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## WATCH PREPARED TODAY

Tull rules: Harrison High's Marching Band finished a close second in its category at the state championships at the Pontiac Silverdome Saturday./A9

For council: Check out a Q/A by four candidates for Farmington Hills City Council on A4 and The Observer's endorsements on A20.

## ENTERTAINMENT

Theater: This Tuesday, the Fisher Theatre begins a two-week run of Steve Martin's much-publicized comedic play, "Picasso at the Lapin Agile."/E1

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## Pact OK ends Power Road feud



BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

As the city attorney went over the finer details of a pending consent judgment, Power Road residents in the audience listened with their arms folded and, at times, with heads down.

The inevitability of a 27-home development on the natural beauty road became clearer with each passing item of the agreement, which was approved

at Monday's Farmington Hills City Council meeting.

The pact ends two years of court wrangling and paves the way for Oakwood Hills to proceed — much to the chagrin of existing residents.

The council passed the agreement 6-1 with Councilman Terry Sever dissenting for "philosophical" reasons.

"You feel 27 homes coming in is a victory, we don't agree," said Maureen Thirring, North Power Road Association president. "We feel there is going to be a price paid for this coming into

Farmington Hills.

"When do we stop having consent agreements and take it to court?"

The consent judgment, which is a binding agreement enforced by Oakland County Circuit, settles a lawsuit brought by the developer against the city over the rezoning from RA-1 to the more restrictive RA-1A.

Oakwood Hills also sued residents opposed to the development, but that suit was also dropped as part of the agreement. Residents named in the suit will be reimbursed for legal costs,

said John Donohue, city attorney.

With RA-1A, the developer was limited to 24 lots. He would've been entitled to 36 lots under RA-1.

The 27 lots was seen as a compromise. The developer must adhere to RA-1A zoning requirements otherwise, Donohue said.

"It's a complete resolution of all problems," he said.

Council members concurred.

Had the city won in a court fight,

Please see POWER, A8

## Circle of trust



STAFF PHOTO BY JEFF KILGORE

Giving it a whirl: Advanced life skills students from Dunkel Middle School and adult supervisors warm up via the "Merrily-Go-Round," before hitting the Challenge Ropes Course at the Boys & Girls Republic. The exercise helps participants get better acquainted and learn to trust each other, essential to success on the course. For more on the course and how it's used in Farmington schools, please see page A3.

## Plan for Super K requires city cash

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Before there's a blue light special at an Orchard Lake Super Kmart, the developer needs a green light to capture city tax money.

Otherwise, the whole 76-acre project won't get past red, the developer said.

Malan Realty representatives met with Farmington Hills City Council members during a study session Monday to outline their need for a tax incremental finance plan, possibly through a downtown development authority. Council members asked for more information on how much money needed to be collected.

Council members are skeptical about the idea of a DDA or TIF, which they see as a tax break.

"I think they're going to have to prove their case," Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi said.

Council members approved the planned unit development in July for the project, which includes a controversial 24-hour Super Kmart on 76 acres along the southeast corner of Orchard Lake and Northwestern.

Please see SUPER K, A8

## Parks tax isn't aquatic plunge

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Some wonder if renewing the parks and millage means Farmington Hills will dive head first into a commitment to build an outdoor aquatic facility.

Included in the half mill renewal on the Nov. 4 ballot is \$2 million in seed money to eventually build an aquatic center. A few, including one city council challenger, question the need for such a facility.

A swim center is far from reality, even if voters renew the millage. The \$2 million is seed money, but at least twice that will be needed to build an outdoor facility.

The rest would have to be made up through either grants, bond or millage requests, said Paul Jacobos, who is spokesman for a group in favor of the millage renewal.

Grants, obviously, are preferable. Parks and recreation commissioners have received \$5 million in grants during the past 11 years.

Another variable is a recent proposal by a private company, which offers to build and operate a facility that would draw from a wider area than Farmington Hills. The city would have to provide the land.

The \$2 million then could be used to buy down cheaper memberships for residents, said Dan Potter, Special Services Director.

"We haven't made any movement towards bonding at this time," Potter said. "It's like putting the cart before the horse. I don't see that being an issue until we see what the company has to offer."

The City of Novi is asking voters to approve a \$4.5 million bond issue for a state-of-the-art aquatic center. There is organized opposition to the bond request there.

A proposed aquatic center for Farmington Hills, developed by an ad hoc committee four years ago, includes a wave pool, lazy river, water slide and lap pool.

A similar facility was built in 1992 for \$4 million in Troy, which was funded by that city's budget and not voted by residents. The facility has lost money since it opened.

Voter concern over an aquatic center in Farmington Hills has been limited to one phone call, Jacobos said.

"I got one call from a guy who wanted to know why we needed an aquatic center when we already have a pool at the Custick Center," Jacobos said. "When I explained to him that it's much more than just a pool, he seemed to be satisfied."

## Thousands treated to Halloween fest in town

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

Saturday's fourth annual Downtown Farmington Halloween Fun Fest turned out to be quite a win-win situation.

Costumed trick or treaters got their candy and an opportunity to participate in a variety of activities under the big tent in the Downtown Farmington Center parking lot.

And businesses drew shoppers or future shoppers to town.

"It's terrific exposure," said Judy Downey, executive director of the sponsoring Farmington Downtown Development Authority. "It's the one event... that just about every business participates in."

About 3,000 people — including 1,800 kids — enjoyed good weather, treats and the chance to walk past many pumpkins and spooky storefront decorations.

"The streets were very crowded," said Larry Sallen, owner of The Clothes Encounters on Grand River. "It was probably the best turnout I've ever seen for this."

Sallen's business featured one of the more ambitious, and scary, displays. It

was put together by Sallen and manager Lori Stanko, and featured mannequins (disassembled, of course), with perfectly placed dabs of red paint and other eerie details.

"We had people who were all around there, staring at the window," Sallen said. "It was kind of cloudy that day, and we had the (window) lights on" to add to the effect.

Sallen said there has been mostly positive reaction from people to the display, which he put up to spark attention in his business and in downtown.

"I don't like to make comparisons," Sallen said. "But it'd be nice if we had a Birmingham-Royal Oak (atmosphere), that's why we did our window. It's to generate some interest, controversy."

Those who weren't up to getting spooked in front of the woman's contemporary clothing store had options.

Some of the featured free attractions of the fun fest, besides trick-or-treating, included: a petting zoo, pony rides and moonwalk trampolines (under the big tent); "Court Yogen — Vampire," a movie shown at the Civic Theatre; a children's costume party sponsored by Metrobank; and a pet costume contest.

Four youngsters each won a \$50 sav-



STAFF PHOTO BY JEFF KILGORE

Take one: Olivia Asta, 1, left, and sister Madeline, 4, eye the bowl of treats with help from grandma, Chris Gilmore, at top left.

ings bond from Metrobank for their creative costumes. Their names were not available, said Metrobank's Rick Stafford.

Discount coupons were handed out, along with the candy bars and peanut butter cups, at places like The Korner Barbers, Big Apple Bagel and Gold

Loft.

"We had almost 1,400 come in, I think," said Bob Marshick, co-owner at The Korner Barbers. He called the event good for the kids, parents and the town.

Please see HALLOWEEN, A8

## It'll be a 'Day for Strings'

Guest performers from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and other professionals will join more than 350 young string players and instructors from Farmington Public Schools for the sixth annual "Day for Strings 87" on Saturday at Harrison High.

Music clinics will be held throughout the school starting at 10:30 a.m., with a special, free "information" for parents and friends at 3 p.m. in the gym.

## Kathy Dorman's day

Farmington Hills City Clerk Kathy Dorman has been selected as president of the Michigan Municipal Clerks Association.

To mark the achievement, the city proclaimed Monday, Oct. 27, as Kathryn Dorman Day.

Dorman has been city clerk for nine years, starting in August 1988. She previously worked as deputy clerk for 3 1/2 years. Her nine-year tenure also included a stint as acting city manager before City Manag-

## FARMINGTON FOCUS

er Daniel Hobbs was hired.

For Dorman, whose day was in her honor, it was business as usual. She was at the council dais for Monday's regular meeting.

"They just proclaim it's her day, but they don't let her have the day off," a person in the city clerk's office said.

## Keeping down the devils

A "full presence" is promised tonight for the Farmington Public Safety Department to curb potential Devil's Night mischief, said Cmdr. Maria Putt.

According to Putt, a full complement of regular officers will be augmented by part-time public safety reserves. Typical teen gathering places such as

school playgrounds and parks will be regularly patrolled and feature extra lighting.

"We're going to give special emphasis to the schools and city parks," Putt said. "... We just want to take away that opportunity" to be disruptive.

Putt said Devil's Night has been quiet in recent years, with "hardly any activity."

## But in Detroit...

Of course Devil's Night arson fires are still a big deal for Detroit.

But Farmington Hills-based Yessian Music recently produced a song "No More" (Let the Angela Rise and Sing) as part of public service announcements running on WYUR, WJR and WJLB radio stations.

Dan Yessian said they put together the song as part of this "worthwhile community effort" after requests from Myron Stuber, publisher of E Motion Magazine, and Detroit Fire Marshal Wesley Gildon.