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# Library books expansion vote



By BILL COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

Supporters of a proposal to build a new library in Farmington Hills concede that there probably is no good time to ask for a tax increase. But the precarious state of Michigan's tax structure and the strong

support the Farmington Community Library enjoys could work in favor of the proposal. A proposal for issuing up to \$15.5 million in bonds to build a new 80,000-square-foot library across from Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge campus will go before

Farmington-area voters Aug. 10. A 1.1-mill tax increase to operate the new facility will also be on the ballot. If the 1.1-mill increase is approved, it would actually represent a .33-mill increase because Farmington and Farmington Hills already carry .77 mills to support the library. If the millage passes, the two cities have agreed to roll back their tax rates by the .77 mills earmarked for operating the libraries. The amount of money to pay the debt retirement on the bonds, the length of time it will take to pay, and

the millage amount depend on interest rates, which library director Bev Papp said are favorable now. The sale of the current Hills main library would also reduce the debt by \$2 million to \$3 million, she said. The debt millage could be in the .4 to .5 mill range, she added. Although many residents are on vacation, library board president Robert Plummer said waiting until the fall to ask for the money is risky business. "Frankly, nobody ever tells you

See LIBRARY, 4A

## Roman Terrace reborn



SHARON LAMM/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Lunch rush:** Waitress Mary Lau picks up lunches from the kitchen as her boss, Bob McDonald expedites things at the new Roman Terrace in Farmington Hills.

# Roman Terrace empire rises after fall

By BILL COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

For Bob McDonald, the support of family, friends and community has helped him bring a phoenix out of the ashes of his landmark Roman Terrace restaurant that burned to the ground in February of 1990. McDonald, 50, and his partners had just finished renovations on the popular Italian-American restaurant and McJoe's Bar on 12 Mile and Orchard Lake when a three-alarm fire raced through the 22,000-square-foot building. The \$500,000 fire claimed several businesses in the building and put more than 100

people out of work. Just over three years later, McDonald, with his partner Harry Phinney, is back in business with the Roman Terrace II in the Halsted Village shopping center, Halsted and 12 Mile. But the comeback was not an easy one. "You can't foresee tragedy," McDonald said from the new, but smaller, restaurant. "We had two deaths in our family in a short time after the fire. So it was touch-and-go for a while." McDonald had hoped to rebuild in the same location. But because

he was insured for only about half of the loss caused by the fire, which started in another part of the building, and because the fire codes were much stricter for a new building, McDonald and his partners could not come up with enough money for a new start at the 12 and Orchard Lake location. Hills Fire Chief Richard Marinucci said the cause of the fire has never been determined. "I was able to get everybody (from the restaurant) a job who wanted one," McDonald said with pride. "I got a job at the Elks Club." Phinney was impressed by

McDonald's abilities as a restaurateur at the Elks and wanted to join forces in a new venture. And although the Roman Terrace II is in a new, fully sprinkled and fire-protected building, there are some differences. The new restaurant has a lighter, rose and blue decor with false Roman columns and a genuine oak bar. It's smaller, with a capacity of 140 compared with 200 at the old location. But the atmosphere and the cuisine are a little lighter. "We've kept a lot of the core of the

See ROMAN TERRACE, 2A

# Former chamber head seeks Farmington council seat

By SUS BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

A newcomer stepped forward and requested a nominating petition to run for a Farmington City Council seat. Mary Bush, 40, former president of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, is seeking her first term on the council. She is an executive assistant and associate broker for Thompson-Brown Realtors in Farmington Hills, where she's worked for 22 years. "It's an opportune time with Shirley Richardson not running," Bush said Monday. "I considered running previously. Now was the time."

## ■ 'It's an opportune time with Shirley Richardson not running.'

Deadline for candidates to file is Friday, Aug. 13. Richardson announced at the July 19 council meeting she would not seek re-election. Richardson, the city's first councilwoman, has been a council member since 1988 and has been a community activist for more than 25 years. Her husband, John, a longtime Farmington veterinarian, preceded her as a councilman from 1969-77 and served as mayor from 1976-77.

Mary Bush The Richardsons made Farmington history as the first husband and wife to serve — at separate times — as mayors. In 1970, the Farmington Elks Lodge named the couple Farmington's Citizens of the Year. Other commitments this year make it difficult to run, Richardson said. Incumbents Richard Tupper, 60, owner of Tupper Associates, and mayor pro-tem Arnold Campbell, 42, a product problem analyst for Ford Motor Co., picked up petitions in the city clerk's office last week and plan

to run for re-election. The race will be uncontested if only Bush, Tupper and Campbell run. The top two vote-getters will win four-year terms. The third will receive a two-year term, said Farmington city clerk Patsy Cantrell. Council members will then elect a mayor to serve a two-year term. John Kenney, 47, who ran unsuccessfully in 1989 and 1991, said Monday he is considering a third try. He said he'll decide by Monday. Ralph Yoder, a veteran councilman who lost his bid for an eighth term in 1991, said he won't try this year, but joined others in encouraging Bush to run.

## He's a real cutie

Cute kid, that 1-year-old Micheal Nichols. Anyway, folks attending the recent Farmington Founders Festival thought so. And festival-goers were willing to back up their opinion with their nickels and dimes and dollars. Young Micheal, son of Mike and Diane Nichols of Howell, won the Baby of the Year contest held during the festival. There were photos of the young entrants on a table outside the Village Mall at Grand River and Farmington Road in downtown Farmington. By each photo there was an empty milk jug. Passers-by voted by putting money in the jugs. The money was donated to Neighborhood House. Micheal garnered 7,868 votes worth \$78.68 to finish first and win a \$50 savings bond and a \$10 gift certificate for the sponsoring Kiddie Karousel.

## FARMINGTON FOCUS

Second place went to 8-month-old Karlyn Cassidy, daughter of Rob and Diane Cassidy of Farmington, who had 7,018 votes and \$70.18 in her jug. She won a teddy bear and a certificate. "We raised a total of \$313.53 for the Farmington Neighborhood House," said Cindy Sneed, owner of Kiddie Karousel, a children's resale store in the Village Mall. In addition to the top two, there were 15 contestants. There were: Daniel Allmayer, Chelsea Asher, Lauren Burchart, Max Burchart, Brianna Clegg, Shelby Conlan, Gabrielle Courtney, Eddie Ford, Mary Fouahee, Katie Glynn, Elizabeth Lacy, Alec Lanigan, Nicholas Parlove, Tucker Penning and Kylee Sprayberry.

## Memory Lane

From the July 30, 1953, edition of the Farmington Enterprise: ■ With the development of just two subdivisions — Bel-Aire and Alta Loma — Farmington's population could double, city officials said. The 1950 Census put Farmington at 2,325, although officials estimated that the number was about 2,600 in 1953. ■ Losing pitcher Don Kegley allowed three hits and three runs as the Farmington All-Star Team of the Little Bigger League lost to the Berkeley All-Stars, 4-0, in Birmingham. ■ Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21839 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336, dropped off at the newspaper office or faxed to 477-9722.