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# FARMINGTON Observer

**Fish dinner**  
The Lenten special goes beyond the frying pan.  
Taste, Bl.



**SUNDAY**  
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**OUT TOWNS**

## FPS board looks at opening doors

BY SUZ BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

In an attempt to be proactive and deal with a declining student population, Farmington school district officials are looking at allowing out-of-district enrollments.

A televised public hearing regarding the Schools of Choice program is planned at 6 p.m. March 4 at the school administration building located on Shilwassee,

east of Farmington Road.

"This is the forum for parents," said Jan Colliton, assistant superintendent for curriculum, of the hearing.

Results will be reviewed at the 7:30 p.m. board meeting that night. A formal vote will be taken at the March 18 meeting.

Though the district considers this issue annually, officials appointed a committee last fall to research it in-depth.

The plan would allow students from

other districts in Oakland County or the Oakland County Intermediate School District to apply for a limited number of slots in Farmington Public Schools.

Enrollments have declined because the Farmington area is experiencing little growth; school officials say parents who have college-age children are remaining in the district.

"When you lose students, you lose money," said Mark Morawski, principal of William Grace Elementary in

Farmington Hills.

A total not to exceed 20 slots at the elementary level are proposed for a pilot program at William Grace and Flanders Elementary schools during the 2003-04 school year. Officials have said the plan would also allow for more efficient use of buildings.

The district receives 90 percent of its funding from the state. Each student

PLEASE SEE OPENING, A7

### Lottery winner

Franco Ostaja of Farmington was shocked upon recently scratching off a Michigan Lottery



"Crazy 8s Bingo" instant game ticket to reveal an \$8,000 top prize. Ostaja, 62, purchased the winning ticket at the Kroger on Eight Mile in Livonia. He kept the winning ticket safely tucked in his jacket pocket until he was able to turn it in at the regional office in Dearborn Heights. Ostaja plans to use his winnings to pay bills.

### Blood drive

To help meet the area blood shortage, the Farmington Hills Universalist-Unitarian church has scheduled a blood drive 3-9 p.m. Tuesday, March 4, at the church.

Reservations to donate blood can be made by calling the church at (248) 478-7272. Drop-in donors are also welcome. The drive comes at a time when the American Red Cross is reporting a severe shortage of blood in the southeastern Michigan area. There is no upper age limit for donors. The only requirement is that your fast blood donation was at least eight weeks before March 4. The church is located at 25101 Halsted, between Grand River and 11 Mile.

### Promotion

Kathy Morosan (pictured) was recently named assistant branch manager at Burns & Wilcox Ltd., a national



specialty insurance wholesaler, underwriter and managing general agent. Morosan is responsible for managing the overall operations of the branch office, also located in Farmington Hills, and for underwriting for the firm's managing general agent contracts and specialty markets. She earned her graduate degree from Michigan State University and passed insurance courses in property and casualty insurance, commercial rating, and accident and health.

### Rabbit time

Michigan Rabbit Rescue will be at Borders Books and Music, 30995 Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, March 8-9. Along with bunny-themed stories, MRR will also educate about care and keeping of domestic bunnies, which will also be available for adoption. Call (586) 578-1152 or visit their Web site at www.michiganrabbitrescue.org



### Snow way!

Anne Toupin and daughter Calli, 5 1/2 years old, make a run down the sledding hill at Heritage Park. After a weekend snowstorm, sunshine and temperatures in the upper 20s made for a fine day for outdoor fun.

ELL BRESLER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

## Planners propose \$7.7M CIP

BY SUZ BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington Planning Commission has proposed \$7.7 million worth of public investment in the city's Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan.

"This is only a planning document, a planning tool," said Bill Richards, assistant city manager. City staff members helped create the document, which could be reviewed during the budget process, Richards said. It contains projects for public improvements, public buildings and other improvements that affect the city's ability to provide services.

The Commission reviews the Capital Improvement Program each year and makes modifications.

The document is intended to be used as a planning tool by both the city council and the administration in the preparation of the annual city budget, as well as the development of long-term financial planning for the

PLEASE SEE PLAN, A7

## Bruce kicks off run for Hills council

BY PAUL PACE  
STAFF WRITER

Randy Bruce, current Zoning Board of Appeals member and former ZBA chairman, has announced



his candidacy for Farmington Hills City Council. Bruce ran for council in 2001 against three incumbents and three other challengers and came in fourth place. Bruce said he wants to build on the message he put out to voters two years ago. "I want to be able to help Farmington Hills through the challenges we will face over the next few years. I believe my eight years on the ZBA have given me experi-

PLEASE SEE BRUCE, A6

## Board faces final 'shared time' vote

BY SUZ BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

Farmington school board members are expected to make a final decision on the controversial shared time issue at their 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 4, school board meeting.

The meeting, which is open to the public, will be held at the school administration building on Shilwassee, just east of Farmington Road. The agreement between

Our Lady of Sorrows and Farmington Public Schools would place public school teachers in the Catholic private school's classrooms.

Shared time would affect 930 students in grades one-eight.

"It's time to vote," said board member Linda Enberg. "Both groups have answered a lot of questions. We'll call for the proposal, open it up for discussion and see if people have any issues."

OLS Monsignor Walter Hurley will be at

the meeting. The parish has shown there is support, he said.

"We presented our situation at the last meeting and requested that the board consider the program," he said. Under the plan, three public school teachers would be hired under terms of the Farmington Education Association, the teachers' union, to instruct OLS children in art, music and physical education.

PLEASE SEE SHARED, A6

## Local soldiers head south to Fort Benning

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA  
STAFF WRITER

Army Drill Sgt. Thomas J. Clark Jr. can measure the impact of leaving his family for active duty just by looking into the eyes of his 6-year-old daughter, Halleigh. "She asked me 'How long is a year?' I could see those big cookie dough eyes," said Clark, a Livonia resident.

He was among 86 Army Reserve soldiers from the 84th Division called to active duty on Monday, Feb. 24, in Operation Noble Eagle/Enduring Freedom. They will be stationed in Ft.

Benning, Ga., for up to one year.

The 84th Division is an institutional training division responsible for basic combat training, infantry training and officer training to ROTC cadets. "Whatever mission we have we'll do to above standards," Clark said.

On Friday, the soldiers gathered at the George Armstrong Custer United States Army Reserve Center on Schoolcraft Road in Livonia for a farewell ceremony in their honor.

"We were activated Monday morning,"

PLEASE SEE SOLDIERS, A7



Drill Sgt. Thomas Clark, a Livonia firefighter, shakes hands with LTC Joe Stallings before deployment to Fort Benning, Ga.

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**LOOKING AHEAD**

Cutting edge  
In Thursday's AGE section:  
Ann Arbor Film Festival  
showcases latest work by  
experimental filmmakers.

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