

# Farthington Observer

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## District may issue bonds to fund major school repairs

Procrastination of major repairs to school buildings is one way to beat the yearly budget crunch.

But Farthington School District officials may have found a way to avoid putting off repairs that get more

expensive each year without going to the taxpayers.

The Board of Education has asked administrators to prepare a priority list of major repair items facing the district. And to fund those repairs, the

school board may issue bonds without voter approval.

Michigan law allows school districts to issue bonds without voter approval, if the total bonded indebtedness of the district will be less than five per cent of the state equalized valuation (SEV) of the taxable property in the district.

BETWEEN 75-100 other school districts in Michigan have opted to issue bonds without voter approval, says Trustee Richard Wallace, a financial advisor by occupation.

If the district opts for the bond sale, it would be the first time Farthington would issue bonds without voter approval.

"There's no intent to circumvent the voters," says Wallace, who chairs the finance committee and recommended the move to the board.

"We're in a favorable debt position, and if we agree to issue bonds, it would not increase the debt levy."

The district currently levies 3.8 mills for debt retirement which generates nearly \$2 million annually to pay off previously issued bonds and interest. The district also levies 35.88 mills for operations.

Taxpayers pay \$1 per mill on each \$1,000 of assessed value on school district property. Each mill currently generates about \$45,000 for the district.

"I feel the need to issue bonds is here now," Wallace explained. "Our community expects us to maintain a good level of safety, appearance, and

effectiveness. We cannot get behind on this one."

ISSUING bonds for major repairs, rather than new construction, also would be new to the district.

"I do not believe in bonding to buy pencils and paper, but I do believe in the logic and equity of bonding for things that are going to have utility for the district," Wallace said.

"You can go too far with paying off debts," he continued. "The pay-as-you-go creates distortion between the user and the payment."

Wallace believes bond issues for major repairs is a more equitable form of financing than operating mills revenue.

"That way you're not forcing today's taxpayers to pay for everything that's being used 10-15 years down the road," he said.

The bonds would be issued for 10 or 15 years, depending on the life span of the major repairs and the amount of the bond issue, he added.

The total debt of the school district is about \$23½ million. That figure is about 3¾ million lower than five per cent of the SEV of the district. If the debt of the district amounted to more than five per cent of the total SEV, the school board would need voter approval to issue bonds.

Although "mechanically," bond issues without voter approval could be continued in the future, Wallace says, he is opposed to that policy.



The King of Naples, Alonzo (Louis Edmonds), left, and Ferdinand (Michael Hendricks) find themselves on a deserted Mediterranean island in Shakespeare's comedy-drama "The Tempest" at Meadow Brook Theatre. Considered the Bard's farewell to the theater, "The Tempest" is a fanciful blend of magic and understanding. Performances at the theater on the Oakland University campus in Rochester continue through Feb. 19; curtain time is 8:30 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 6 and 9:30 p.m. Saturday, 6:30 p.m. Sunday and 2 p.m. Wednesday. (Staff photo by Stephen Cantrell)

## Resident group monitors funds

By STEVE BARNABY  
Farthington editor

A citizens watchdog group has been established to monitor how Farthington Hills does out its Federal Community Block Grant Funds.

The group was established by the Coalition for Block Grant Compliance after the Hills was targeted as one of 10 governmental units in the Oakland-Wayne County area to be watched.

Presently, Farthington Hills is considering how it will spend \$438,000 in block grant funds. A public hearing is being conducted tonight at Hills city hall, Orchard Lake and Eleven Mile, at 7:30 p.m.

The city has participated in the program for the past three years. It has received \$1 million. Funds from the grant have been used for installation of storm sewer drains in the city's south end. But the majority of the funds has gone for loans and grants to homeowners who wish to fix up their houses.

A cross section of communities were chosen, according to coalition officials, to see how different types of communities are dealing with Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations.

"These groups will be looking at applications and the performance reports of the various communities," says Clifford Schrupp, a member of the coalition's board of directors.

Under HUD regulations, funds gar-

nered from the block grants are to be spent to aid low-income families who either live or work in a community.

The City of Livonia ran into problems with the coalition last year when that group took the city and HUD to court, claiming the city wasn't complying with federal regulations.

Although the case is still in the courts, Livonia did lose close to \$1 million after HUD rejected its most recent application for block grant funds.

Other governmental units involved in the study are Intersect, Hamtramck, Royal Oak, Dearborn, Sterling Heights, St. Clair Shores, Clinton Township and Wayne County.

The local group will get a \$50 stipend from the coalition to monitor the grant procedure. Because local participants may be unfamiliar with application regulations, officials from the coalition will work the members to familiarize them with the regulations.

One of those members is Hills resident Aldo Vagnozzi.

"One of the problems with the present procedure is that the council has its mind made up on how the money is to be spent before the public hearing," says Vagnozzi.

He advocates more input from local residents before a decision is made. "The public hearings are perfunctory," he says.

But, he stressed that it was more the fault of the system rather than the officials who have to make the decisions.

## At gala dinner

## 'Y' launches building campaign

By STEVE BARNABY  
Farthington editor

The official drive to build a \$2 million YMCA recreational facility in Farthington Hills began with a gala affair.

Last Wednesday, more than 300 per-

sons gathered to kick off a community fund drive to raise \$200,000 to build the 40,000-square-foot structure. The remaining funds will be garnered from a United Foundation grant.

Oak Hill Country Club was packed with Farthington area residents, past and present, who lent support to the

drive. Master of ceremonies was Marjorie Van Ameyde, former Farthington School District superintendent.

The district's athletic director, Jack Cotton, reviewed the Y's history which began in the Farthington area back in 1962. Since then, the Farthington Y has grown from its Lawton farmhouse on Drake with a \$31,000 budget to its present facility on Twelve Mile with a projected 1978 budget of \$254,800.

Dick Frankel, chairman of the advance gifts committee, had the best news of the evening as he read off pledged commitments of more than \$348,000.

Among those groups who committed funds are the Farthington Area Jaycees, \$50,000; industrial businesses, \$30,000; the Y family organization, \$12,000; the Y board of directors, \$10,000; and the North Farmington Kiwanis, who have committed \$3,000.

But much of the money will be raised through contributions from community residents. A mass mailing

presently is in the works to contact community members.

The Y supporters hope to raise the needed money in time to break ground for the facility this fall.

The proposed new building will be constructed on 12.8 acres of land already owned by the Y at the Twelve Mile site.

Included in the plans are a physical fitness activity area, men's health club, women's health club, indoor jogging track, whirlpool, 25 meter swimming pool for instructional and therapeutic use and a gymnasium.

Other features will be locker rooms, showers, offices, multi-purpose rooms, handball/racquetball courts and a parking lot.

Frank Clappison, a Y board of director member, had inspirational words for those attending.

"The future of this Y branch is in this room, tonight. We have the opportunity to offer a facility to help not only ourselves, but others in the community," said Clappison.

## Month-late Yule wrapped in love

Pat Byerlein's favorite Christmas present was opened about a month late.

It lacked the bouncy red ribbon favorite presents usually sport. It was unwrapped and unboxed.

Byerlein's favorite gift is the opportunity to be with his family in their Farthington Hills home.

After doctor's diagnosed Byerlein's illness as leukemia, he was in Providence Hospital for 43 days—including the Christmas holiday.

His wife of 31 years, Julie, decided to help him return home by giving him the added incentive of a Christmas at home anytime he was discharged.

For the Byerleins, Christmas means more than a tree and a date on the calendar.

"We had a lot of Christmases," said Byerlein. "On the basis of having happy times, we've celebrated many Christmases. It isn't made by the tree or without the tree."

"It doesn't have to be December."

JULIE Byerlein's determination to keep Christmas when it suited the family was looked upon as the natural decision.

By using a mixture with sugar, she managed to keep the tree alive and green for her husband. A month after other trees were just a memory, the Byerleins were enjoying the fir that took up one corner of their sun porch.

"Lots of people have kept up their trees longer than this," she said. "During World War II, people did that all the time."

Since their children are grown and all but one has left home, the Byerleins were planning on celebrating their Christmas in Florida.

The day after Byerlein brought home the family's first Christmas tree in three years, he told his wife that he was leaving for the hospital.

On Christmas, his family gave him two presents and told him to come home for the rest.

When he returned home, Byerlein, 54, received a present he wanted for a while—a pellet gun.

"It's what he really wanted," confided Mrs. Byerlein.

HIS FIVE children have adopted Byerlein's appreciation of the outdoors. The family has kept up its tradition of winter picnics involving hot drinks, sleds and hot dogs in the snow.

Beth, 22, has gone one step further and is a carpenter. For Christmas, she made her father a set of chairs.

In addition to cherishing being at home again, Byerlein, an account executive, had another present he enjoys.

"I missed the snow," he grinned.

## Fire wrecks apartment

A blaze which ripped through an apartment in the Midwood complex, Farthington Hills, is under investigation by the city's fire department.

Wednesday's fire spread from the lower hallway and wall to the upper levels of 35766 Grand View Court.

Tenant Abe Ellis was at home when the fire started about 2 p.m. He escaped without injury, according to Fire Chief John Van De Voort.

Fire Stations One and Four sent men to the fire. A maintenance worker for the complex tried to extinguish the blaze with a dry chemical compound before firefighters arrived.

About \$14,000 in property damage and \$2,000 in loss of the apartment's contents were reported from the blaze, according to Van De Voort.



Julie and Pat Byerlein put away the Christmas ornaments that were used almost a month after the official celebration. Byerlein's Christmas at home waited for him to be discharged from the hospital. (Staff photo by Harry Maubach)

## The American Jewish Congress boycotts states opposed to ERA

The American Jewish Congress, with regional offices at 21751 Nine Mile in Southfield, has passed a resolution boycotting convention cities in states that have not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment.

The resolution noted that more than 50 groups have already agreed to meet only in those states which have already ratified the amendment.

These groups include many which hold large conventions such as the League of Women Voters, the National Association of Social Workers, the National Educational Association, and the Modern Language Association.

The 1978 convention of the Congress will be in Miami in March. Florida has ratified the ERA.

## Council agendas set

City of Farthington  
8 p.m.  
23600 Liberty

The Farthington City Council consider a revised smoke detector ordinance, disaster control, participation in areawide fire service cooperative, bids for the State Street parking lot, and budget adjustments for winter maintenance, along with other regular business.

City of Farthington Hills  
7:30 p.m.  
31555 Eleven Mile

The Farthington Hills City

Council will conduct a public hearing regarding community development for 1978-79.

After the public hearing, the council will consider the assignment of easements to Oakland County for Phase I of the Ten Mile-Rouge sanitary sewer arm; and a quick claim deed to Oakland County for the Phase I operation.

A study session will follow regular business with a presentation by the director of public services and the engineering supervisor regarding procedures and operations.

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### WINTER DELIGHT

Ice cream in the winter. Reporter Lynn Orr went out and found those folks who sell the cold stuff do during the frigid months. To see what she found out, turn to page 3A.