articles about local phenomena, astrology and things that go bump in the night -- but not too loudly.



WILBUR BROTHERTON

Brotherton Leaves City Hall

Farmington's affable Mayor Wilbur ("Sandy") Brotherton is ending a 14-year career with the city to begin a new political life in Oakland County.

Brotherton will take office Jan. 4 at Oakland County commissioner. He has already been named to the local and regional affairs; planning and zoning; equalization; and finance committees.

He recently submitted a letter of resignation as councilman and mayor, effective Jan. 4.

"WHILE THE past 14 years on the city council have included times of trial and tribulation, they have also included many stimulating and happy times," he said.

"I hope that as I move on to Oakland County, the record will show I have in small measure contributed to the growth, stability and well being of the Farmington Community."

Brotherton's resignation leaves the position of mayor open. Sources in city hall indicate Mayor Pro-Tem

Ralph Yoder is the most likely candidate.

The empty council seat, which will be filled by the appointment by the city council, will most likely go to Richard Tupper, currently a member of the planning commission.

The planning commission, it turns will be "taking applications". It has been a traditional "first job," along with the zoning appeals board, for newcomers to local city politics.

Lawyer Urges Silence

Public Wants Story

By STEVE BARNABY

Like Scrooge in Charles Dickens' "Christmas Carol," the Farmington school board is being haunted by ghosts of memories past.

In the board's case the memory is the recent resignation of Dr. Roderick Smith as superintendent. The ghosts are the letters of protest from citizen's and civic groups, expressing dismay at the board's lack of explanation of the resignation on the advice of their lawyer.

THE MOST recent letter of protest was presented to the board on Dec. 19 by the League of Women Voters of Farmington and West Bloomfield.

A similar letter of protest was presented to the board on Dec. 5 signed by more than 500 residents of the Farmington School District.

The league's letter, read by Mrs. Richard Gould, president of the chapter, labeled the board's decision to withhold the reasons for Dr. Smith's resignation as irresponsible.

"The wall of secrecy apparently growing around the activities of the board of education is detrimental to the democratic process," said the letter.

Aide Vagozzi, board vice president, who had called for unity behind Acting Supt. Marinus Van Ameyde, at the Dec. 5 meeting, said the most recent letter by "a group of strong school supporters," deserved some sort of response and explanation by the board.

"Some explanation has to be given. I suggest the board meet with representatives of the league, the petitioners and the Citizens' Advisory Council in conjunction with the board

attorney and furnish some answer," said Vagozzi.

Vagozzi didn't put the suggestion up as a motion because not all board members were present at the Tuesday night meeting and he felt it would have little chance of passing.

THOSE PRESENT at the Dec. 19 meeting were Vagozzi, Myrvyn Ross, Board President Perrin and Elizabeth Brennan. Both Perrin and Mrs. Brennan voted in favor of Smith's resignation. It takes four members of the seven to pass a motion.

Perrin replied to the accusation of irresponsibility by saying that "those sitting in the audience" hadn't grasped the situation.

He explained that the board had been advised by legal counsel if they discuss the

matter in public they are liable for court action.

"Smith could sue the board if he applied in another district and was refused employment because of statements made by Farmington board members," said Perrin.

"I don't want to put the board or myself in that position...there is little I could add without putting the board and myself in a bad legal position," said Perrin.

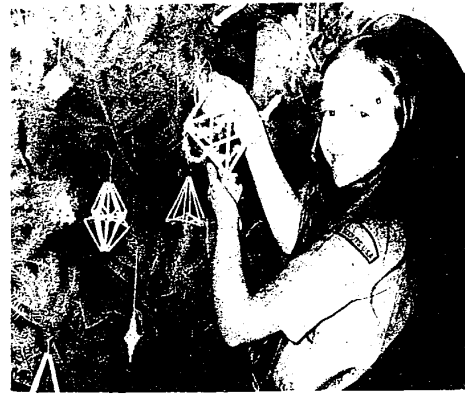
Of the resignation, Perrin said there had been a "number of occurrences over an extended period of time concerning the board and administrative operations which had been discussed by the board members and superintendent after which time it was concluded by a majority of the board and the superintendent that separation 'one from the other' was advisable."



A SWEDISH TREE, decorated in the Swedish style, is demonstrated by Julia Nieman, who is wearing the Lucia crown and a white robe (Evert photo)



NORWEGIAN TREE--Troop leader Mrs. Herbert Piilo demonstrates a tree depicting the Norwegian style--with the tree decorated with flags and ornaments strung vertically. (Evert photo)



FESTIVAL OF TREES--Ann Wilson shows off one of the trees decorated in authentic Lithuanian fashion at the Farmington Community Center. (Photo by Fran Evert)

3 Charter Hearings Scheduled

A series of public meetings in January has been scheduled to explain a proposed charter for the City of Farmington Hills to the public.

Approval of the document by the governor is also required before an election is held. The tentative date of the election is May 8.

THE LAST writing session Tuesday tied up many of the

loose ends left by the commission. The biggest was the adoption of a "graduated" tax limitation -- which will allow the charter limit to escalate over an eight-year period.

Starting at six mills in 1973, when the charter would go into effect, the limit would be raised to seven mills the next year, and then an additional

mill each two years, ending with 10 mills in 1980.

The graduated limits were close to the actual projected millage required to operate the new city, according to members of the commission.

A projection of current township expenses indicated that over the eight-year period, expected growth in valuation would not be enough

by itself to generate needed revenue without increasing the tax rate, according to figures presented by Chairman Robert McConnell.

The graduated tax limit appealed to conservative commission members who hoped the low initial tax limit would make the charter more appealing to the voters.

IN GENERAL, the charter, with a seven-man council elected at large, a "weak mayor" elected by the council and the relatively low tax limit, reflected the platforms of the commissioners.

Joan Dudley, however, saw two "planks" of her election platform turned to sawdust

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