



Michael Barnard, 25, plays bass clarinet in the Farmington Community Band, but his big job in the weeks ahead will be drumming up support for his school board candidacy. He is one of six candidates vying for one opening on the Farmington school board. The election is June 13.

Hills' Michael Barnard Musician seeks seat on BOE

By Tom Baer
staff writer

Michael J. Barnard is a familiar figure around Farmington Harrison High School on football Saturdays. Fans who don't remember the face will surely recognize the voice.

Clad in a green sweater, Barnard has spent many a half-time in the pressbox announcing the activities of the school's marching band over the public address system. The musical Barnard also plays bass clarinet in the Farmington Community Band.

For the next few weeks, however, Barnard will be working to beat the band for another cause — getting himself elected to the Farmington Board of Education.

Barnard is one of six candidates vying for one opening on the seven-member board. The top vote getter in the June 13 election will serve a four-year term.

At first glance, Barnard, a 25-year-old bachelor, might seem an unlikely candidate for a school board.

"I think the fact that I don't have children will give me an advantage," said Barnard, an account executive for American Bell, the business and marketing branch of American Telephone and Telegraph.

"It'll give me somewhat of an unbi-

ased approach to issues which confront the school board. Granted, someone with children might think that he has a better perception of what's good for the kids. But I think I have the advantage because I've spent 13 years in the Farmington public schools.

BARNARD STARTED at Eagle Elementary, went on to East Junior High and finished at Harrison from which he graduated in 1975. A Central Michigan University graduate, Barnard majored in marketing, minored in economics and was active in student government.

Asked to name an issue with which the board will be dealing in the near future, Barnard promptly said, "declining enrollment."

"I haven't done a lot of research, but obviously declining enrollment is going to be one of the biggest issues over the next several years," he said. Barnard mentioned the closing of two elementary schools, Bond and Fairview, as the result of declining enrollment.

"I see the same thing happening with some of the other schools as the enrollment continues to decline and even shift from one geographical area to another," he said.

"Thus we're going to have to concern ourselves with how to manage these non-functional assets, both buildings and property. There are some profita-

ble ways. Other school districts, especially Detroit, have been able to sell to office developers. These are opportunities we should investigate."

Barnard sees a low-budget campaign for himself.

"I anticipate spending a lot more time than money," he said. "I'll be spending something to make people aware of me, but I think it's more important for me to meet people — and not only the voters."

Motocross safety program offered

A new bicycle motocross (BMX) safety program for elementary to high school age boys and girls and their parents is available free to schools and youth groups in Oakland County.

Call Oakland County parks and recreation supervisor Dan Stencil at 858-4948 for information and scheduling of the program.

Bike motocross cyclists race on dirt tracks such as the BMX track at Waterford Oaks County parks where the motocross season begins the first Saturday in May.

"THE MEMBERS of the school board have a lot they can tell me. You can bet I'll be talking to them. And the teachers and students are important. I'm going to organize my time so that I can talk to all these groups."

Barnard is a volunteer with the Harrison music department and the marching band. "In this way, I stay close to the teachers and students," he said.

Barnard lives with his parents on Minglewood in Farmington Hills.

On Saturday, June 18, the Waterford Oaks track will host the National Bicycle League's War of the Stars race which draws bikers from all over the country.

The free program, sponsored by the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission, includes a talk on BMX safety by Clarkson pro rider Ed Burnette, a video tape of last year's national race held at Waterford Oaks, and equipment, clothing and information displays.

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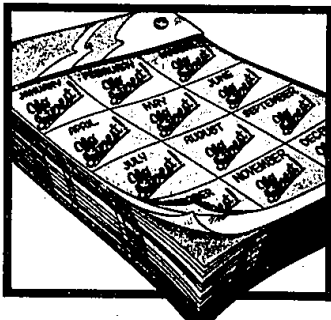
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