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Swimming results, 1D

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Farmington Observer

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TOO tall for the Hills. At a joint meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council and Farmington Board of Education Dec. 8, deputy superintendent of schools Michael Flanagan tried to provide a sense of how big the district is. If you combined the district's 28 buildings on, say, the Little Caesar property at 12 Mile and Drake, you'd have a building with a 10,000-square-foot base that rose 166 stories.

To which councilwoman Jean Fox, an ardent defender of Farmington Hills' ban against high rises, responded: "Not in Farmington Hills you wouldn't!"

CAREER shift. After earning bachelor's and master's degrees in aerospace engineering and working for Hughes Aircraft, 1978 North Farmington High School graduate Todd Langen shifted jobs.

In 1986, he became a full-time scriptwriter. His new role has paid off as ABC prepares to air a Langen script on the situation comedy "Pursuit of Happiness" Friday. Langen lives in North Hollywood, but his family is still in the Farmington area.

FOOTNOTES: One year ago this week - Parent groups should be more than "cookie and tea parties," according to the head of the Farmington Area PTA Council.

Roxanne Fitzpatrick thinks parents should be a policy making force in Farmington Public Schools.

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Reminder

Your Observer Carrier will be stopping by this week to collect for the month. Please have the money ready and be sure to get your receipt. It's worth a \$2.00 discount on the next classified advertisement you place in your hometown newspaper.

Hills election costs debated

'I'm not ashamed of it. I have no regrets. I just ran scared. I campaigned hard. I wouldn't do anything different. If you've lost once, you know the feeling.'

— Joe Alkateeb
top vote-getter

Expense reports are completed, 10A

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Joe Alkateeb was determined to be re-elected to a third term on the Farmington Hills city council, regardless of the expense. He knew the campaign would be expensive, maybe \$8,000. But in the final analysis, Alkateeb, who nabbed first place in his bid for one of four open seats, spent \$11,030.

"I'm not ashamed of it. I have no regrets. I just ran scared. I campaigned hard. I wouldn't do anything different. If you've lost once, you

know the feeling," Alkateeb said, referring to an unsuccessful campaign in the early 1980s.

Though Alkateeb says he's comfortable with his campaign's high costs, not all candidates share his feelings with mounting expenses. Others say they are concerned about the increasing expense of council elections.

"You're talking about spending more for a two-year term than I'm being paid. I'm not complaining. But if there's a better way, I'd like to



Joe Alkateeb

find it," councilman Aldo Vagnozzi said.

Vagnozzi, whose campaign expenses total about \$5,000, came in fourth place in the Nov. 3 election and earned the two-year term. Council members earn \$1,500 annually.

"I THOUGHT I would have to spend \$5,000. And that was confirmed when I saw what the others were spending. So I budgeted \$5,000. Unfortunately, it took that much to get where I got," Vagnozzi continued.

The former veteran city council watcher suggested a voluntary limit on candidate spending. "But I don't think this community will ever consider that. And a voluntary limit is

only as good as the people who pledge," Vagnozzi said.

Councilwoman Jean Fox, who placed second in the election for a four-year term, said she's also concerned that other interested residents will be dissuaded from seeking election because of reported costs.

According to election finance reports filed with the Oakland County elections clerk, Fox's cumulative expenses are listed at \$7,150. But Fox said she actually spent only about \$3,350. The cumulative expenses listed in the report include a \$3,700 repayment of a personal loan she made to her campaign.

"You can't wait until you start a

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STEVE FECHT/staff photographer

Cathy Goebel of Redford admits it was difficult putting her daughter Lori in a child care center at 9 weeks of age. But she's found the experience rewarding and always gets a hug and a smile from her daughter, now 18 months old.

Day care center serves needs of kids and parents

By Sue Mason staff writer

Cathy Goebel and her husband Jim know how chancy child care can be.

They've learned from experience that quality child care is a "god-send for peace of mind," but it's something that doesn't just drop out of the sky like manna from heaven.

"You have to check into the common sense things that would be appropriate in your home," Goebel said. "You should visit a center two or three times before signing up, see what kind of toys the children play with and meet the staff."

"It doesn't necessarily mean that it's a good day care center because there's a waiting list."

The Redford residents' introduction to child care came eight years ago with the birth their first child, Kirsten. They found child care was almost non-existent, so they turned to a neighbor for help.

The arrangement lasted for two years and when it turned unstable because of conflicts, Goebel resorted to organized child care.

About 15 percent of children of working parents are cared for in child care centers.

Kirsten was just barely 2 and Goebel lied about her age to get her into a nursery school.

She liked the center and its director. But she returned to home-based care when the director left after a clash with the corporation that owned the center over investing the profits into new equipment. That arrangement lasted until Kirsten started kindergarten.

LAST YEAR the couple faced the dilemma again after the birth



of their second child, Lori, now 18 months.

A bit wiser after her first experience, Goebel changed her thinking about child care.

"With Kirsten I thought I'd pick a day care close to home, but that didn't work. So with Lori, I picked one close to work so I could get there quick if she was sick or something," Goebel said.

She found out about the Learning Tree child care center in Livonia from fellow teachers at the Ashcroft School in Livonia and decided to check it out. It was almost a case of love at first sight.

"Lori was 9 weeks old, and they (the staff) were so accommodating," she said. "They did a lot to alleviate my fears. I only cried the first day on my way to work."

The second time around in child care has been a good experience for the Goebels, so much so that Kirsten attended the center's summer day camp this year.

Putting the children in child care was hard, Goebel said.

"But I think Kirsten felt it worse because she knew what was going on. It's easier when they're younger, but it's still hard."

Selecting professional child care may well come down to the par-

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'Right to die' plea granted

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

The ventilator that has sustained Farmington Hills resident Clifford Culham Jr.'s life for more than a year will be removed within a week.

"At long last, Mr. Clifford Culham's wishes will be honored," said Oakland County Circuit Judge David Breck, rendering his opinion Tuesday on Culham's November request to be removed from life-sustaining equipment.

Breck's ruling legally allows Culham, 57, who is suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease, to be removed from his life-sustaining ventilator and feeding tubes by a physician who sought legal immunity to conduct the medical procedure.

Breck did not read his opinion into the court record Tuesday morning, but read aloud what he called the preface of his decision.

The medical procedure, Breck ruled, allows Culham to "no longer be a captive to modern medical technology."

The judge called Culham and the handful of other Lou Gehrig's disease victims around the country, who have chosen to be removed from life-sustaining equipment, "brave pioneers."

Following Breck's brief reading, Culham's wife Joan, 55, and Birmingham physician Dr. Mark Glasberg embraced. Breck lauded Cul-



Clifford Culham Jr.

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Official at school stabbed

By Casey Hana staff writer

An administrator of a Farmington school program for teenage wards of the state was assaulted and stabbed with a screwdriver Monday, while trying to stop two 16-year-olds from stealing his truck from the school lot.

Charles Autry, 49, assistant supervisor at the Shiawassee Center in Farmington Hills, was assaulted shortly after 9 a.m., said Lt. Richard Murphy of the Farmington Hills Police Department. The school is at Tuck and Shiawassee.



Charles Autry

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Clawson resident Art Oatley lights candles in memory of drunk driver victims as Southfield-Lathrup High Madrigal members look on. Oatley had a son killed by a drunk driver.

Their memory lives on

By Chris Risk staff writer

They came for one reason: to honor those who have died in alcohol-related car accidents.

Getting there was easy; staying was hard.

More than 100 people turned out Monday night for the sixth annual candlelight vigil sponsored by the Oakland County chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Drivers.

They gathered solemnly at Nardin Park United Methodist Church in Farmington Hills — mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers and relatives of someone who had died because another decided to drink and

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