

She finds new career that's neon bright, 7B

Dual-meet results, 1B

A taste of Russian cuisine, 3B



Farmingington Observer

Volume 103 Number 2

Monday, October 7, 1991

Farmingington, Michigan

36 Pages

Fifty Cents

© 1991 Suburban Communications Corporation

Candidates clash on recycling fee

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Paul Sowerby thinks the state attorney general should be asked his opinion on the Farmington Hills mandatory recycling fee.

Larry Lichtman is confident the user fee does not violate the state constitution. But he wants a legal opinion on whether a tax can be charged for only those taxpayers using the recycling program.

"I think it's an obligation we owe to the taxpayer," Lichtman said.

Sowerby, 47, and incumbent Lichtman, 53, — two of the seven candidates seeking election to four seats on the Farmington Hills City Council

See Hills, Farmington candidate profiles on Page 3A

— told an audience of 20-25 people Tuesday night at the Farmington Democratic Club's candidate's debate their opinions on various issues, including the controversial recycling fee.

"WHAT WE have now is a tax," said Sowerby, an attorney and former council member. While waiting for an opinion from state attorney general Frank Kelley, an injunction should be filed and residents' payments for the recycling program put

FARMINGTON HILLS CITY COUNCIL

'91 ELECTION

In an escrow account.

Candidates responded to questions from the audience on issues including: parks and recreation; developers' donations as well as their opinions on whether Richard Headlee, president of Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co., and author of the 1978 Headlee Amendment to the state constitution has too much influence on the political process in the

Farmingington area.

"I THINK this issue should go before the voters," said candidate Ron Oliverio, 37, a first vice president for Investments at First of Michigan National Corp.

Incumbent Nancy Bates, 58, said the fee issue is still being worked on. "We didn't make this decision in a dark room with the lights turned out." She reminded the audience that the city has accommodated residents with financial hardships and physical handicaps.

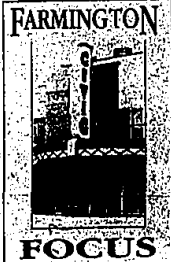
Joanne Smith, 65, chairwoman of the Farmington Hills Planning Commission, said she favors a "true user fee." If a resident wishes to contract

with their own trash hauler, they should be allowed without being forced to pay the city's fee. "People are concerned they are paying for something they don't use."

POLITICAL NEWCOMER Andrew Haczkowski, 22, supports economist Patrick Anderson's position that the \$13.50 quarterly recycling fee is unconstitutional. "I do believe it's not a true user fee. It's against the Headlee Amendment," the Army reservist said.

The user fee should be an actual fee — not mandatory — or should be taken to the public for a tax vote.

Please turn to Page 4



TODAY, MONDAY, Oct. 7, is Ernie Harwell's last game for the Farmington Hills. May or Aldo Vagnozzi said

so. Harwell, a longtime Farmington Hills resident and the voice of the Detroit Tigers for the past 33 years, has broadcast his last game for that team. His firing last December was big news.

But the Farmington Hills faithful, especially those at City Hall, have honored the beloved broadcaster with a proclamation. It reads:

"WHEREAS, these words, 'The summer smiled, and touched us with a song,' written by Ernie Harwell, wonderfully and accurately describe the rich harmonic summer sounds of Ernie Harwell, talented poet and storyteller, calling the play-by-play of a Detroit Tiger baseball game; and

"WHEREAS, Ernie Harwell, for 33 years, has been the radio voice of the Tigers and the people's lives over the years as they followed the games through Ernie's eyes and heard the summer sounds of a man who loves baseball; and

"WHEREAS, Ernie Harwell delighted his audience, not only with the action of the game, but also with his folksy descriptions of the third strike that went by 'like a house by the side of the road,' or the home run that was 'long gone,' or the fly ball in the stands caught by 'that gentleman from Oscoda,' and . . .

"WHEREAS, Ernie Harwell will forever be remembered and missed by an untold number of fans who listened to Ernie's wealth of baseball folklore and who will never hear a Tiger baseball game broadcast in quite the same way again."

Vagnozzi closed by proclaiming Oct. 7 as Ernie Harwell Day in the city "to honor one of its finest citizens, and offer deepest appreciation for the many years of Ernie Harwell's voice."

YES, CITIZEN, your vote really does count. If you don't believe it, switch your TV set to cable Channel 12 over the next three months and watch "My Vote Counts," a series focusing on voting for all citizens.

The show, presented by the Farmington Hills Committee to Increase Voter Participation, will be aired Wednesdays at 8 p.m., Thursdays at 2 p.m. and most Fridays at 7 p.m.

On October's program the city council candidates will be presented, city manager William Costick will speak on the duties of a city council member and city clerk Kathryn Dorman will talk on election procedures. Charles Stanton will host the show.

The November show, hosted by Richard DeVries, will have information on ballot questions and how they're made possible through citizens' right to petition. Patrick Anderson, of Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance, will be interviewed.

During December, information for handicapped voters will be featured. Someone from the state Developmentally Disabled Council will be interviewed by host Lawrence Jick.

Opinions and reactions to the show are encouraged. Call Dave Teitmeyer in Farmington Hills Department of Special Services at 473-9581.

Farmingington-area residents can watch their votes count in the Tuesday, Nov. 5, city council election.



SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

Llove those llamas!

Ralph Rideout, a Farmington Hills Baptist minister when he helped start the Farmington Advisory Council about 20 years ago, returned to the area last week with two female llamas, Nova and Ecstasy. Rideout, who now raises llamas in

Washington State, was transporting the two animals to Massachusetts for sale. On the way, he stopped here to visit Jack and Jane Hooper of Farmington Hills. For a story and more photos, please see Page 8A.

Gill project a team effort

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Parents, staff and students at Gill Elementary are taking a personal interest in their school, and they're investing lots of time and elbow grease to prove it.

Plans for a major playground project are under way, in which the community will raise between \$35,000 and \$50,000, work hand-in-hand with an architectural firm to plan it, and, in the spring, spend four days building it. The all-volunteer effort is expected to include dozens of people throughout the school year.

The school's PTA has already pledged \$10,000 toward the project.

"It's going to be one of the most unique community/school efforts I have ever seen," said principal Michael Duff, discussing the project spearheaded by a parent committee. "Coming on the heels of this renovation (a school renovation and addition which is nearly completed at Gill) it will be extremely meaningful for the children and the community at large."

THE PROJECT is being coordinated through Robert S. Leathers & Associates, a New York-based architectural firm which does similar projects across the country.

Parent Ann Huffman is co-chairing the effort with Bufine Justman and said they are using the school district's "Together — Yes We Can" theme to fire people up.

"I've already had so many people come up and say they'll be there," she added.

"It will be not just for the kids and Gill School, but for the entire community," said parent and committee member Debbie Lukasiak. "It will be, literally, hand-built by the Gill community."

The architects will visit Gill sometime in November for a 12-hour "Design Day" in which they will meet with students, staff and parents to

Please turn to Page 2

Burtch was a man who cared

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Through his 43-year teaching and coaching career at Farmington High School, Robert Burtch is best remembered for his caring ways and his willingness to offer help where it was needed.

The longtime teacher and coach of the school's champion basketball team in the 1950s died of an apparent heart attack and subsequent auto accident about 8:35 p.m. Oct. 1 near the Ft. Henry Motor Inn in Wheeling, W. Va.

Burtch would have celebrated his 69th birthday on Tuesday.

"It appears he had a full blown heart attack, which caused the accident," said Sgt. Clark Gable of the Wheeling Police Department. Following the apparent heart attack, Burtch's vehicle veered and crashed into a toll booth in the city.

BURTCH BEGAN teaching social studies and physical education at the district's oldest high school in 1948 and had retired from there this past June, after the dis-

trict offered incentives for employee retirement. Most recently, he taught modern world history, African history and advanced physical education.

"I'm having difficulty remembering anyone with more teaching experience," said Farmington schools personnel director, Robert Coleman.

A Hancock, Mich., native, Burtch went to high school in Toledo then went on to study at Ohio University where he earned a bachelor of education degree and the University of Toledo where he earned a master of education degree.

He spent his entire Farmington education career at Farmington High, where Coleman said he was well-respected by his peers and students. Coleman recalled when Burtch was selected to review all the extra-duty assignments at the school, with the confidence he would come up with an equitable solution.

"He was a really caring individual — he helped a lot of kids," Coleman said. Often, Burtch could be found in the suspension room, working with kids in trouble.

Please turn to Page 2



Robert C. Burtch

Beating the booze

Reporter's daughter got help just in time

By Casey Hans
staff writer

John Gross, an Emmy-winning television feature reporter, husband, and father of three thought he had the world by the tail.

Then one of his daughters discovered alcohol and the family quickly lost its grip.

"By the time she was in the eighth grade, she went from good to bad to zero," Gross said last week at an Oct. 2 kick-off breakfast for Substance Abuse Awareness Month in Farmington Hills.



"She was hanging around with what she thought was the cream of the crop, but it was really the cream of the crud."

Gross' daughter got help just in time, he said, before she was ready to try some acid that weekend. Now,

she is finishing school and taking her life one step at a time.

The experience was doubly traumatic for Gross, who thought he had moved beyond the alcohol problems he experienced growing up as the child of an alcoholic.

But, there is a silver lining and a lesson for everyone in his daughter's alcoholism and his family's experience.

"IT'S THE best thing that every happened to us, because we never

Please turn to Page 2

what's inside

- Classifieds . . . Section C-D
- Index 1C
- Auto Sections C,D
- Real estate Section C
- Employment/Sections . . . C
- D
- Crossword 2C
- Entertainment 6A
- Sports Sec. 1-2B
- Street Scene 7-8B
- Taste 3-6B
- Travel 7A

The CLASSIFIEDS

Classified makes good dollars and sense. Get the most for your money-buy or sell classified.

591-0900

Use Your MasterCard or Visa