

Farmington Observer

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VOLUME 113 NUMBER 99

FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 60 PAGES • http://observer-ocentific.com

SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

Appointee says he will run in 1999



Gary Sharp was appointed Wednesday to serve on the Farmington Board of Education until the June 1999 election. He succeeds Joseph Svoke, who resigned in August.

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington school board had to choose one of two finalists for the vacancy created by Joseph Svoke's August resignation. Even though Gary Sharp got the nod,

in a 4-2 vote, board members could have just as easily selected Bill Luse. Or both, if they were able to appoint two new trustees.

"It was gut wrenching to come to a decision," said school board President Cathy Webb on Thursday, still trying

to recover from Wednesday night's difficult choice. "When we had to make a decision, I reminded all of us how fortunate we were to have the caliber of candidates to consider. It was painful to pick one."

According to Webb, "As much as we're thrilled to have Gary Sharp, we're equally disappointed to not have Bill Luse."

"This is a tremendous opportunity," said Sharp on Thursday. "I know (making the decision) was extremely diffi-

cult for the school board, they had a lot of qualified candidates. But I appreciate the confidence the board has in me."

Both Sharp and Luse were among 10 candidates who applied for the vacancy caused by Svoke's resignation. Svoke



Gary Sharp, new trustee

Please see SHARP, A4

Block schedule continues to concern

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Nothing has changed, according to Farmington Harrison High School parents, about a proposed fall 1999 move to four-by-four block scheduling.

At an informational meeting of Harrison Concerned Parents held recently at the Farmington Hills branch of the Farmington Community Library, parents echoed some of the worries they expressed during a June informational forum.

First and foremost, they claim their questions and concerns about the controversial plan still aren't being adequately addressed.

"It's very obvious a growing number of parents want more information," said parent Steve Imer, who is on the district's 14-person block scheduling planning committee.

Secondly, they doubt that their input will be seriously considered by district educators and Harrison teachers as the plan moves forward toward final approval by the school board.

And they still don't like the concept. In fact, several parents spoke out about the need to organize and have some clout when upcoming forums take place, possibly beginning in October.

Harrison teachers last spring voted to begin the process of going to the four-by-four plan, which requires students to attend four 90-minute classes every day per semester. According to

Please see BLOCK, A2



STAFF PHOTO BY LIZ CALDWELL

Free: Canada geese, such as the ones photographed above, often join ducks on the grounds of Independence Green Apartments, where a duck was beheaded Wednesday.

Why?

Men charged with beheading

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

While two men faced animal cruelty charges, authorities are at a loss why someone would lure and then decapitate a defenseless animal.

During questioning, a Farmington Hills police detective said the pair charged provided some vague reasons - drinking being one - but added Kathy Tinn, "Nothing that could explain something like this."

Michael Gregory Prasher of Ann Arbor and Bradley Jon Woons of Grand Rapids are charged with one count of killing and torturing animals after two men beheaded a duck in front of shocked onlookers near a pond at Independence Green Apartments Sept. 1.

If convicted, the felony carries a four-year jail, \$5,000 fine or 500 hours community service. Also, a person found guilty could be forbidden to have a pet.

Dressed in hornada shorts, Prasher and Woons hung their heads during their arraignment Thursday in 47th District Court. Both stood mute as their attorneys entered not guilty pleas.

Judge Maria Parker set bond at \$10,000 cash, citing the pair's prior conviction for theft over \$100 in Kent County April 23. Prasher and Woons, who posted \$100 cash bond in that case, will be sentenced Sept. 24.

Around 6:30 p.m., witnesses said three men appeared to be feeding ducks near a pond at Independence Green Apartments Sept. 1.

Please see BEHEADING, A5



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DEWEL

Court: Michael Prasher (left) and Bradley Jon Woons with his attorney Robert Mirque.

THE WEEK AHEAD

TUESDAY

Be there: The Council of Homeowner Associations of Farmington Hills will meet at 7:30 p.m. in the basement meeting room of the 12 Mile branch of the Farmington Public Library. Gathering and refreshments will be at 7 a.m. Speakers are Pam Rogers Amy, an educator and activist on homeowners insurance, and Marie Donigan and Jeff Stewart, who will talk about neighborhood landscaping and the city tree program.

WEDNESDAY

Speaking: A Nazi Holocaust survivor and author of a special booklet, "My Testimony and Legacy," will speak and sign copies of his book at 7:30 p.m. at Border's Books in Farmington Hills.

THURSDAY

Connecting: The Farmington Chamber of Commerce will host its morning connection at 8 a.m.

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Knollenberg won't talk Clinton

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Instead of a peach of a dessert, Farmington Exchange Club members wanted the dish on impeachment from their congressman after lunch Wednesday.

U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg, R-Bloomfield Township, didn't spill on the Bill Clinton affair except in the most general terms. Knollenberg sits on the House Ethics Committee, but that body only deals with issues of congressional members' conduct - not those of the president.

"We won't get into that," Knollenberg said to the gathering at the Brass Pointe Tavern. "The structure is in place (for impeachment proceedings) if there are grounds for it."

"Here is what it comes down to: How effective can a president be with this burden?" he said.

The congressman is seeking re-election in November, but he's no stranger to the Exchange Club. He's kicked off

Please see JOE, A2



STAFF PHOTO BY TOM HAWLEY

Signals: Erinne Williams was diagnosed with a form of muscular dystrophy.

MDA Labor Day Telethon hits home for Botsford employee and family

BY BETH SUNDRLA JACIMAN
STAFF WRITER

It's not unusual for most children to crawl, but it is for 16-month-old Erinne Rose Williams.

Erinne was recently diagnosed with a form of muscular dystrophy called Spinal Muscular Atrophy-2. The condition is such that Erinne's mother, Suzanne, has been told that Erinne is fortunate to be crawling.

Erinne crawls along with her own style including her holding her wrists turned out. The unusual crawling and the fact that she had the ability to stand but lost that ability are some of

the signals that gave her mother reason to think something was wrong.

Williams said she also suspected something was wrong because she has lots of experience with children. She is the director of the Botsford Child Care Center on the Botsford Hospital grounds in Farmington Hills. Erinne is also in child care there.

"I've been doing this for 17 years," she said of her years in child care, seven of them at Botsford. "I've seen thousands of kids. I knew Erinne was not a typical child."

Williams and her husband also have children from previous marriages, a

daughter, Claire, 13, and a son, Kevin, 7.

At her 12-month doctor's exam, Erinne began undergoing tests including MRIs and nerve studies, EMGs and blood tests. Finally, a DNA blood test confirmed the diagnosis. Spinal Muscular Atrophy is a disease of the cells in the spinal cord. It affects muscles for activities such as crawling, walking, head and neck control and swallowing.

Suzanne and her husband, Jim, found that they are both carriers of the genetic recessive trait that causes the disease.

"The whole experience has been an

Please see ERINNE, A4

Let the campaigns begin!

While candidates are pounding the pavement, dominating the airwaves and the print media, we believe voters have a lot to say. We'd like to hear from you - the average voter - on what you believe are important issues in the November election for governor.

The Observer will host a Citizens' Election Roundtable later this month and we're looking for a few residents to join others throughout your hometown circulation area for a lively discussion of what's important to you - the average voter.

The roundtables will include discussions on the gubernatorial race and statewide ballot issues (physician-assisted suicide and Clean Michigan).

Roundtables will be held 7-9 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 23-24, in our corporate headquarters at 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia.

We're looking for a good cross-section of voters. So if you've got an opinion and are available both evenings, please fill out the guest form which accompanies this article.

We'll notify you if you are selected. The sessions will be photographed and serve as the basis for stories to appear on the Farmington Observer op-ed pages before the Nov. 3 election.

Our readers are well-informed and have lots to say - we know because you write us, email us and fax us on a daily basis. We're counting on a robust discussion of the issues. You provide the opinions, we'll provide the snacks and the moderator.

ELECTION ROUNDTABLE GUEST FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Business Phone: _____ Age: _____

Education: _____

Employment: _____

Professional Affiliations: _____

Community Involvement: _____

What issues are important to you in the November election?

Drop this form off or mail it to:
Farmington Editor Joanne Maliszewski
33411 Grand River, Farmington, Mich. 48335
Or you can fax this form to:
(248) 477-9722



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