

Muer aims to be a ball
with new eatery. 10A



Hawks play
for title. 1B

A puppy under the tree?
Animal lovers say no. 3A

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Peltz-MDOT committee quieted

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Chairman is 'official' speaker

A gag order?
That's what at least a couple people murmured as they left an ad hoc Peltz-MDOT meeting Nov. 21 following a vote to have only chairman Mark Davis speak for members of the group.

But two members, Joe Derek and Roy Lindhardt, did not vote on the motion offered by member Mike Horner, a member of the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Commission.

Comments to the media — including the Observer, Detroit News and radio talk shows — by Derek and

Lindhardt in the past two weeks, about wetlands replacement at Peltz-MDOT and discussions of the proposed plan in closed city council meetings, prompted Horner's motion.

"I think that is uncalled for. I think it is wrong," Horner said, referring to comments made.

Horner said members can speak as individuals, but "you do not speak for this committee."

Members who have spoken to the Observer or at public city meetings about wetlands replacement have

not represented themselves as speaking for the entire committee.

"I FOR one will always speak out whether the world likes it or not," said Derek, who did not vote on the motion. "I've seen unfairness. I've heard baloney. I won't go away."

Derek reminded the committee that "first of all, not many people in this community are vocal."

Lindhardt, who was quoted in the Detroit News and on J.P. McCarthy's radio show as calling the proposed wetlands on Peltz-MDOT a

"yuppie swamp," said. "They (media) called me at 6:15 a.m., and I answered their questions."

He reminded committee members he was called into a special meeting and was informed of the city's hopeful plans to replace wetlands from 12 Mile where a boulevard construction project is continuing. The state Department of Natural Resources requires replacement of wetlands.

Lindhardt also quoted councilwoman Nancy Bates as acknowledging at a council meeting Monday, Nov. 18, that the council made a de-

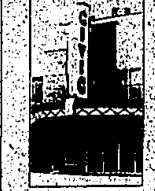
cision in closed session about the wetlands replacement plan, which was developed to obtain a permit from the DNR to allow construction on 12 Mile to continue.

Councilwoman Joanne Smith, who was elected Nov. 5 and was not a part of the closed sessions, including Nov. 11 when she was on vacation, said that if Peltz-MDOT is not used for wetlands replacement, the council must discuss land acquisition, which is acceptable to discuss behind closed doors, according to the Open Meetings Act.

"FROM A PR standpoint, I don't

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FARMINGTON



FOCUS

THE COMMUNITY Center will host puppeteer and songstress Maureen Schliffman and her Hanukkah concert at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 4, at the Community Center, 24705 Farmington Road.

The show celebrates the traditional Jewish holiday. Refreshments will be served after the concert.

Cost is \$4 per person and \$15 per family. For more information and reservations, call the Community Center at 477-8404.

NOW THAT'S bazaar... a holiday bazaar sponsored by the Farmington High School Football Backers, that is.

The event will be held 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7, at the high school, 32000 Shiloh, Farmington. Refreshments will be available.

Continuous drawings will be held from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Available for the winning will be autographed sports items — including Lions, Pistons and Red Wings equipment — and tickets for the games.

The new school store, The End Zone, also will be open.

GIVE VOICE to your holiday spirit by doing some Christmas caroling with the people from the Farmington Community Library.

The carolling begins at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 12, at the Farmington Branch Library, 23500 Liberty. Participants are asked to bring a flashlight and some cookies to share.

Register by calling the library at 477-7770.

TALES FROM the toy box... that's a children's presentation offered at the Farmington Community Center at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 15.

The Voyager Puppet Theatre will present the animated "stories from the toy box designed to bring a child's imagination to life. Cost is \$4 per person and \$15 per family.

Tickets may be purchased at the Community Center, 24705 Farmington Road. Call 477-8404 for more information.

MEMORY LANE — From the Nov. 29, 1991 Farmington Observer:

From the Around the Block Column: "Santa Claus is coming to town and his helpers, Dancer's Department Store, Mac's to \$5 Store, Robertson Hardware and Hatton's Hardware, are pitching in to help. Together they are offering an eye-popping display that will attract the youngsters and, we wouldn't doubt, a few oldersters, too. The toy manufacturers have gone all out this year, supplying Santa Claus with a big array of practical, useful and interesting toys. They are designed to keep the young ones interested and happy until the next trip by Kris Kingle. So in the next few weeks, if you see a big noisy mob around the counter in your favorite store, you will know it's toy town on display. If you want some fun, join the crowd and watch the expressions and listen to the chatter — that the real Christmas spirit you are witnessing."

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48346, or dropped off at the newspaper office.



PHOTOS BY SHARON LEMUEUX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



St. Fabian youngsters 'gobble' up feast

Thanksgiving came early for about 300 students at St. Fabian School in Farmington Hills. On Nov. 20 the appropriately dressed youngsters were treated to a turkey dinner with all the trimmings served in the gymnasium of the school on 12 Mile Road. The event was sponsored by the student council and a St. Fabian parent who is in the catering business prepared the dinner. At left, fourth-grader John Kern digs in to the feast. In the photo above, teacher Rita Richardson (left) and one of her second-graders, Brendan Smith, talk over the turkey, stuffing, potatoes, peas, cranberries, rolls. All students ate together, and the meal cost each \$1.25. This was the inaugural all-school Thanksgiving dinner at St. Fabian, but it'll be back next year, the principal said. "The kids were super," she said. "They enjoyed it so much."

New reading machine offers independence

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Imagine being read to by Perfect Paul, Frail Frank or Uppity Ursula.

If you're visually impaired you'll have a chance to be read to by any of these three voices plus six others, such as Whispering Wendy, Rough Rita or Kit, the Kid.

The voices aren't real people. They are synthetic voices on a Kurzweil Reading Machine that essentially eliminates the middle man — someone to record on to braille or to type in large print for visually impaired people.

The Farmington Community Library now has a Kurzweil machine of its own available for anyone who is visually impaired.

The Kurzweil Reading Machine brings even greater independence because it can immediately read aloud any works typewritten or typeset," said library director Beverly Papai.

Through a federal Library Services and Construction Act grant, administered by the Library of Michigan, the Farmington Community Library bought one of the machines for about \$10,000.

"That is less than a new car. For the visually impaired person, the Kurzweil can bring the sense of independence that a car represents," Papai said.

PAPAI FIRST met Raymond Kurzweil — the machine's inventor — in the mid-1970s at an American Library Association Conference. At that time, his machine was the size of a large Xerox machine and the synthetic voice was a monotone. The price tag was \$42,000.

"Everyone who saw the demonstration felt it was magic," Papai added.

The Kurzweil is sort of like a Xerox machine but no where near its size. Today the machine is small enough to fit under an airplane seat.

The machine takes a copy of the printed materials. And it's not limited to books or magazines. Visually impaired people can bring in their

'The Kurzweil Reading Machine brings even greater independence because it can immediately read aloud any works typewritten or typeset. . . For the visually impaired person, the Kurzweil can bring the sense of independence that a car represents.'

— Beverly Papai
library director

bills or correspondence or anything else they want read.

"Someone who reads braille, for example. They don't have any independence to read something like their mail, documents or personal or professional materials," Papai said.

Instead of providing a visual output, the Kurzweil highlights sounds into its computer memory. And it also adds intonation, so it's not monotone," she added.

The machine has two major components. The electronics unit houses the circuitry and software needed for converting scanned text into spoken words.

The second component is the scanner, which is an optical device that takes a picture of the page you want to read. The picture is converted into electronic data and is further processed and converted into speech.

VISUALLY IMPAIRED users will listen to a tape about how to operate the machine, including choosing a voice in which they want their materials read. Headphones also will be bought to provide the user some privacy, Papai said.

"This is information accessibility

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Farm buildings

Some concerned about future of old structures

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

At least one member of a committee charged with planning a working farm in historically significant farm buildings in Heritage Park wants to know why there's a wait to put the buildings in a historic district.

"I don't see what difference a report makes with your going ahead and making it a part of a historic district," working farm committee member Jeff Stewart told the Farmington Hills City Council Monday.

The previous week the council conceded to a request from the Farmington Hills parks and recreation to wait for a final report from the Working Farm Committee before designating the farm buildings historic and worthy of protection and preservation.

But the council's action left some confused, including city staff members and historic district commissioners

"I just want it stated, that's all," City Manager William Costick said.

Talk boiled down to just what are the council's plans for the farm buildings that represent a period in history when people built country estates in Farmington Hills.

"Are you going to keep these buildings up so they parks and recreation's working farm group can use them?" historic district commission chairwoman Ruth Mochlin asked.

COSTICK RESPONDED: "Certainly no one's ever discussed taking them down." In fact, \$50,000 has been budgeted to stabilize the barn this year, he added.

But doubts remained.

There's an "intimation" that because of having to wait for the working farm committee's report

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HOLIDAY GIFT GIVING

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