

# Civic from page A1

um. The art deco-themed mural, by Farmington Hills artist Beth Newman, features spotlights and skyscrapers topped by a "Farmington" street sign (see related story).

Following a round of welcomes and opening comments from Farmington Mayor Bill Hartsock and other city dignitaries, the guests munched on snacks (placed in bags at each seat) and watched "The Philadelphia Story," a 1940 classic starring Jimmy Stewart (who won an Academy Award for his performance), Katherine Hepburn and Cary Grant.

Among the treats were bottles of water, which prompted this Y2K-inspired joke from Hartsock: "It gave me a chance to get rid of that bottled water."

In addition to the reception and movie, the guests enjoyed an afterglow of coffee and dessert, also at Legato.

Echoes of "what a party" could be heard repeatedly during the afterglow, which carried on well past midnight.

Wearing smiles of fulfillment were volunteers Suzanne Paul and Denise Towson, co-chairs for the Civic reopening weekend. They declared the entire weekend a big hit, with all auction items selling out and bringing in more than \$10,000 for future renovations.

"It was just an overwhelming success," Paul said. "And tonight, this is just gorgeous."

During opening remarks, Hartsock and other city leaders spoke with great pride about how the community supported their decision to buy the Civic (from longtime owner Greg Hohler), which was done to ensure it's long-term viability and downtown presence.

**Exciting time**  
Council members wore tuxedos



My turn: Edwina and Bob Eggleston sign the "First Nighter" poster.

or evening gowns and made their grand entrance through a curtain at the back of the expanded stage, one of many improvements made since the city bought the theater and hired Bill Clark (M.K.A. Inc., Quadrants Inc.) to manage and renovate it.

"Many positive things happened in Farmington over the past 12 months," Hartsock said. "The Civic Theatre (purchase) probably is the ultimate in terms of our participation in developing the downtown area. It's a great time to be in Farmington. If Bill Clinton was here he'd probably say, 'Farmington, I hear your excitement.'"

Council member Mary Bush commented that, "We've really preserved a real piece of history here." The Civic remains in business during a time when the number of such independents is dwindling.

Special presentations were made to Clark, Hohler and Farmington City Manager Frank Laubhoff.

"I alone could not do this," said Clark, thanking citizens of neighboring Farmington and Farmington Hills and his staff for their efforts.

The plaque awarded to Hohler (not present at the event) was

dedicated to both Greg and his father, Edward, who originally owned the Civic.

Farmington Hills Mayor Nancy Bates also presented a proclamation to Hartsock and offered her congratulations.

"This is indeed a jewel for your community and we're very proud of you," said Bates.

### Auction action

Meanwhile, the day started out about as well as it could.

The top four spenders at the Saturday afternoon auction (and the total amounts they bid) were: Ed Cleland (see related story), \$1,898; Richard Grohman, \$1,045; John Hayek, \$600; and Solomon Lazar, \$578.

One of the other item buyers was Farmington City Council member Arnold Campbell. He spent a total of \$60 for two collectible plates from "The King & I" to give to his son Andrew, a Farmington High School graduate who performed in the school's version of the classic.

"I thought these (plates) would be a nice remembrance," Campbell said.



Mingling: Betsy Campbell chats with Nancy Leonard, dressed as Charlie Chaplin's Little Tramp character.

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL HEDGECOCK

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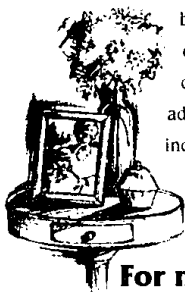
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