

Ponds to help project drainage

BY GREG KOWALEKI
STAFF WRITER

Three ponds will figure prominently in the Gateway Center development at Orchard Lake and 14 Mile in West Bloomfield.

Schmier and Feuring Properties of Boca Raton, Fla., has presented its proposal to develop the 63-acre site on the northwest corner of the intersection.

Representatives from the developer have been meeting with the township planning commission. While final approval for the site is pending and construction is still two years away, the site plan is taking shape.

Drainage is a key concern. "A tremendous amount of water will come off this," said Raymond Holland, who represents the township board on the planning commission. "It has to be retained somewhere."

The proposed "somewhere" are three ponds. The first is planned for the corner of Orchard Lake and 14 Mile, a second will be at the north end of the site on Orchard Lake and the third will be at the west end of the commercial area on the site north of 14 Mile.

"No matter how you look at it, this is a wetlands," Holland said. "When you look at the new

plans, it's all asphalt and buildings."

The site is almost entirely undeveloped now. Only a small flower shop and a golf driving range are there and there is a set of gas pipes along the north edge of the site. In all, 13 wetlands have been identified.

The proposed development calls for two major retail buildings covering 258,000 square feet. Also planned are two restaurants covering 16,000 square feet totally and an office building covering 3,600 square feet. Multiple family housing will be at the west end of the site, but the current plans are focusing on the non-residential development area.

The site will have about 1,800 parking spaces which will mean a lot of asphalt that will prevent rain water from being absorbed into the ground.

To accommodate the development, some wetlands will have to be filled in while others are enlarged or created. Wetlands removed will be replaced on a 2-to-1 basis, in compliance with the township wetlands ordinance. The three retention ponds are designed to hold water runoff and release it slowly into the drainage system.

But Thomas Law, chairman of

the West Bloomfield Floodplain and Wetlands Review Board, questioned if they will be adequate.

"The filtering capacity is questionable," he said. While the ponds will be able to store water, they may be holding dirty water that flows off the parking lots, Law said.

The area around the ponds will be landscaped, but Law said that filtering vegetation needs to be placed in the ponds as well.

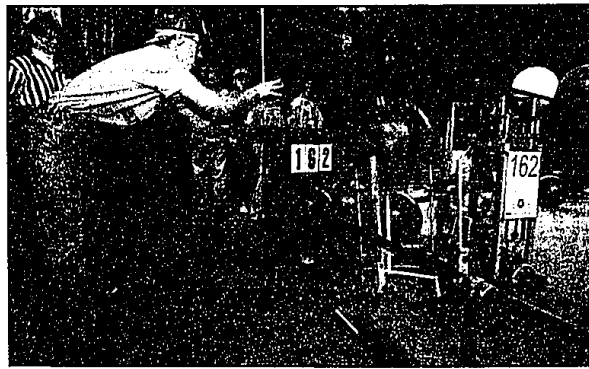
"The plants also force (the water) to slow down," Law said. How the water flows and where it goes is a concern too.

Rainwater will be carried through the drainage system into Farmington Hills and it's important not to overload the system there, Holland said. "Whatever we do, it has to be acceptable to Farmington Hills," Holland said.

The pond at the corner of Orchard Lake Road and 14 Mile also will serve as a decorative feature to welcome people into the township. Eventually there will be a sign at the corner, but Holland said the township planning commission has not discussed that yet.

"There's a long way to go," Holland said.

March madness hits Robo Hawk



Pulsating: Harrison High School sophomore Jason Link tosses a ball to Robo Hawk during March 20 seeding competition at Eastern Michigan University for the seventh annual FIRST... For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology competition. The pulse action robot was driven by seniors Carrie Cox and Muhammad Alan. Harrison and TRW in Farmington Hills teamed up for the effort.

Experiments push EMU/F'ton project

BY MARY MURPHY
SPECIAL WRITER

Give four magnets of different sizes and strengths to a group of first grade students. Ask them a question. "Which one is the strongest?" Some answer, "The little one" and some answer "The big one."

Don't tell them the right answer. Give them a box of paper clips and let them mea-

sure and record how many each magnet will hold. Ask again, "Now which one is the strongest?" Or ... teach them about magnets from a text book and show them from the front of the classroom how each magnet has different strengths. Which lesson will have more impact on the children?

Research shows that the first experiment will foster higher levels of learning than the second, more traditional lesson.

One of the goals of the Farmington/Eastern Michigan University Science Teaching Project, F.E.S.T., is to develop teaching units which emphasize questioning, discovery and hands-on student-centered education. The project is funded through an Eisenhower Grant awarded by the Michigan Department of Education and is an extension of an established partnership between Farmington Public Schools and EMU.

The F.E.S.T. project is directed by Donna Wissbrun, supervisor of student teachers at EMU, and Randall Wright, science coordinator for Farmington schools. Project administrator is Georgia Longer, EMU's collaborative education coordinator. Project participants include: teachers from Gill, Grace, Flanders and Lanigan elementary; pre-student teachers from EMU; science curriculum consultants.

Primary goals of the project are to enhance educators' understanding of scientific concepts, to prepare female elementary and secondary teachers and to devel-



Web watch: Lanigan teacher Leslee Lacosse (left to right), Lanigan student teacher Julie McGrath, Flanders teacher Nancy Covey and Gill student teacher Sandra Limmer explore the Internet for additional sites.

op science units based on the Michigan Curriculum Framework and on research-based "best teaching practices."

The curriculum being developed will integrate problem-based teaching, in-depth learning and technology-assisted instruction. Authentic assessment, measuring what students can actually do with what they learn, and real-life connections will be emphasized. Outcomes of the project will be the development of a cutting-edge science curriculum and improved MEAP scores.

The project is scheduled to continue until December.

At the end of the project the units will be presented at a district-wide "Kaleidoscope" educational conference.

Mary Murphy is a graduate assistant at Eastern Michigan University.



Table talk: Chefs Jon Vosler (far right) and Wesley Larsen (to his left) visited the class of teacher Sonya Hanifin, far left

Chefs show bread need

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

The next best thing to learning about the various food groups is sampling some of them. And that's exactly what a kindergarten class did - with the help of two Farmington Harrison High School graduates.

Jon Vosler and Wesley Larsen, currently chefs at Romano's Macaroni Grill in Farmington Hills, recently showed kindergartners at Rogers Early Childhood Elementary School in Melvindale how to make various pastas. About 200 kindergartners, from morning and afternoon classes, enjoyed the mix of Italian cuisine and culture.

The visit was arranged by a friend of the chefs, Rogers kindergarten student teacher Sonya Hanifin, in order to cap off a lesson on nutrition.

"I've been going over the food

groups each day," Hanifin explained. "When I tell them they need six-to-11 (daily) servings of breads and cereals they think it's far fetched."

But they see it isn't so unrealistic when they factor in the pasta part of the breads-cereals equation. Spaghetti, ravioli and other pastas actually count towards meeting the daily breads and cereals requirement.

"I thought it'd be a nice way to reinforce what our body needs to function," said Hanifin about the March 11 visit by Vosler and Larsen. "If there's no gas in the car, the car's not going anywhere."

According to Hanifin, who is a student teacher at University of Detroit-Mercy College, Italian food wasn't the only highlight of the chefs' visit. Kindergartners also listened to Italian music and talked about the culture.

RECREATION NEWS

ADULT SOFTBALL

The Farmington Hills Recreation Division is now registering new teams for men's, women's and co-ed softball. Call 473-9570.

EGGSTRAVAGANZA

Join Parkey for a fun-filled program of games, arts & crafts, storytelling, snacks, and best of all an Easter Egg hunt Saturday April 4; ages 3-5, from 10-11 a.m.; ages 6-10, from 12-1:30 p.m. Cost is \$10 per child and pre-registration is required. Call

473-9570.

'HOOP' CONTEST

Farmington Hills Recreation provides basketball players the opportunity to show their moves and become the "Hoop Contest" champion in a game much like Pig or Horse. The event will take place on Sunday, March 29, at the William Costick Activities Center in Farmington Hills. There are divisions for ages 9 through adults. The fee is \$7 per person. Registration deadline is

March 20. Call 473-9570.

FAMILY NIGHT

The city and the Commission on Children, Youth and Families will present the annual free Family Night from 6:30-9:30 p.m. Friday, March 27, at the Costick Activities Center. Free open swimming each hour, along with animal shows, kids shows, arts and crafts and "Hooper," the Detroit Pistons mascot, will be available from 7-8 p.m. Call 473-9570.

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