

## Letters to the Editor

### Interim DDA Director offers thanks

Dear Editor:

Thank you seems trite to me—especially to my children: Caitlin, Ian, Angelica and Amelia. This past year has been exceptionally challenging and equally rewarding for me in many ways and these four individuals have been supportive, simply terrific, and have grown as I have in independence and strength of character.

Consequently, it seems trivial now to express my own appreciation to this community given the Service Award that was presented to me at the Grand Opening preview of the Walter E. Sundquist Pavilion and Riley Park.

I am very proud and honored to have received the award and again I am touched by the goodness of people in Farmington. Volunteerism is a bit self-serving in a sense. I, like many others in this town, have been hoping for a change. But timing is everything and I happened to be at the right place at the right time, speaking with people who had a vision and encouraged me to step up.

One person I'd like to express my thanks to is Greg Cowley. I have known Greg for many years. I actually started my first job out of college as a sales administrator and Greg was one of the five managers that I supported. Greg was (is) demanding and driven, but what struck me most was his integrity. I have respect for people who stand by their convictions, and their commitments even in adversity and when their truths seem to go against the grain, they hold fast for what they believe to be right. The commitment that the Cowley's have made to this community is evident. Greg has been personally encouraging and supportive on many levels and continues to offer his expertise and services to this community and for this I owe him many thanks.

Walter Gajewski is another indi-

vidual who I would like to thank as well.

In the same manner as Greg, Walt has stood by the dream of this pavilion and park for many years. Planning and re-planning and continually trying to keep the idea alive to the extent it may have seemed unrealistic to pursue.

However, Walt's commitment to this project and the idea of bringing a structure downtown to encourage people to come together, as we saw and experienced with the grand opening and then again with the well attended Halloween Fun Fest, is something we all should be thankful for.

A vision for success coupled with many tasks and some frustration can make it difficult to see the forest through the trees. This is one man who stayed focused on the dream of bringing this community the wonder and hope with the advent of this pavilion and park and by bringing them both to life.

Take a few minutes to look at the pictures on the [www.downtownfarmington.org](http://www.downtownfarmington.org) Web site and you will see what I am talking about. The pictures tell a story of a community success but the challenges that were overcome to get to that point should also be recognized. I want to say a sincere thank you to Walt for making me see that the challenges were nothing more than opportunities.

These two individuals have encouraged me to make a difference. So many times, we may feel trapped by our own personal schedules and our commitments to our jobs and our homes, and family. But it is true, if you pull strength from within for something you believe in will affect a change, you will see that it can actually happen and the rewards will be ten folds in any manner of life.

As the Interim Director of the Downtown Farmington Develop-

ment Authority, I was totally supported by the DDA Board, City Manager's Office, city council, the Main Street Committees, and of course, the Pavilion Committee.

Mary Pierman, administrator in the DDA Office, held me in check as I struggled with policies and procedures.

I have never been involved in local government or politics but I can say that our town leaders: Dirk Beamer, President of the DDA Board, and the board itself, Vince Pastue, City Manager and his staff; Public Safety Director, Chuck Nebus; Director of Public Works, Kevin Gushman; Mayor Arnold Campbell and the city council were supportive and welcoming. My questions and concerns were met with professionalism and respect and for that I am grateful.

Now for the small army of volunteers. Wow!! The volunteers of this community are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, kind and have an understanding that if we all work together great things can and do happen.

The skills and the diversity of thought and creativity are, in my opinion, the oil that keeps this town churning.

As we go into this new election, I am confident that the sparks will continue to fly and excitement is on the horizon. My best wishes for continued success of this momentum is extended to the new Executive Director of the DDA, Annette Knowles. This army has and will work wonders!

I am now taking a bit of a break from "extreme" volunteering, but look forward to working again as a member of the Pavilion Committee, where my newfound extended family resides. You all have given me a gift, the true gift of spirit.

Mary Martin

*We reserve the right to edit your Letters to the Editor for clarity and to fit the space. Please keep your letters to no more than 300 words and include your name and the name of the city in which you live.*