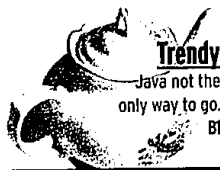


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OC Republicans elect Welday, Knol

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

Two Farmington Republicans have been elected to leadership roles in the Oakland County Republican Party. Longtime Republican activist and Farmington resident Paul Welday is the new chairman of the party after Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson

resigned from the position. And Republican Valerie Knol, who lost her bid for the Farmington area state House seat in November, was elected secretary by the executive committee of the party in Pontiac. Welday said he is withdrawing his intention to run for vice chairman of the state Republican party, which is holding its elections in January.

"I don't want to bite off more than I can chew," he said, adding he hopes outgoing State Rep. Andrew Ruzickowski (R-Farmington Hills) chooses to run for the state post. Ruzickowski could not be reached to confirm his intentions. Knol said, "I am very honored to be chosen." Regarding the recent unrest in the

county party between conservative and moderate members, she commented, "I'm a consensus builder. I plan to work out our diverse opinions and concentrate on getting Republicans elected to office in 2004." Knol said she hasn't decided whether she will make another bid for state representative in 2004 or for any other office.

PLEASE SEE KNOL, A8

Plymouth cites Broe homes; deal sought

BY TONY BRUSCATO
STAFF WRITER

Citing what could be a huge monetary loss that could financially strap the city of Plymouth, as well as a legal battle that could include the U.S. Justice Department, city officials are working on a deal to rescind the tickets issued against three supported-living facilities on Farmer Street owned by Broe Rehabilitation of Farmington Hills.

The attorney for Broe Rehabilitation, Gregory Bator, confirmed his office has been contacted by city legal representatives seeking a deal to end the confrontation. The matter is scheduled to be heard by U.S. District Court Judge Robert Cleland Dec. 18.

"We have been contacted by the city about potentially rescinding the matter," said Bator. "There's no resolution at this point because there is no acceptable proposal by the city under consideration. However, there are talks going on."

The city ticketed the Broe supported-living homes at 338, 347 and 378 Farmer in October, claiming they are businesses being run in a residential neighborhood. Neighbors have complained about being accosted by Broe residents, vulgarity, fighting and public nuisance issues at the homes.

Attorneys for Broe Rehabilitation announced on Nov. 20 they had filed a federal lawsuit, alleging discrimination against the

PLEASE SEE BROE, A6



Libby Bohme ascends the climbing wall at Benchmark Outfitters, as part of the Adventure Outdoors class offered by Farmington High.

Students take on outdoor adventure

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Whether scaling the rock-climbing wall at Benchmark Outfitters in Farmington or kayaking in a pool, students in the Adventure Outdoor Leadership class at Farmington High love testing their skills. The pilot program, an elective 84-minute class, includes two dozen 12th graders who were selected from 300 who expressed interest.

"It was seniors first," said department chair Kelly Boyd. Boyd and teacher Glenn Breuhann, are assisted by Mick Banks, special events coordinator for Benchmark Outfitters in Farmington. The goal was to build skills by exposing students to different outdoor activities. "These are activities we felt they could carry on throughout their lives," Boyd said.

The idea was presented by Bruce Lilley, Benchmark's general manager and vice-president, who approached Farmington High School Principal John Darrett during the 2001 Founders Festival. Lilley is a Farmington High graduate.

"They just happened to bump into each other at Starbucks," Banks said.

Student interest was so overwhelming, the class will be offered again next year. Senior Peter Mellon considers it a

PLEASE SEE CLIMBERS, A10

OLS shared time meeting planned

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Public Schools and Our Lady of Sorrows officials will meet again Monday to discuss a shared-time proposal under which public school teachers could be hired to teach OLS students.

The meeting, scheduled for 8 a.m. tomorrow in Monsignor Walter Hurley's office, will include Farmington Superintendent Bob Maxfield, board members Priscilla Brouillette and Linda Enberg, Hurley and OLS Principal Jim Watson.

Officials have been discussing shared time for art, music and physical education classes over the past

year. Last January, Farmington Public Schools projected \$175,000-\$200,000 in revenues over expenditures if the program is implemented.

OLS, which would have to terminate some teachers, sees the cost savings as a way to funnel money into new technology.

"We are going to go ahead and talk to Farmington to put it on the board agenda," Watson said, with Hurley in agreement.

The controversial issue was put on hold by district officials until parents of OLS students could meet by grade level. The last meeting was held in early November.

Criticisms against shared time

range from separation-of-church-and-state issues to a desire for a totally Catholic education. No prayers or religious symbols are allowed in the classroom during public school instruction. Some parents also have expressed a low opinion of public school education.

Some of the meetings hosted by Hurley and Watson were described as volatile by some who attended. Those parents didn't want to give their names because of perceived potential repercussions.

Maxfield and Hurley called Monday's meeting, which was originally scheduled for Dec. 10 but was

PLEASE SEE OLS, A8

Sorrows alum pays for survey

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

A Farmington Hills man and Our Lady of Sorrows parent who wanted to get a non-emotional perspective of support for a shared-time proposal recently commissioned a report by an independent accounting firm.

Randy Bergeron, who is an OLS alumnus, paid for the report by Doeren Mayhew, certified public accountants and consultants in Troy. Bergeron, a partner with Century Truss Co. in Brighton, said he did so because OLS pastor Monsignor Walter Hurley has said he would rely on consensus rather than a

PLEASE SEE BERGERON, A9

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LOOKING AHEAD

Man-made Christmas
Next week in At Home: A local man whose passion for holiday decorating rivals Martha Stewart's.



Our Towns



LETTERS TO Santa

All boys and girls, naughty or nice, know Santa Claus will soon be checking his Christmas List - and checking it twice that means Farmington youngsters need to get their letters to the Jolly Old Elf written and on their way to the North Pole.

Once again, the Farmington Observer is asking youngsters to send us their letter to Santa along with a school picture to appear in the Observer before Christmas Day. To make sure we have time to forward the letters to the North Pole, get the letters to us by no later than Monday, Dec. 16.

Individually post-marked letters should be sent to Santa, care of the Farmington Observer, 3341 Grand River, Farmington, MI 48335.

Santa call-in

Hey kids - grab a phone and get ready to dial. Santa returns to Southwest Oakland Cable Commission Studios for his annual Santa Call-In Program on Thursday, Dec. 19.

Here's your chance to personally talk to Santa and tell him what you want for Christmas. Along with Santa's best Christmas wishes, everyone will be treated to some great Christmas carols.

Ell Michelle joins Santa during this live broadcast on Farmington's Channel 15 from 6:30-8 p.m. The program will be rebroadcast through Christmas Eve.

Last year, Santa talked to more than 100 kids, so mark your calendar and call early. Santa's special call-in number is (248) 473-2828.

Holiday help

The Great Harvest Bread Co. has a mission this holiday to help feed the hungry. The bread company, located in the Downtown Shopping Plaza off of Farmington Road, is asking folks to bring a brown handle grocery bag filled with nonperishable and nonalcoholic groceries to the store.

In return, the store will give a loaf of Honey Whole Wheat or Old-fashioned White. Owners Ray and Lorie Novelly said the campaign is going well, and they have decided to extend the donation drive deadline to Dec. 20.

"Our goal is to get one ton of food and we're getting close to it," Ray said Friday.

The store is open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday and 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday.

