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SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Ready to roll: New vans to provide rides for senior citizens - and a new cab company offering reduced fares - are approved by Farmington officials. /A3

Roll 'em: Stadium-style seating and 14 screens will beckon movie-goers to a new theater near 14 Mile /Haggerty later this month. /A9

COMMUNITY LIFE

Chastity Lady: Teens get the message of "saved sex" from a well-known author hosted by Our Lady of Sorrows Church. /B1

SPORTS

Semifinal setback: Top-seeded Plymouth Salem dashed Farmington's hopes of advancing to the Western Lakes tournament championship game in boys basketball Tuesday. /C1

AT HOME

Safe at home: Items and designs help reduce dangers for young explorers around the house. /D6

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75 percent turn on to football field lights

A majority of residents asked say Farmington schools should add lights - if they address parking, light spillage, cost, etc.

The drive for Friday night football in the Farmington school district made another first down during Tuesday night's board of education meeting.

But the end zone is still a few plays away. The athletic field lighting committee recommended adding lights to football fields at all three high schools; adding restroom and storage facilities; and making other miscellaneous improvements, such as enhancing sidewalks, fencing and installing parking lot lights.

Although board members were receptive to the plan, final approval or rejection might not take place until April - following completion of the 1998-99 budget. It would cost about \$700,000 to implement the plan.

Four major areas of concern, according to a recent survey answered by 250 residents, would also need to be addressed: expense; parking; student behavior; and "spillage" of light and noise into adjacent neighborhoods.

"It shouldn't be much of a problem to diffuse light," said Farmington High School principal and committee co-chair Jim Myers, who presented the recommendations.

After the meeting, Myers talked about technological improvements to field lighting systems.

"They now have different ways of focusing the light," Myers said. "It's more direct. The light is almost funneled straight down, like going from one room to another, from the dark to the light."

There were no residents at the meeting who expressed concerns about the plan. In the survey, 75.1 percent of respondents said they would welcome the lights - as long as their concerns were addressed.

Officials might have to wait until the first few games are played to get a better handle on some of the concerns, Myers noted.

According to Myers, residents who answered the survey virtually mirrored an earlier debate by the school board as far as likes and dislikes were concerned.

On the plus side, residents said the plan would increase athletic scheduling flexibility, bring more parents out to the games, increase attendance and result in a better schedule for bands. About the latter, marching bands often must play at Saturday games and scramble to make it to invitational.

Nighttime football would also boost high school spirit.

"I remember when I went to school," said trustee Bobbie Feldman. "And Friday night football games were it."

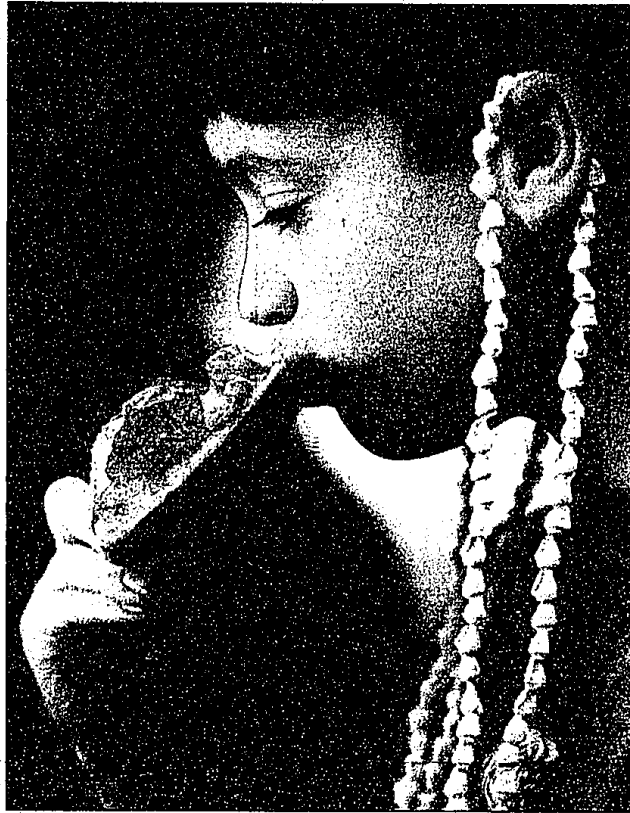
Board Vice President Cathy Webb said enabling night games "will give students a safe and supervised place to go on Friday nights besides going to the mall."

Webb reiterated that several high school students, during the recent "Call to Action Summit" hosted by Farmington Families in Action, identified the lack of such options as a big concern.

The lighted fields wouldn't be used just for foot-

Please see LIGHTS, A4

Cultures collide



Pizza and Papua: Natives of Papua New Guinea might not wear the beads that way or enjoy much pizza, but Robert Horner and other third graders at Longacre Elementary learned about the island country near Australia through the stories of Sue Andersen, who visited last week after months of e-mail correspondence.

E-mail pal delivers stories, sights of life in Papua New Guinea

Sue Andersen recently offered proof to a class of Longacre Elementary School students that there are real people behind the anonymous names found on Internet dialogue.

Andersen, a missionary for Wycliffe Bible Translators in Papua New Guinea, spent two months during 1996-97 communicating in cyberspace - back and forth via e-mail - with the second-grade class of Longacre teacher Chris Brueck.

But that just whetted their appetite for more. The youngsters and their overseas pen pal enjoyed an up-front-and-personal "homecoming" last week.

Andersen turned up Feb. 23 at Longacre to meet the kids and show tangible objects of New Guinea life.

"It was nice to bring closure, even though it now is the next school year," said Brueck. "Unanswered questions were answered, particularly what she looked like."

Andersen then chimed in. "I don't have a bone through my nose."

One of the students, 9-year-old Jon Fenske,

Please see VISITOR, A2

Union charges Marriott firings were unfair

A union representing service employees claims 15 workers employed by Marriott Corp. were fired at Botsford Hospital for their part in an ongoing union organization drive.

As a result, Service Employees International Union Local 79 has filed unfair labor practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board. The union has also demanded the workers be reinstated.

On Wednesday, fired employees and union officials were stopped from congregating inside the hospital lobby. Farmington Hills police were called to clear the area while a union official met with a hospital staff member.

Some 150 hospital service workers will vote March 12-13 on whether they will be represented by union. Employees at Botsford Commons - an assisted living facility affiliated with the hospital - joined SEIU after a 63-41 ratification vote recently.

"It's wild," said Laura Johnstone, SEIU spokeswoman. "We've seen retribution before, but nothing quite like this."

A hospital spokeswoman denied the charges. The 15 employees were fired because of documented cases ranging from misconduct to improper timekeeping, said Margo Gorchow, Botsford Hospital spokeswoman.

Botsford Hospital contracts with Marriott Corp. for dietary, laundry and housekeeping services. The corporation provided dietary service for 10 years, but was recent-

Please see FIRINGS, A4



In defense: Josh Reed, 13, a student at East Middle School, defends the goal at Olde Town Park on Independence.

Holding court

Kids turn tennis site to inline hockey rink

In this court, there are no judges or juries: Just goaltenders and inline skaters. Judgments come down swift, usually on left wing when Greg Hocking streaks towards goal and deposits a dirty orange ball into the upper corner of the net. Hocking and older brother Brad join 10 others in a ritualistic afterschool game of inline hockey at the tennis courts in Olde Town Park on Independence and Waldron in southeast Farmington Hills.

"It's an everyday thing for us unless it's raining or snowing," said C.J. Henkel, 11, who attends East Middle School.

As more school buses drive by, the num-

ber of kids grows in the tennis courts. They circle around on inline skates like seagulls around a prelate stand waiting for enough teens to arrive to start a game.

Once the required red goal nets are in place, it's game on.

These kids who range 11-15 in age don't need an organized league, schedule, coach, referee or an adult watching over them.

A player chooses up sides. With his eyes closed, he kneels over a pile of players' sticks and throws an equal number to his left and right. Sides form when the kids

Please see INLINE HOCKEY, A2

A Kick out of GRIP

A special, free workshop for parents and students in grades six through eight will focus on social and refusal skills for teens at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 19, at Farmington High School.

The program called GRIP (Generations Responding to Issues and Problems) features speaker Fran Kick, an educational consultant, speaker, author and television host of TEENTALK. Free baby-sitting is available for children ages 3-8.

Preregistration is encouraged and forms are available through the Farmington Public Schools, which is co-sponsoring the event along with Farmington Families in Action. Fax (489-3314) forms to the district. They may also register online at <http://www.farmington.k12.mi.us> Telephone registra-

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tations won't be accepted. For details, call Diane Bauman at 489-3349 or Terry Klenczar at 489-3333.

Framed

The Farmington Public Safety Department deflected members of Farmington's city council during Saturday's Bowl-a-Rama to benefit Team Farmington Special Olympics.

Officer Carl Swanderski led the way, bowling a high game of 250 during the contest at Drakeshire

Lanes. With a contribution of approximately \$3,000, the public safety department raised the most money for the Special Olympics. The program is coordinated locally by the Farmington school district.

Thanks for a good job

At the beginning of Monday night's Farmington City Council meeting, a proclamation was presented to Peggy Willson, widow of the late James D. Willson. Mr. Willson died recently, after 11 distinguished years as an election worker (1986-97) for the city. Other longtime election workers were in the audience and were introduced.

According to Peggy Willson, her husband enjoyed serving the city. "He was very proud and happy to do it."

