

Candidate in class: Sophomore Aaron Scheinfeld (right) interviews candidate Larry Owen in a North Farmington public speaking class.



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LEMIEUX



What about employment? Junior Melissa Wahl asks about employment issues as Brad Lan listens.

Candidate from page 1A

Under either plan, Owen said school budgets will get slimmer as Lansing takes over the purse strings.

Though the discussion was informational, Owen couldn't resist a little campaigning. He said those who backed the plan to eliminate school funding last July probably "went to the Evel Knievel School of Leadership."

He lumped Democratic gubernatorial candidate Debbie Stabenow into the group he called the "Democrat fellow travelers" who joined Gov. John Engler in eliminating school funding without replacement revenue in place.

The candidate suggested some ways he'd improve education, calling for such things as smaller class sizes and helping kids get through college. He

'Both plans are lousy. I don't think taxpayers should be forced into a box: Let's take lousy plan A or let's take lousy plan B.'

*'Larry Owen
Democratic gubernatorial hopeful*

also said attitudes about education have to change.

Some students, however, were skeptical.

"He knew the problems. I didn't hear too many solutions," said Kevin Demeter, a senior. "He kind of spoke to us in generalities."

Added senior Dave Migdal: "I know what needs to be changed. The question is, how are they going to do it?"

Owen is not the first politico

to face incisive questions from Dubb's students.

Past visitors in her three public speaking classes include U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg-R, West Bloomfield; and Detroit City Councilman Gil Hill.

"They (students) are not intimidated," Dubb said. "They say to themselves, 'I think I'd like to interview Jack Kevorkian.' They just call him up. They seldom get turned down."

Hills council says amen to closing on Mercy site

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills city manager Bill Costick's announcement that the city had closed on the Mercy Center property brought a collective sigh of relief from city council members.

Costick made the announcement at a March 2 ice arena study session.

"It's ours," he said of the property.

Some council members had expressed concern about the negotiations to close the deal that gives the city 27-plus acres of Mercy property, including a wing of the

center that will continue to be used for senior programs as well as cultural and community events.

Costick said the Sisters of Mercy had had to consult "someone upstairs." To that, councilman Terry Sever said director of special services Dan Futter, the city's point man at the center, also had to check with someone upstairs - namely the city council.

"And we might be a lot tougher," Sever quipped to laughter.

Assistant city manager Steve Brock said negotiations had not only gone smoothly - with the closing only one day later than the scheduled March 1 goal - but had even

been better than anticipated.

"I'm surprised it was finished as soon as it was," he said. "There were a lot of considerations as to how to divide utilities (in the shared facility). They (Sisters of Mercy) even had a more complicated array of people to get approval from."

Kathleen Barrett, director of communications for Mercy, said there were no real problems during the negotiations, only "fine tuning." The city is borrowing \$4 million over 15 years to pay for the property (\$3,050,000) and for renovations and improvements (\$950,000).

Sleuths sought to solve mystery

Farmington police Detective Imma Baffone scratched her scalp, dragged on her cigarette and took a gulp of coffee in one fell swoop of her hand.

"Tell me, when did you see him last?" she asked the lanky woman standing in front of her.

"Well, it had to be about 3 p.m. Thursday," Jane Fink said, staring at the ground. "I just finished reading my Farmington Observer when the doorbell rang. He stopped by to pick up the last pages of the mystery novel we were writing together. He promised he'd call me later that night."

"But, the phone never rang," Fink continued.

Tell us how this mystery should end. The author who writes the best finish will see his or her work published in your Farmington Observer Suburban Life section on March 24.

We're looking for the funniest, most novel approach to this spoof set in the Farmington area.

The winner will receive a gift certificate from Cadillac Cars on Grand River between Orchard Lake and Middlebelt roads. A copy of, "Pronto," written by

Elmore Leonard, a mystery novelist from Birmingham, also will be awarded just in case the dinner conversation lags.

Entries should be between 800 and 1,000 words and must be submitted to The Farmington Observer office, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336 south of Nine Mile, or by FAX: 477-9722, by March 18.

Submissions by Suburban Communications employees and their families will not be considered.

A committee of Observer & Eccentric reporters and editors will judge the entries.

ON THE AGENDA

Below are highlights from the agendas of meetings this week. All meetings are open to the public.

Farmington Hills City Council regular meeting
7:30 p.m. Monday, March 7

- A special presentation for the Mercy property.
- A preliminary hearing for liquor license violations.
- Consideration of approval of a planned unit development agreement for the McDonald's project for the west side of

Orchard Lake south of 14 Mile.

■ Consideration of approval of appointment to the library board.

■ Consideration of approval of award of bid for reconstruction of fire station 2 on Middlebelt north of 12 Mile to Parsons Inc. in the amount of \$839,800.

■ Consideration of approval of additional improvements to Founders Sports Park.

■ Consideration of approval of a grant application through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to the federal government for landscaping materials.

■ Consideration of adoption of

resolution supporting the goals and mission statement of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Multicultural/Multiracial Community Council.

Farmington City Council
8 p.m. Monday, March 7

■ A public hearing on the 1994 recreation grant.

■ Consideration to commence cable franchise renewal negotiations.

■ Consideration to introduce new city fence ordinance.

■ Purchasing city code supplement.

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