

today's
hot line

Vol. 82, No. 43 - 42 pages, 4 sections

what's inside

Gals Flex Muscles

Gymnastics is a rapidly growing sport for girls and is becoming more popular as evidenced by the large crowds now attending matches. It is also very competitive, as evidenced by the closeness of the score in a match pitting North Farmington High School against Farmington Senior High School.

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A Homeowner's Fight

A Farmington Township homeowner has spent the past two years appealing assessments on his property made in 1967. The fight was carried to the State Tax Commission and is now before the Senate Administrative Rules Committee. The homeowner tells his story to the Farmington Enterprise & Observer this week.

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Dancers In Place!

Ballet is a demanding art and the Farmington based Suburban Concert Ballet will put hours of practice to the test in a concert this weekend. What's the curtain time?

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Identity Search

Observerland women are discovering a new way to discover themselves. Read how two of them did it in the Women's Section.

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Queen Bess' Music

Elizabethan music is the lady's specialty and she's coming to Observerland for two different concerts. The musician's name is Suzanne Bloch and the concerts are with the Plymouth Symphony and in the Scholcraft College Humanities Series. You'll find all the details on the Amusements Page.

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Your Secrets

Some of the 1970 census questions will ask for personal information. What are your chances of having to fill out the "long form"? What precautions is the Census Bureau taking to keep your secrets. We have it all spelled out on the Regional Affairs Page.

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Township, School Trustees Disagree About Rising Taxes

Two legislative bodies in the Farmington area met at the same time Monday night and discussed the same problem—rising taxes—but disagreed on approaches to be taken.

A resolution was adopted unanimously by the Farmington Township Board urging the school board to consider lowering the school millage rate this year to relieve homeowners.

At the school board meeting, Trustee Aldo Vagnozzi read a statement objecting to comments made two weeks ago by township trustees and urged support for a constitutional amendment or educational reform.

VAGNOZZI, while stating that the township and city sets the assessments, commented:

"When property values go up as they have in recent years, the assessors have no choice but to increase the assessment, and with each increase comes a boost in property taxes."

"This is what some of us who opposed adoption of the revised Michigan Constitution of 1963 pointed out would happen to taxes if the 50% assessment rule was adopted."

A RESOLUTION introduced by Township Trustee Fred Lichtman concluded by asking the school district to:

"Give careful and serious consideration to a reduction of the school tax rate this year so as to substantially lessen the burden of tax increases for Farmington Township homeowners."

Although Vagnozzi may not have known about that resolution Monday night, he did in effect respond to it during his comments.

"I would hope that at the point the Farmington school board considers next year's budget, we take a look at the possibility of reducing the tax rate."

"But one of the bad features of the assessment procedures, as far as the Farmington School District is concerned, is that much of the increased property taxes generated from increased assessments result in reduced state aid under the formula used by the Legislature."

"In one recent year we lost a substantial amount of state funds because of higher local property assessments. At one time we were receiving about 65% of our school funds from the state. That figure is now below 50%."

"Thus the higher property tax assessments don't necessarily mean more funds for the local school district but merely result in a shifting of

the burden from the state to the local property owner."

DURING DISCUSSION at township hall, Trustee Earl Oppertbauer commented:

"The primary purpose of the resolution is not so much to put pressure on the school board as it is to call attention of the people to the facts of life. We on the township board do not control the ultimate tax bill that the citizens of this community pay."

"The resolution will go a long way towards informing the people in a nutshell what the problem is."

Oppertbauer also suggested

informational letters be sent taxpayers spelling the problem out in "plain and less legalistic language."

"The letters would put the problem of increasing taxes into proper perspective."

TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE Fred Lichtman, brother of School Board Trustee Gary Lichtman, commented that school revenues are running way ahead of what was predicted at the time of the last voted millage proposal.

Fred Lichtman commented the school board had a sizable surplus last year and "there

probably will be a sizable surplus this year."

Answering a reference to his relationship with Gary Lichtman, he replied: "My kid brother never won any arguments at the dinner table, and he's not going to win one now."

"The township has a greater duty than to just spend taxpayers' money. It should look to the interests of the taxpayers in all areas."

"The school district has benefited from increased assessments more than any other level of government."

TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR Curtis Hall added the resolu-

tion's intent was not to criticize the school board but was "calling attention to the facts of life."

Hall added that not only the school board but the Legislature should take a look at the tax situation.

Hall's second suggestion was also voted by Vagnozzi at the school board meeting which lasted an hour longer than the township's session.

If the district could not lower the millage rate, Vagnozzi said. "The second solution would be either a change

Continued on Page 8A

County Will Pave Drake

The Farmington Township Board Monday approved a road improvement project for Drake and Nine Mile roads estimated at \$185,000.

The board agreed to enter into the project for 0.7 of a mile with the Oakland County Road Commission. Each of the government units will pay 50% of the cost.

HOWEVER, discussion of the plans touched off a complaint on how Oakland County divides the cost of its projects.

Drake Rd. from Nine Mile to 1 1/2 and Nine Mile Rd. from Castlemeadow to just east of Drake Rd. will be improved this year.

Township Supervisor Curtis Hall said the road near the intersection of Drake and Nine Mile become practically impassable during wet weather.

"It's difficult to get any large emergency vehicles in there," Hall commented.

He added the project fits into the plan to improve the mile road network.

The supervisor said further improvements would not be made east on Nine Mile until vacant lands north and south of Nine Mile are developed. The township, he said, tries to get interested parties to donate 25 to 30% of the cost of a project if possible.

"I can't see why we should put up township money for the people who are going to develop this land," Hall said.

On all other mile road improvements, he said, developers have contributed to the cost of road improvements. The property on the parts of Nine Mile and Drake Rd. to be improved belong to private owners, he added.

"I doubt if we'd ever get any amount of money from these property owners," the supervisor said.

TRUSTEE FRED Lichtman took the county to task for including such large fees for engineering work in the cost estimates. About 20% of the estimated total cost is for engineering fees and contingency funds, he said.

Lichtman said the estimates for the category were too much considering the county's engineering staff does the work. Since taxpayers are already paying the engineers' salaries, the taxpayers of the township pay twice for the services, he said.

"We talked about this when we had our meeting with the county, and all we got were smiles," Lichtman said. "The county shouldn't be making a profit from us."

COUNTY ESTIMATES are usually inflated anyway, Lichtman said. County estimates for a project in Kendallwood was \$36,000 compared to an estimate of \$16,000 from a private contractor.



BIT OF THE EAST - Tamer Arpaçi of Ankara, Turkey, and Dr. Robert Blomstrom of Michigan State University stand in front of the Turkish temple carved out of ice which adorned a luncheon table at the Orchard Ridge

campus when Arpaçi visited there. The sculpture was carved by members of the Gourmet Club of Oakland Community College, a student organization of the Food Service Management Department. (Everett photo)

Five Village Offices On March 9 Ballot

Two contests will be decided March 9 in the Village of Wood Creek Farms election.

Three men are competing for two positions on the village council and two others are in the race for assessor.

Acting Village Clerk Mrs. June Manos said incumbents Alvin Albertson and William Ortman are being challenged by John Voorheis in the village council race. Two two-year terms on the council will be filled by the election.

The other contest is for assessor. Incumbent Robert J. Swift is being challenged by George E. Trout. The assessor serves a two-year term also.

Two other candidates are unopposed. Incumbent Francis L. Kigar is running for village treasurer and Mrs. Manos is the only candidate for village clerk. She was recently appointed to the position to fill the term of Mrs. Eileen Abbott who retired.

One special issue will also be on the village ballot. Voters are being asked to renew the franchise of Detroit Edison to supply electricity to village residents.

Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. March 9 in the Paul Inman Associates Building at 30095 Northwestern Highway.

Buzzards' Flight To Hinkley Encourages Student To Creativity

By ELIZABETH WISSMAN

"When the Swallows Come Back to Capistrano" is a beautiful song.

How about "When the Buzzards Come Back to Hinkley, Ohio."

That's a little tougher to set to music.

But the creative writing club at Farmington High School is waxing lyrical in an essay on, at the moment, on the subject, "Why I want to Go to Hinkley, Ohio, to See the Buzzards Return."

DEPENDABLE as the

Capistrano swallows, about 70 buzzards (turkey buzzards at that) have been returning to Hinkley, Ohio, for about 150 years (March 13).

The FHS creative writing club teacher, Linda A. Arndt, read about it.

She got hysterical at the description of the habits of the birds - they are foul-smelling and vermin-ridden - they have a tendency to throw up when they're surprised while eating.

NOT TO CAST ASPERSIONS on Hinkley, Ohio, it somehow seems fitting that

the buzzards return there instead of to the more melodious Capistrano.

IT WAS MISS ARNDT's thought that the habits of the Hinkley buzzards would inspire her kids to more creative prose than a mundane subject like "How I Spent My Summer Vacation."

Also, she knows the inclusion of the buzzard essays in the student writing booklet, "Early Harvest," will stimulate sales when it comes out in the spring.

MISS ARNDT has arranged the project in true competitive style with a \$20 first prize to finance the winner's trip to Hinkley to see the buzzards return.

If the winner can't make it to Hinkley, which is near Cleveland, and can't get parental permission to be on hand at dawn for the birds' return, the prize will be \$5.

Each essay is to run from 300 to 600 words and the kids will use pseudonyms so Miss Arndt won't be influenced by more than beautiful prose when she selects the winner.

MISS ARNDT, the buzzard expert, doesn't really know why the birds keep coming back.

She has heard that once a witch was hung up to die, attracting the birds who were so pleased they kept coming back.

Another hypothesis is that a huge hunt was once staged to catch animals that were marauding livestock. It is thought that the carcasses of the animals lured the buzzards to beautiful Hinkley.

REGARDLESS OF THE

reason, Miss Arndt plans to present when the birds return this year.

She says, "I can't think of anything more delightful, when asked what I did over the weekend, than to be able to say, 'I went to Hinkley, Ohio, to see the buzzards return.'"

BE THAT AS IT MAY, the creative writing club's essays might conceivably inspire a beautiful lyric on the buzzards - but who will set it to music?