

Farmington Observer



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DEAR OLD DAD

Editor's note: Our "My dad is special because..." Father's Day contest received some great entries. The following essay was chosen by the Observer staff as the winner of the contest, meaning the author and her dad will get two tickets to a Detroit Tiger's baseball game.

Daddy...
...cheers at track meets.
...shows off school projects at work.
...says "good try." (42 strokes for 3 holes!)
...welcomes an abandoned dog as a pet.
...loves us!

Rachael Button
Farmington Hills
Dad: Rich Button

For more great essays, please turn to Page A2.

THE WEEK AHEAD

MONDAY

Still cruisin': The weekly "Cruise the Grand" classic car display continues, 5-9 p.m. June 22 behind The Pasta Stop and Page's Food & Spirits. The festivities are in the parking lot at the southwest corner of Grand River-Farmington Road.

TUESDAY

Dinosaur time: Art teacher Jennifer McCandless will present "Let's Draw Dinosaurs" for children, 2 p.m. June 23 at the Farmington Library.

Block talk: Harrison High School's proposal to go to block scheduling will be the subject of an informational meeting for parents, 7 p.m. at the Harrison auditorium.

WEDNESDAY

Women's health: A program on how women over 50 can avoid cancer, heart disease and osteoporosis will be offered at 7 p.m. June 24 at Providence Medical Center. Call 1-800-968-5595.

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Edison sheds light on gripes

Farmington Hills officials and residents gave Detroit Edison an earful, in light of persistent power outages. Edison tried to explain.

When Detroit Edison meets with city officials and area residents, often sparks don't fly but frustration does. Barbara Keogh, like her Meadowbrook Hills neighbors, has experienced several power outages, including May 31. She was joined by other residents to lodge complaints at a meeting Thursday in Fire Station No. 5. Only her quadrant goes powerless during storms; others remain online. "Why do X and Z never fail? It's always Y that goes down," said Keogh, who was without power 7 hours and 42 minutes April 12 Easter Sunday. Residents in Quaker Valley and Independence Commons subdivisions report frequent outages, also.

In the case of Meadowbrook Hills, Detroit Edison officials blame the problem on a troublesome circuit, which serves the southwest portion of the Hills. The circuit has had 26 outages in the past 2 1/2 years. "We don't consider that good performance," said Lewis Bregni, Edison distribution planning engineer.

Another resident questioned whether Edison should be allowed to attend kindergarten at Our Lady of Sorrows School in Farmington this fall.

Reward, city stand acclaimed

A leader in the Jewish community is commending Farmington Hills for offering a reward to encourage their information in two cases involving anti-Semitic graffiti.

The two incidents, one at Adat Shalom Synagogue June 1 and the other at Forest Elementary June 10, are not believed to be related. Hills police have said. To underscore their seriousness, though, a \$2,000 reward is being offered for information leading to an arrest in each case.

The city of Farmington Hills and Farmington Public Schools are both putting up \$1,900 each while the Farmington/Farmington Hills Multi-

Please see REWARD, A4



Willing to try: The Kornacki family said it was ready to pay for a ramp and help son, Greg, 6, with his head in hand, get around Our Lady of Sorrows School. The rest of the family (clockwise from left) is Ed, Nancy, Maria, 2, Brian, 9, and Keith, 6.

A family's sorrow

School can't accept boy with spina bifida

Ed and Nancy Kornacki insist there is no reason their 6-year-old son Greg shouldn't be allowed to attend kindergarten at Our Lady of Sorrows School in Farmington this fall.

But for reasons the Kornackis can't understand, Greg, who has spina bifida but otherwise is a seemingly typical child, wasn't admitted into Sorrows for 1998-99.

The parents said they were told, flat out, by the Rev. Walter Hurley, the church pastor, that Greg wasn't being admitted and that the decision was final.

Even though a Farmington Public Schools assessment of the child showed he was ready to begin kindergarten, a lack of facilities for children with special needs was cited for the refusal to admit Greg to Sorrows.

"Monsignor (Hurley) made it very clear that this decision will not be changed," said Ed Kornacki, during a recent interview at his Farmington Hills home.

It is a decision that is becoming more and more uneasy for Sorrows parish members, according to Kornacki friend and neighbor Jon Ball.

The pastor at Our Lady of Sorrows has been unyielding and continues to take that stand, despite a growing amount of resentment among parishioners as they find out what's going on," Ball said. "We and several others

have written letters to Monsignor Hurley and received no response."

Ball also noted that the decision — and attitude — is ironic, considering that Ward Presbyterian Church in Livonia (now located in Northville Township) welcomed Greg to attend pre-school there. Sorrows does not have a pre-school program. Meanwhile, Greg's parents contacted Adam Cardinal Maida, Archbishop of Detroit, who assured them that the matter would be looked into.

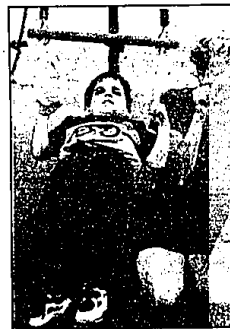
Tough decision

Hurley Friday said he could not comment about the specifics of the Kornacki case, for reasons of professional ethics and confidentiality.

He did say that there are wheelchair-bound students attending Sorrows and that he understands that parishioners might be upset with a decision. (Greg relies on a wheelchair most of the time, but he can get across a classroom, with the help of braces and crutches, his parents said.)

"I am aware there are a number of people who would be concerned about it (the refusal)," Hurley said. "I'm not sure they would have the full range of knowledge" about the case.

"Sometimes, when people are placed in a position of leadership, they have to make decisions not everybody (can) deal with."



Workout: Greg with his mom, Nancy, on the family's playscape.

The Kornackis do not understand the decision, especially since they see their son as a typical kid who could do just fine in school — despite his confinement.

For example, with the Detroit Red Wings well on their way to the Stan-

Please see SORROW, A4

Grocer buses in elderly

Many Farmington residents are fighting to keep a full-service, quality grocery store in the Downtown Farmington Center, with the rumored closing of Farmer Jack. But apparently some are being enticed to do their shopping a mile down the road. It's not exactly the royal treatment, but for Farmington Place resident Margaret Dawes, Tues-

day's round trip luxury bus to and from the Nine Mile-Farmington Road Farmer Jack came pretty close to it. Dawes, a senior citizen who normally walks to the Farmer Jack in the downtown center, said it might not be a terrible thing to take the bus on Tuesdays and Fridays to the food chain's much-larger Crossroads Shopping Center location.

"It was great," Dawes said, noting that other Farmington Place residents are saying good things about the shuttle. "They helped us on and off the bus. They introduced us to the store manager. She was very nice."

And they also received a store tour, complimentary coffee and



In store: Activist Annalee Morrison petitioned to keep a grocer in downtown Farmington.

Please see STORE, A6

Honoring Murph

Numerous proclamations, salutations and quips greeted the retirement celebration of Farmington Hills Assistant Police Chief Richard Murphy Friday at city hall.

Among the funnier quips: ■ Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Goss introduced himself as, "Gary Goss, first precinct commander for the Farmington Hills Police Department. I cover the downtown area. and I report to Dick Murphy."

■ Farmington Hills Fire Chief Rich Marinucci noted that you won't find a nicer police officer, and a man who handles things so well. "It is truly a significant accomplishment," Marinucci deplored, "to work in any place — and for the chief — for as long as you have."

■ Police Chief Bill Dwyer showed a self-deprecating streak, as he presented Murphy a retirement badge. "Turn everything else in ... turn the gun in —

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or wait about 14 years," Dwyer joked.

Class reunion help wanted

Harrison High School 1978 graduate Vicki Loyer-Carlson needs your help. She's trying to find out if her class is planning a 20-year reunion. Seems the Arizona resident has so far struck out on trying to contact classmates or find information on the Internet.

"I would love for people to send me their names and addresses (or e-mails), and for some folks to volunteer to help put the reunion together or to suggest a business that we might contract with who will do the honors," Loyer-Carlson wrote in her e-mail letter to the Observer. "I can do some work from here,

but obviously if I can get people in Farmington interested in putting this together we'd have a better chance of actually having one."

Contact her at Vicki Loyer-Carlson, Ph.D., Family Wellness Center, Inc. 645 E. Speedway Blvd., Tucson, Az. 85705; call 520-388-9180; fax 520-388-9187; or e-mail to vloyerc@ang.arizona.edu

Cloverdale grads

Gary Fassinger, Stacy Mancini, Todd Moore and Steven Sonnenbater, all 26, are scheduled to graduate 1 p.m. Thursday from the Cloverdale Developmental Center during an outdoor ceremony.

During last week's annual Field Day (featured in the June 18 Farmington Observer), Cloverdale teacher Ruth Whiteman said the school has a good track record at placing its graduates into vocational programs that meet their specific needs. Cloverdale is a special education facility, with students age 3 to 26 who have physical and mental impairments.

