

Stellar spellers

Bee smart:
Alex Romine, a fifth-grader at Gill Elementary, took third place in the area spelling bee at Adler Elementary in Southfield. Romine was his school's top speller.



She's a champion: Adriane Bracciale, a seventh-grader at East Middle School, captured first place at the regional spelling bee in Southfield Wednesday by spelling "pontificate." She moves on to the state finals.

District workers get raise

CLARENCEVILLE

Administrators and non-union workers in the Clarenceville School District recently received a 2.3 percent pay hike.

The pay hike is the same as the one recently given to the district's 113 teachers.

As part of their new three-year contract, the district's 12 administrators also, like the teachers, agreed to an insurance rate increase cap of 3 percent. With the cap, the administrators will pay any increase over 3 percent.

Non-union workers include child care aides, teacher para-professionals, noon aides, pool employees, and hall monitors.

The Board of Education recently approved the pay increases for both groups.

The administrators' previous three-year contract expired in August. The new three-year contract, with a 2.3 percent pay hike for each year, expires in 2000.

Farmington public safety pedals new bike patrol

BY TIM SMITH

STAFF WRITER

The mounted police aren't coming to Farmington. But the next best thing is — bicycle patrols.

Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Goss told city council members about the program during last Monday night's regular meeting. It will cost \$8,000 to \$9,000, out of the general fund, to operate the program, designed to help patrol downtown and parts of the city that are difficult to reach by automobile. Goss said training will begin in May, with a projected Memorial Day start-up.

"Maybe we'll compete with the skateboarders" at the Downtown Farmington Center, said Goss with a chuckle.

Three members of the department, Cnrd. Maria Putt, Officer Chip Hennessy and Officer Terry Purves will carry the bikes on their patrol cars. When a situation arises that requires officers to check out a difficult-to-access part of the city, they'll stop their cars, remove the bikes from their bike racks and start pedaling.

"I think, more than anything, it will help us better interact with the community," said Putt, who said she was excited about the bike patrols. "We'll have quicker response through (Shiawassee Park) and things like that."

Putt, Hennessy and Purves actually wanted the bike patrols to start last year, Goss

explained. But the idea was put on the back burner until they brought it up again this year.

"These will be in addition to our regular patrols," Goss said. "... It'll bring our officers closer to businesses and residences in the city."

Goss said the bike patrols will be out in force for special events, such as the Founder's Festival in July. But they'll also be visible throughout the year, "around the schools and parks. We think we can integrate this service" without deteriorating existing patrols.

Officers will "use the car as a base and then go out on the bikes to get to areas we currently don't have access to," continued Goss. "It'll make us a lot more flexible."

Putt said the bikes probably wouldn't go out during winter. "We're not going to put snow tires on them."

City Manager Frank Lauhoff, who formerly headed up the public safety department, was enthusiastic about the idea as an example of "community policing ... It's getting closer to the community and that's what this bicycle program is about."

It will cost about \$1,000 for each of the three bicycles and another \$2,000 per officer for uniforms and equipment, such as helmets.

Before starting the program, the officers will undergo rigorous training, riding 20 miles up and down hills in northern Oakland County.

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Crash

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pick up her son when the vehicle went into reverse.

On Friday, Farmington Hills police had a licensed mechanic examine the car, which had only been driven 500 miles. The mechanic checks the brakes and how it shifts into gear, Green said.

The police investigation could be completed by Monday.

After the police investigation, the city attorney will review the case to see if any charges will be filed.

"We look at that vehicle and find out if there are any mechanical problems," Green said. "If there are none, and the vehicle went backwards and struck these kids, you can only make so many conclusions: The woman wasn't in control of her vehicle."

Because the accident happened on private property, police jurisdiction is limited, Green said.

Chrysler introduced a new Concorde model this year. In company investigations, the vehicle is taken to the dealership or Chrysler Corp. to be diagnosed.

The fact that it is a new vehicle with only 500 miles could be a factor, the Chrysler spokeswoman said.

"So it could have been she just wasn't familiar with the vehicle at this time," said Tinson, a Chrysler consumer media relations spokeswoman, "but most likely we will make an appropriate diagnosis."

Beanie raffle for Longacre House

The most difficult to find Beanie Baby, the one dedicated to Princess Diana and one of only 1,500 of its kind, will be raffled by the Longacre House of Farmington Hills, according to Ben Marks of the Longacre House.

The proceeds of the raffle will benefit the 127-year-old historic mansion and its scholarship fund.

Raffle tickets are \$3 each or two for \$5. Tickets may be purchased now with credit card by calling 477-8404 or you may stop in and pay with check during regular business hours. The raffle is May 15.

The Longacre House is located at 24705 Farmington Road. Business hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday and 9 a.m. to noon Saturday.

AGENDA

Farmington school board special meeting
6 p.m. Tuesday, March 10
Lewis Schulman Administrative Building
32500 Shiawassee
489-3300

The agenda includes:
■ Technology update.
■ Bid review and award: Farmington High School, Phase 1, and O.E. Dunkel, Phase 1.
■ Review Plante & Moran Study Concerning Personnel and School/Community relations.

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