

POINTS OF VIEW

Farmington's old order changeth — bite by bite

An era is passing in the community known as Farmington. I realize that with every forkful of chicken and peas I see hoisted at the Glen Oaks Country Club.

For sure a lot of chicken and peas, a lot of roast beef and carrots and the contents of a lot of salad plates have gone down the gullets of the area's shakers and movers during the last month or so.

There've been a couple of recent "name" retirements — Bob Deadman, Farmington's city manager for the last 20 years, and Margaret Schaeffer, judge of the 47th District Court for the last 18, and the events were milestones along the highway that carries the community's official life.

Of course, after each retirement comes the obligatory goodbye dinner. Deadman's was Jan. 6 and Schaeffer's took place Feb. 4. Both were held at (where else?) Glen Oaks. It was good food and good fete at both, I might add.

And then there were the less formal welcome-to gatherings. Frank Lauhoff, the man who will replace Deadman as city manager, had one of those last week. Cookies were munchied and soda pop and coffee were sipped.

"Here we are... eating again," said a member of Farmington-area officialdom with a laugh.

That Schaeffer shindig was just about what you'd expect: a "roast" for an outgoing official of some prominence. There were lots of speeches, funny ones, serious ones, ones that had to be rated triple-X. No, we won't repeat any of those in this missive. One was suggested (too bad he couldn't somehow "pon" it) that, with the retirement, the community was going from a Schaeffer to Parker, meaning Marla Parker, the new judge of the 47th. By the way, I'm wondering when and where Parker's welcome-to affair will be held.

In a more serious vein, Nancy Bates,



TOM BAER

Farmington Hills mayor, said of Schaeffer, "The quality of life is better because you are here."

Schaeffer, who was born the year women gained the right to vote, has seen the changes in the community and its court. When she first took to the bench, the court had no permanent home and shuttled between the city halls.

"It's been exciting and challenging

— and fun," Schaeffer told her audience.

Schaeffer maintained her popularity throughout her 18 years of public service, and that's not always the case with local judges. Oh, they may not get voted (or booted) off the bench, but they do have to make unpopular decisions sometimes.

And with too many judges a metamorphosis takes place: A human being, mortal in every respect, turns into a king or queen of divine origin complete with royal robes. Come retirement time, not too many folks want to attend their good-bye parties — except to say good riddance.

But Schaeffer... well, the worst thing I can recall anyone saying about her is that she sometimes got her hair done on Friday mornings. If that's as mean as they get about you in 18 years on the bench, you've had yourself a whole of a career.

Actually, Farmington is fortunate. It

appears there are suitable replacements for these two outgoing giants, Deadman and Schaeffer.

Parker, who is still savoring a hard-won victory over Jack McDonald last November, has worn the robes and pounded the gavel as a magistrate in the Farmington District Court. And I don't think she sees herself as Queen Marla.

Lauhoff, who had been Farmington public safety director, will succeed because, like his predecessor, he's always prepared. I watched him fielding questions from the council during a recent "goals" meeting. It was like watching veteran shortstop take infield practice, just waiting for a bad-hop grounder.

No, these two will be around for a few years. In maybe 18 or 20 years, they'll be feled at retirement parties of their own — at Glen Oaks, of course.

Tom Baer is the editor of The Farmington Observer. He may be reached by calling 477-5450.

No more cigar butts in Don Riegler's mashed potatoes

Weldon Yeager, the retired Republican pol, used to tell a great Don Riegler story.

Yeager was a Constitutional Convention delegate, state representative, state GOP secretary, nominee for secretary of state and even a township trustee, in areas ranging from northwest Detroit to Redford, Livonia and West Bloomfield, with a stopover in Gov. George Romney's administration over the last 32 years.

Yeager told of the time in 1966 when Riegler, a 28-year-old IBM type out of Harvard Business School, was running as a Republican for Congress up in Flint.

Riegler bought a ticket to a UAW picnic (Republicans never are invited) and sat down to eat. A burly union guy took the stump of a smelly cigar out of his mouth and stuffed the butt in the middle of Riegler's mashed potatoes.

"What do you do?" Yeager asked. Riegler didn't dare start a fight, but he couldn't wimpishly take the insult.

"So he ate right around the cigar butt, leaving it standing in a small

mound of potatoes. That," Yeager concluded, "is real class."

Riegler upset incumbent Democrat John Mackie and went to Congress as a member of Gov. Romney's "Class of '66."

All the other class members are gone from Congress: Sen. Bob Griffin, Reps. Jack McDonald of Redford, Mary Eash of Ann Arbor, Gary Brown of Kalamazoo, Jim Harvey of Saginaw and Phil Ruppe of Houghton. Only Riegler is still on Capitol Hill.

In the '60s Riegler was "close friends" with Rep. George Bush, R-Texas. They spoke at each other's fund-raisers. (See Riegler's *O Congress*, pp. 214-215.)

In 1973 Riegler turned Democrat and then won three terms in the U.S. Senate. He was tainted by the "Prince Don" mud in 1976 and severely damaged by the Keating Five mess over savings and loans. Riegler has a bad reputation for wanting to appear only at functions where there are TV cameras, in sharp contrast to junior Sen. Carl Levin.



TIM RICHARD

I picked up some scar tissue. Nixon's gone. Agnew's gone. Bush is gone. Reagan's gone. I'm still here. Stay with me.'

Don Riegler
U.S. Senator

But Riegler is out there, at the comparatively young age of 55, seeking term No. 4. And at last week's Demo-

cratic state convention, he was getting his strongest support from (of all places) the labor caucus, where nominations usually are determined.

"I picked up some scar tissue," Riegler acknowledged. "Nixon's gone. Agnew's gone. Bush is gone. Reagan's gone. I'm still here. Stay with me."

Riegler never runs against the Republican candidate. It's hard to remember the Republicans whom he defeated but easy to remember what he ran against: in 1982, the religious right; in '88, the Japanese.

This year Riegler is running against Mexico — cheap labor, lack of union protections, weak environmental rules — and the evil free trade pact negotiated by his former pal Bush and Carla Hills. "The government has to speak out against unfair trade practices and cheating," he shouted above the union leaders' cheering.

Now, many of these union leaders wear business suits, white shirts and stylish ties. But Riegler took off his coat and rolled up his sleeves — a la George

Romney in his prime — to speak. He punched the air with a series of right hooks, then with a series of left hooks.

Riegler talked of the Hispanics, blacks and women in President Clinton's administration. "That Cabinet room looks like this room. It includes everybody, like the labor movement," he said to cheers. (Riegler omitted homosexuals. Practitioners of unnatural sex still aren't popular in union halls.)

AFL-CIO president Frank Garrison introduced other Democratic hopefuls for high office, but ignored Macomb prosecutor Carl Marlinga, who intends to challenge Riegler in the 1994 primary. "This movement is going to make damn sure Don Riegler is re-elected," Garrison said, without bothering to poll those present.

No more cigar butts in Don Riegler's mashed potatoes.

Tim Richard reports regularly on the local implications of state and regional events. His office number is (313) 349-1700.

LETTERS

More on clock

We would like to support the ideas suggested by several recent letter writers to use available money in downtown Farmington for purposes other than a clock tower.

We believe one of the main reasons cities like Plymouth, Northville, Birmingham and Rochester draw people to their downtown shopping districts is the ambience, including pedestrian-friendly areas with plenty of trees, benches and pleasant areas just to stroll and relax.

Some of these cities are blessed with a park area in or near downtown, or they have created sizable green areas.

When the DDA streetscape plan was begun in Farmington, we hoped it would produce a similar environment. Some additional trees were planted on Farmington Road and Grand River, but it appears more could be added.

Some trees were planted on Orchard Street and in the new parking areas, but more are needed and those in place need to be better maintained.

Trees are planted on the major parking lot of the downtown center, but these primarily shade a few cars.

The fountain was put in and a few trees were planted, but the area appears barren and without people-centered appeal.

Benches were added in the downtown area, but rather than put some of them under covered areas or away from the road, most go unused because they are in dangerous or impractical locations.

We would like to see extra funds used by the DDA to further enhance the shopping area for people and not mainly for cars.

It is true that adequate parking is necessary for business, but so is a pleasant environment where people can safely walk about and comfortably congregate and enjoy the downtown area.

Fam and George Wright, Farmington

More on Clinton

After 12 years of the Republicans going to the money trough, it's only fair to give the Democrats a chance to bamboozle.

I'd rather have the huge spending on an inauguration party than the private shindigs by the

Savings and Loan bank-busters.

The monies spent was from lobbyists and promoters. It could be referred to the "trickle down system" to jump start our sluggish economy.

"Two for the price of one" is the way I view Hillary and Bill Clinton. Congressman Dole and his wife are on the government payroll. Both earning big salaries. Both retiring on government pensions. Both will write books.

Mrs. H. Motruik, Farmington Hills

No on clock

As a Johnny-come-lately to the city of Farmington, I cannot speak with the same sense of sentimentality as the writers of previous letters I have read against the erection of the clock tower at the northwest corner of Farmington and Grand River.

I can, however, say that the charm of Farmington drew me here, and I would consider the proposed clock tower to be an intrusion on that charm.

As a contributor to the 125th anniversary celebration, I would resent my meager funds being used to obstruct the vision of one of the gems that drew me here.

I believe I am one of many who appreciate the untiring efforts of Shirley Richardson in making the Farmington anniversary such a success, but I believe her efforts do not reflect the wishes of the majority of Farmingtonians when it comes to the clock tower.

Since there were left-over monies, I would prefer the residuals be used for more worthy causes. How about contributing to Meals on Wheels or the Goodfellows so that they can assist some of our citizens who deserve recognition for their past or hoped-for contributions to our hometown pride?

Anna M. Kiraly, Farmington

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