

# Farmington Observer

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## Nuke threat spurs locals to organize

**By Judy Celmner**  
special writer

Concern about the possibility of a nuclear war is not just restricted to Washington bureaucrats or nuclear physicists.

State and local groups are picking up on the nuclear concern. Nuclear freeze advocates in Farmington can be heard at church group and special lectures and can be seen circulating freeze petitions at shopping centers and mall games.

Signatures on nuclear-freeze petitions number more than 170,000 state-wide so far, said Dong Lent, 40-year member of Oakland County Peace and National Priorities Center, based in West Bloomfield Township's Church of Our Savior.

But "we need 224,000 signatures to put the issue on the ballot," he said.

The issue at hand is a proposed bilateral freeze of production and deployment of nuclear weapons by both the United States and Soviet Union. Signatures on the petition are being collected in Lansing — for the Nov. 2 elections.

Farmington Our Lady of Sorrows Church collected about 1,100 signatures on its Signature Sunday March 28. The church also is involved in all group activities, said spokeswoman Sister Patricia Ace, trying to inform people in Farmington — and Farmington Hills about the issue.

Not only are nuclear-interested members of the church learning "what is the Christian position in regard to nuclear war," Ace said, "we hope to present some educational programs so people can become aware of nuclear issues and their threat to humanity."

Consciousness raising with the Peace and National Priorities Center takes shape in slide shows, movies, the availability of a library, speakers and programs presented to interested groups on particular nuclear issues.

Lent said the center is an informa-

tional group which makes peace education materials available. "We try as much as we can to get people as much information as they can get," said Lent.

The center takes no political stand, Lent points out, "but it could be said to have a bias toward peace rather than toward aggressive action." The center's position about the freeze is a good example of this, he said.

More nuclear weapons, Lent said, do not make us more secure, more nuclear weapons make us less secure every year. "The difficulty with negotiations is they take a lot of time... and while they go on through all these months and years, the technology for building nuclear weapons (progresses and) continues to outstrip the pace of the negotiations."

That is why "the idea of education is important," Lent said, stressing that "we can only make good decisions when we have the necessary information."

Those interested in signing the petition can call the freeze office at 577-5053. The petition says:

"An infusion of legislation to create a new act to require certain state officials to write a special communication to the president of the United States and the president of the Soviet Union government that both countries agree to halt immediately the testing, production and further development of nuclear weapons, missiles and delivery systems in a way that can be checked and verified by both sides. It would also urge that the United States Congress transfer the funds intended for increased nuclear weapons systems to civilian use."

Asked his biggest fear of a nuclear war, he said:

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Inspecting the work of Chinese dentists, Robert Vernier, owner of the House of Dentures in Farmington Hills, discovered that things weren't as backward as he'd been lead to believe.

## Denture grip diplomacy reaches across Pacific

**By Craig Fleckure**  
staff writer

Chinese dental techniques are comparable, technically, to those of the United States. But China falls far short of having enough dentists to go around, meaning incredibly long waits for patients.

That's what Dr. Robert Vernier, owner of the House of Dentures in Farmington Hills, found on a recent trip to that communist country. Vernier was part of a group of 12 dentists invited to China by the Sino-American Technology Exchange Council.

The U.S. dental contingent visited five cities on the mainland: Peking, Nanjing, Yangzhou, Zhenjiang and Shanghai as welcomed guests of the Chinese government from Feb. 26 to March 29.

Vernier said like all members of the group he genuinely sought to exchange information with his Chinese counterparts but soon found he had little new information to impart to them.

"We got there, we go to the hospital, we're all geared to give our own little lectures, and when we go into the hospital we find that technically things are fairly comparable in the dental hospital," Vernier said.

This surprised the group, Vernier said, because prior to the group's arrival the trade council had been telling them Chinese dentists were desperately lacking in modern-day equipment and techniques.

"So, I figure there's no sense in going through my prepared routine on how to make dentures and ask the dentists if they had serious problems fitting dentures."

"TO BE POLITE they brought up a couple problems," Vernier said. "We were informally kibitzing back and forth, and that's when I found out there so there were so few problems. There are 11 million Chinese in Peking and

190 dentists. Of the 190 dentists there are probably only five making dentures."

"A person who wants dentures made has to go the dental clinic in the hospital around 5 o'clock in the morning... It costs (the equivalent of) \$11 for a set of dentures or a pair of eyeglasses."

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"We really wanted to help them, and they sensed that."

The group got the royal treatment, especially in the smaller cities the visited. At one stop they were treated to a 24-course meal that included sparrow as an entrée and numerous toasts with a potent clear liquor.

"It didn't take us long to learn to lay off the whole stuff during all the feasting," Vernier said. "After the first sip you could hear the whole room go 'whoa.'"

The group became very fond of their interpreter, a young man of 23, who kept jotting down examples of American slang.

AFTER MONTHS of listening to language records, Vernier was able to use an expression in Chinese — "I need a beer."

That message was immediately understood by the Chinese, but it took a lot of explaining to get across what Americans mean when they "kid" somebody. It's not an insult, but an endearment.

The trip left the dentist and his wife, Jean, with many lasting impressions.

There were the thousands of identical black bicycles parked outside work sites.

"How they ever found theirs again I'll never know," he said.

There were the billboards urging married couples to only have one child for the public good.

Children are a source of pride in China, as in most countries, he said.

"The only time you'd see the Chinese on the streets smiling is when they would hold up their children for you to see."

When Chinese people found out he was American, Vernier said, they would inevitably ask if Americans were happy. With the next breath, he said, the Chinese citizen would invariably say that the Chinese want to be friends with the American people.

## Pinball boosters are tilted

Two legal challenges to Farmington Hills' pinball and video game ordinance restrictions lost in separate court decisions recently.

U.S. District Judge Thomas P. Thornton on April 20 denied a request for a preliminary injunction against the city sought by attorneys for the Broadway Market. The market's owners are trying to open a video game arcade in the midst of the many booths at the former Great Scott supermarket.

In a similar case decided April 23 Oakland Circuit Judge Steven M. Andrews dismissed with prejudice a suit brought against Farmington Hills by the owners of Tally Hall food mall.

At issue in both cases was the question of what constitutes a primary use of a business establishment and what constitutes an accessory use.

The city's attorney, Richard J. Poehlman, successfully argued in the Broadway Market case that each tenant of booths in the market constitutes a primary use. The larger the space a primary user business occupies, the more machines owners may install under terms of the city ordinance.

But the owners of Broadway Market and Tally Hall contended that the mall or market itself was the primary business use and argued unsuccessfully that they had a right to open up an arcade that they would operate in their multi-use establishments.

JUDGE HORNTON cited Poehlman's argument in deciding in favor of Farmington Hills by denying an injunction.

Poehlman said in court that:

"I think if you go to the bottom of all this is their contention that the Broadway Market is one principal use, and that there are 30,000 square feet and that video games are a proper accessory use to the Broadway Market, and therefore they are entitled to 30-some odd games. It's that simple."

"We're saying that is an improper construction of what a principal use is. What this is an area which comprises a number of principal uses and we have to determine what is accessory to each one of those users."

The market and mall owners want to operate the game rooms themselves to keep the profit instead of having their tenants make the money from the games.

Bert Poole, controller of the Broadway Market, said owners of the business are probably "going to drop the whole thing," by dropping plans to install video games on the site.

Joanne Smith, manager of Tally Hall, said owners there were waiting to see what happened with Broadway Market before deciding whether to challenge the city's amusement ordinance in court.

## Physicians warn of post-war doom

**By Judy Celmner**  
special writer

"Every day I have people walking in my office here asking how they can get involved that they can do about this nuclear freeze," says Lillian Genser, director of Wayne State University's Center for Peace and Conflict Studies.

"I tell them first 'become aware and get some knowledge about what we have and what the Soviet Union has.' Second, 'become involved' — in whatever way fits them, whether that's circulating petitions or writing letters (to congressmen)."

A film on the threat of nuclear war, along with discussions led by two professors from WSU, will be presented at the Farmington Temple in Farmington Hills at 8 p.m. tonight.

The threat of a nuclear war has prompted several forms of protest including the forming of groups describing the horrors of a nuclear blast. One such group is the Physicians for Social Responsibility, whose concern "is that the public be aware of the medical consequences of a nuclear war," says Dr. William Anderson of Southfield.

"We are trying to raise the consciousness of the general public," Anderson says, adding the group is "trying to get them to think the unthinkable," which is the possibility of a nuclear war.

Genser's approach takes a different path.

"The most important thing I tell people," says Genser, who speaks frequently to community and church groups, "is a quote repeated by the late President (Dwight) Eisenhower, the late Gen. Douglas MacArthur, the late Gen. Omar Bradley... all of them, including Admiral Hyman Rickover: 'The only way to win a nuclear war is not to have it.' And that is why we must all work at not letting it happen," Genser said in a telephone interview from her Wayne State office.

While Genser's thrust is not to stage a war, the medical emphasis is on the

inability to cope with the aftermath of a nuclear exchange.

"There is no acceptable treatment for the devastation of a nuclear bomb," Anderson says, "because all the people that are not killed would not have the capability of taking care of the survivors."

"Our group," explains Anderson, does not take a political stand, nor do we "align ourselves with any political groups," he says.

Speaking solely from a medical point of view, Anderson says, "there would not be enough doctors, nurses or hospital beds to take care of all the injured in the event of a nuclear war."

"Let me say this," offers Genser, when asked how real the possibility is of a nuclear exchange. "Every time there's an escalation of the arms race and there's a qualitative change in the nature of the weapons, we get closer to the use of those weapons. Presently, both countries (United States and the USSR) are about at parity. We're ahead at some and they're ahead at some."

Anderson declined to say whether he thought he would see a nuclear exchange in his lifetime, but "I cannot conceive of the major powers in the world having the nuclear capability and not using it in the event they are losing a war," he says.

But the social and medical ramifications of a nuclear war would be devastating, both agree.

Another threat, says Anderson, is the possibility of "the accidental deployment of nuclear weapons — not only by both countries, but by any country."

A nuclear war, Genser says, would destroy "the whole fabric of our society. The lucky ones would be dead."

If we had such a war, she says, there would indeed be those that would survive and thrive on radiation and there would be no safe water for drinking.

"It's a horror that would be indescribable."

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## Students warm up to middle schools

**By Judy Celmner**  
special writer

Students in Farmington public schools have come out overwhelmingly in favor of the middle school concept.

Teachers, however — especially sixth grade teachers — are less than enthusiastic about the switch from the traditional junior and senior high to the middle school, survey results show.

The switchover to middle schools, says Assistant Superintendent of Schools Lynn Nutter, was made because it was thought sixth, seventh and eighth-graders were more alike and had more in common.

"Too," Nutter says, "it makes for a better school structure" to have sixth through eighth together, rather than seven through nine."

Adding to the list of gains is Charlene Parrot, co-ordinator of Career Education, who claims that "the middle school really becomes the bridge between elementary and high school."

The concept of "planned gradualism" has helped that cause, she says.

Planned gradualism, Parrot explains, is the idea of gradually getting

students into a system of having a different teacher for each class instead of one teacher all day, like grade-school classes. It also involves students more in choosing their own classes, including those classes which provide "creative experiences."

The survey indicated other positive changes occurred in:

- exploratory programs
- basic learning skills
- career awareness
- community relations
- student guidance services

The survey, however — the same one used in 1978 — indicated eighth graders would rather attend a junior high than a middle school, though their parents preferred the present (middle school) system.

In addition, a majority (52.2 percent) of sixth grade teachers feel it's been difficult for sixth graders to adjust to the amount of homework in the middle school.

Reason for teachers' less excited reception to the middle school idea, explains Nutter, is rooted to declining enrollments in elementary schools, causing many of the kindergarten through eighth-grade teachers to be moved to middle schools. Consequently, Nutter says, many teachers feel "displaced," even though K-through-eight teachers' certification allows this transfer to take place.

A majority of sixth grade students — 56.5 percent, survey results show — say it's been difficult being responsible for their schoolwork.

The survey was conducted from December through March (1981-82), two years after the switch from junior and senior high schools.

Middle schools consist of grades six through eight. The switch to middle

schools affected all of Farmington's public schools, causing four newly-formed middle schools to pick up a sixth grade, and three senior highs to pick up a ninth grade.

In terms of students' behavior, offered Warner Middle School Principal Gil Henderson, there are improvements in court.

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**TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY**

Look for the beautiful special section in today's issue commemorating the contribution to the community made by the Farmington Board of Education.