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## THE WEEK AHEAD

### MONDAY

**Taxing decision: Farmington Hills Council members face a tax abatement for Robert Bosch Corp. when they meet at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 9 at city hall.**

**Rep talk: Ask your state representative (Andrew Raczowski) anything you want at 10 a.m. Feb. 9 at Farmington Hills City Hall. Make an appointment at 1-800-864-2108.**

### TUESDAY

**Hoop clash: Two of the better local basketball squads, Farmington High and Harrison, meet on the hardwood at 7 p.m. Feb. 10 at Farmington.**

### WEDNESDAY

**Kid fun: Pippin Puppets perform for Valentine's Day at 7 p.m. Feb. 11 at the downtown Farmington library.**

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## District still says 'no choice' for outsiders

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

One year ago, residents in Farmington Public Schools strongly opposed the concept of inter-district schools of choice, where students living anywhere in Oakland County could attend classes here.

According to the school board, those anti-choice feelings haven't changed enough in 12 months to warrant the district opting in for 1998-99. And so, the board decided Tuesday to not hold a public hearing to gauge current opinion on the subject.

Superintendent Bob Maxfield said a formal board decision will take place in March, well in advance of a spring opt-out deadline imposed on all Michigan districts. No sudden change of heart is expected.

Before Tuesday's meeting, the subject was discussed by the board's policy committee, chaired by Vice President Cathy Webb. During her report to the full board, she again reiterated that 1. bringing schools of choice to Farmington apparently isn't a major issue with residents; 2. people want to protect their school tax investment.

"The board, over the last year, hasn't noted much significant change," said Webb. "The concerns expressed a year ago — maintaining lower class size, the feelings they were paying their tax dollars to Farmington Public Schools and they should benefit from that and the concept of neighborhood schools — are still very important."

According to Webb, there currently is a choice option for district parents, who might want to send their children to schools outside of their neighborhood. For example, youngsters can enter a lottery to be enrolled into the Highmeadow Common Campus.

"We will not be opting into inter-district choice," Webb said. "But we'll support intra-district choice."

So far, about 12 of the 28 districts in Oakland County have opted in to schools of choice, Maxfield said.

## Schulman inspired, calmed district



BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

A steeple and an administrative building are named in his honor, but Farmington school officials say Lewis Schulman leaves behind more than physical monuments.

Schulman, who died Thursday, is credited with infusing a spirit into the district that simmers 12 years after he stepped down as superintendent. Schulman died from kidney failure after suffering with Alzheimer's dis-

ease. He was 78.

The former West Bloomfield resident served as Farmington school chief from 1976-85. He was also Harrison High's first principal when the school opened in 1969.

"He was real concerned about the kids themselves: He wanted them to learn and he wanted them to succeed," said Jack Schulman, his son. "He struck that balance between working with teachers and the kids."

"As a teacher, he knew where they were coming from but he was really concerned about kids."

Lewis Schulman Street runs off 12

Mile Road into Harrison High. The district renamed its headquarters on Shawansee Road in his honor in 1986.

The Schulman name became synonymous with education.

His late wife, Regene, was a Detroit Public Schools teacher. His son, Jack, is a teacher at North Farmington High, daughter Jo is a special education teacher at Farmington's Cloverdale Development Center and son Bill is a middle and high school teacher in Charlevoix, Mich.

His sensitive, caring style was a soothing influence as the district went through growing pains. No small part

in that was his helping mend a fractious school board.

"It was a zoo before he became superintendent; he brought class; he brought calm," said Helen Fustow, former Farmington school trustee who was elected



Ex-Superintendent  
Lewis Schulman

Please see SCHULMAN, A5



House of conflict: Carol Palaian and her daughters top to bottom, Angela, 11, Maria, 11, Lisa 14, and Julia, 2, stand at the playhouse in their backyard that the neighborhood association wants removed.

## It's neighbor vs. neighbor

### 13-foot tall playhouse draws suit in Hills sub

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

They built it and they came. Except the family that constructed a backyard playhouse in a Farmington Hills subdivision didn't expect they would include an attorney with a briefcase.

Since the Palaian's A-frame playhouse — a gift from an uncle — went up in the back of their Independence Commons home, they've gotten flak. Neighbors complain the 13-foot high structure is unsightly, especially since it rests in a common area of the Farmington Hills subdivision southwest of 11 Mile and Drake.

Homeowners' association board members want the structure removed, saying it violates their deed restrictions. The board is taking the Palaian's to court over the matter.

A suit has been filed against the Palaian's before Judge Fred Mester in Oakland County Circuit Court. A hearing has not been set.

"We lived in another neighborhood in Farmington Hills for 16 years and we never had a problem," said Carol Palaian, whose family lives on Crompton Circle. "I can't believe it."

The family offered to take down the structure but wanted to wait until the ground thaws. The board, through its attorney said it was unacceptable, Palaian said. "I don't know what they want," she added.

A spokesman for the Independence Commons said the question is when the family agreed to dismantle the playhouse. "That was only after legal action was taken," said Dave Imesch, association president.

"If you were to canvas most of the neighborhood, you would probably find most of the homeowners are very upset with this one homeowner and want this structure removed. It's an ugly structure and it doesn't fit in with the character of the neighborhood."

What upsets the Palaian's, and some neighbors who support them, is no one said anything while the structure was being built. The association and subdivision residents waited until after it was finished to lodge complaints, Carol said.

Another Crompton Circle resident agreed. "I think that is mean; these people worked night and day on that," said LaDonna Hartman. "I'd sign a petition to keep it up just because of that."

If someone would've informed them, the Palaian's said they would've stopped construction. The house was built by an uncle as a gift to his nieces: Lisa, 14; twins Maria and Angela, 11; and Julia, 2.

Deed restrictions prohibit Independence Commons mem-

Please see PLAYHOUSE, A5

## Old Orchard projectors roll again Feb. 27

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

The Old Orchard Theater has a date — Feb. 27 — for its reopening.

The three-screen cinema formerly owned by AMC has a new operator, Toledo, Ohio-based Great Eastern Theater Company. Great Eastern is an independent company that runs drive-ins and cinemas in Toledo, Bowling Green, Fremont and Mansfield.

The company is familiar with the Michigan market. Great Eastern also operated a theater in Cheboygan and handles film bookings for other cinemas in the state, a company spokesman said.

"It will be an interesting venture," said Jim Walter, Great Eastern Theater president. "I think it's a good physical facility."

"It's a small theater, but there are 1,400 seats in that auditorium."

To fill those, Old Orchard will continue to show first-run films, Walter said. Maintenance work needs to be completed and a staff of 15-20 people has to be hired before opening.

"We're a good operator. We're an independent; we're not a chain," Walter said. "We feel we do a good job in keeping our facilities in good condition."

Great Eastern is leasing the facility from Southfield-based Arie-El Productions, which bought the theater from

AMC. The lease is for "at least a year."

"We don't know after that," Walter said. "I definitely think they're interested in leasing the facility for something else in the future, possibly a restaurant or something. In the meantime, they could change their minds and continue to lease it as a theater."

No one at Arie-El Productions could be reached for comment.

Please see FILMS, A5

## FARMINGTON FOCUS

### Leading COHA

The Council of Homeowners Associations of Farmington Hills (COHA) recently elected new officers.

They are: Andy Nickelhoff, president; Fran Valley, first vice president; Marcia Van Crevelde, second vice president; Dick Steiger, secretary; Joe Colombo, treasurer; Noreen Yuskowatz, trustee; and Gail Haynes, trustee.

Guests are invited to the next meeting at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 10, at the Farmington Community Library on 12 Mile.

### Time In Washington

State Rep. Andrew Raczowski said last week he'd placed second in the Junior Officer of the Year

national competition awarded by the Reserve Officers Association of the United States.

As one of the top 10 finalists in the program, Raczowski visited Washington, D.C. for oral person interviews and evaluations.

"No award could ever shadow the pride that comes from serving my country," said Raczowski, in a press release that notes his "official military title is 1LT(P) Andrew Raczowski, 2nd Battalion of the 333rd Regiment, 1st Brigade, 84th Division, Infantry."

### Landmark showing

A 30-year veteran Farmington Hills artist, A. Warren Schultz currently has an exhibit of his oil painting on display at the downtown Farmington branch of the Farmington Community Library.

Look for landmarks like the Farmington Masonic Temple, the Botsford Inn and the Gov. Warner Mansion in his works that will be exhibited through Feb. 27.