

FARMINGTON Observer

Noel night

Celebration puts all in the holiday spirit. B1



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Cities break out the snow shovels

By PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

Monday's unexpected steady snowfall had Frank Garpey of Farmington Hills shopping for a much-needed snow shovel at the Damman Hardware in down-

town Farmington.

"I had one in my hands at Home Depot last week, but I thought I better check to see if I had one already," he said. He didn't.

So when it appeared no end was in sight, Garpey realized

there was no more avoiding the inevitable fact this time of year: It snows here.

He looked over an array of different styles of shovels on sale, some that were old fashioned, some with ergonomic poles and some that plow the snow rather

than scoop it.

"I thought I'd give this one a try," he said of the newer-looking, plow-type shovel.

SALT PRICES DOWN

Snow season arrived in the

two cities Monday, but public works employees said they were ready with plenty of salt to keep roads safe.

In the city of Farmington Hills, there are two storage domes for road salt. And more

PLEASE SEE SHOW, A8



ELL BREXLER | OBSERVER

Debbie Yassay gives her son, Lance, a big push. The sled hill, located behind the Farmington Board of Education offices, was a popular place during Monday's heavy snowfall. The Yassays live in Livonia.

District honored for safety efforts

By PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

Having a child feel safe while in school is a vital part to the learning process, said Bob Maxfield, superintendent of Farmington Public Schools.

"Parents entrust their child to us that they will be totally safe" when at school, he said.

And the school district takes that trust seriously by having a Safe Schools Initiative and Safe Schools Advisory Committee.

The district was honored Monday as one of five in the state with Best Practices in Support of Michigan Safe Schools.

Maxfield credited Estralee Michaelson, the district's director of Safe Schools and Student Services, with put-

ting together a successful program that started out as a task force after the student shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo., in 1999.

It grew into a committee joined by Farmington and Farmington Hills police and fire officials. The group still meets on a monthly basis today because school safety is an ongoing issue, Michaelson said.

Craig Yaloo of the state's Office of Drug Control and Sheridan Rhodes, Michigan State University coordinator of Safe Schools, presented the district with a plaque in honor of their program Monday at the school board office.

School officials were joined by Farmington Public Safety Officer Gary Goss, Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer, Farmington Hills Fire Chief Richard Marinucci and other

police and fire officials.

Yaloo said the district's program uses a total community approach by getting police and fire service involved in the planning and implementation process of making schools safe.

Michaelson said putting the guidelines together for a safe schools initiative was a challenge, but worth the effort.

"It's been a great highlight in my career," she said.

Major components of the district's Safe Schools initiative include programs focusing on prevention, response and recovery.

Michaelson said the program was also honored by the Michigan Schools Public Relations Association.

Another example of the ongoing community-wide collaboration for safe

PLEASE SEE SAFETY, A7

I-275 families propose noise berm solution

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Residents along I-275 might be a tad sick and tired of complaining about traffic noise, but they're not too weary to pose a few sound reducing remedies of their own.

Livonia resident Sandra Carroll proposed erecting earthen barriers or living walls to absorb traffic noise along the federal highway.

Earthen barriers are mounds of dirt that are seeded and grown naturally to absorb noise. Living walls, which are popular in Europe, are similarly built but are usually narrower and require structural support.

Contractors working on nearby projects dump the soil. City workers and neighbors do the rest in terms of planting of grass and evergreen trees. Carroll's neighborhood east of I-275 and south of Six Mile has an earthen berm in place. The natural berm was put up in 1996 with the help with a resident who was a civil engineer.

Construction crews working on a Garden City sewer project trucked in the soil to build the 20-foot tall barrier. Carroll thinks similar low-cost barriers would work on city-owned parcels along the freeway. There is

PLEASE SEE BERMS, A9

Just for you

Oakland Community College's Just for You entertainment series presents the Michigan Opera Theatre Friday, Dec. 6, at the Orchard Ridge Campus in Farmington Hills.

The Michigan Opera Theatre presents "The American Songbook," a medley of hits from the American musical theater, past and present. MOT artists Maria Camarillo, Betsy Bronston, Karl Schmidt and Mark Sondra will serenade the audience with songs classic and contemporary, including sections from "My Fair Lady," "Tidder on the Roof" and a special tribute to Richard Rodgers.

Joining the MOT singers are 10 talented young artists from the Rose City Stars of Windsor, Ontario, singing in the yuletide with songs of the holiday season. The program starts at 7:30 p.m. at the campus Smith Theatre. Admission is \$15 and tickets may be purchased at the college's bookstore. Call (248) 544-3422.

New in classified

If you missed the Tuesday deadline for placing your classified ad in the Observer & Eccentric, don't worry. The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, in an effort to better serve our customers, now offers a "Too Late To Classify" category for those last-minute additions for the Thursday paper. Deadline for the "Too Late To Classify" category is noon Wednesday. Call 1-800-579-SELL to place your classified ad.



ELL BREXLER | OBSERVER

Alie Santacrew listens to former Detroit Tiger Jim Price.

Students learn about governing

By PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

Having a community function properly 24 hours a day, seven days a week doesn't just happen.

It takes lots of folks to make a hometown run smoothly and be safe.

Students from North Farmington and Harrison high schools said they learned just that Tuesday during the schools' Student Government Day.

Gabe Schwartz, 15, a student at Harrison, found out what it's like being a city council-

"I learned a lot," he said. "It's more than what it looks like."

Forty-eight students split between the two schools shadowed city officials from the Farmington Hills mayor to the district court judge to the librarian.

All got to visit the police and fire stations and learn more about what public safety officers do every day as well.

"I thought it was really interesting what they do," said Gabe.

Samantha Paquette, 14, a student at North Farmington, got to play mayor pro-tem during the students' mock city council meeting.

PLEASE SEE GOVERNING, A9

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LOOKING AHEAD

Focus on Wine
In Sunday's Taste section: Drink your favorite champagne but try Michigan newcomer, Besseral de Bellefont.



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