

'Oliver' debuts Thursday

BY JOANNE MALISZEWSKI
STAFF

You'll find yourself humming along to "Food, Glorious Food," and "Where is Love?" and revisiting the characters of Fagin the thief, Bill Sykes the bad guy, loving Nancy and young Oliver when the annual Farmington school district and community musical, "Oliver," debuts at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 10, 11 and 12 at North Farmington High School.

Music will be provided by Paul Barber and members of the Farmington Community Band. Tickets are available daily 10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m. in the west lobby of North Farmington High School. Adult tickets are \$10, students and senior adults are \$7.

Performances will be dedicated to the late Earleen Kiener, executive assistant to the Farmington Public Schools superintendent, who died in 1997. "She was with us from our inception. She was just such a lovely lady," said Sue Cobb, production assistant for the school district's TV 10 educational access.

"This year we have a lot of family members who are working together," said Cobb, who with her husband, Dean, school district telecommunications coordinator, organizes, coordinates and puts on the annual musical production that draws cast members from the schools and community at large.

More than 150 actors auditioned in June. The cast has about 100 adults and children. "We then put the whole show together in six weeks. We are a whirlwind," Cobb said.

"Oliver," the musical, is based on Charles Dickens' "Oliver Twist," the story of an orphan searching for his long-lost mother in London.

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■ 'We decided to put on 'Oliver' because there are lots of kids in it.'

Sue Cobb
—'Oliver' cast

of kids in it. We thought it was time to bring in younger kids," Cobb said.

Following the June auditions, rehearsals began Aug. 3. A number of the actors obviously had been practicing in the intervening months. "If they can get their music down, that's wonderful," Cobb said.

The kids who portray orphans both in Fagin's gang and in the orphanage are putting together their own costumes, with their parents' help. The adult actors are encouraged to rent their costumes.

"We do character sheets," Cobb said, adding that actors determine how the character will look and be played.

Lead characters in the cast include: Oliver, Marc Zakalik; Mr. Bumble, Randy Barrett; Topper, widow Corney, Denise Karakashian; Noah Claypole, Dan Freeman; Mr. and Mrs. Sowerberry, Tom Schroeder and Jan Vogel; Charlotte, Lauren Zakalik; Artful Dodger, Ryan Hertz; Fagin, Jim Whitten; Nancy, Sue Cobb; Bob/Nancy's understudy, Rose Sellar, Natalie Myre; old Salyers/strawberry seller, Shelly Wasserman; Bill Sykes, Chris Bouschet; Mrs. Bedwin, Esther Szafranski; Mr. Brownlow, Duane Fox; Dr. Grimwig, Howard Hertz; chairman/knife sharpener, Joe Szafranski; Milkmaid, Megan Nestor; old Annie, Kathy Malsner; First Bow Street Runner, Jim Study; Second Bow Street Runner, Doug Shiffman.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DEERBERG

On stage: Child actors rehearse one of "Oliver's" well-known numbers, "Food, Glorious Food" in preparation for the opening of "Oliver" at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 10, Friday, Sept. 11, and Saturday, Sept. 12, at North Farmington High School. Tickets are available daily at the high school. The production is a cooperative effort between the school district and community.

Signing



STAFF PHOTO BY LEE CARLSON

Author: Gwen Foss, manager of Books Abound in downtown Farmington, will sign copies of her latest book from noon to 5 p.m. Saturday, at the bookstore. Books Abound is at 33336 Grand River, just east of Farmington Road. "The Book of Numbered Lists" is described as a concise and detailed reference guide to numerical lists. It includes everything from the Three Reichs to the Three Stooges. For more information about the book signing, call (248) 477-8777. She is pictured with other books featuring numbers and lists.

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pond in Independence Green on Grand River and Haled.

A resident then saw a man pin a duck down while the other swung a golf club, chopping off the animal's head. The resident, who saw the incident from his window, ran down and grabbed one of the men while the others fled.

As angry neighbors assembled, the man being held threatened them, police reports said. After officers arrived, one of the men who fled was seen peeking around a building. Police caught him and witnesses identified him as one of those involved.

Police questioned a third man, who is an Independence Green resident, and confiscated golf clubs from his apartment.

Another resident found a bloodied nine-iron in the bushes. The club matches those taken from the apartment, police said.

The incident has garnered nationwide attention, said Bill Dwyer, Hills police chief. Dwyer attended the arraignment along with Assistant Chief Marty Bledsoe and other police personnel.

"We take it real seriously," Dwyer said. "Some people don't take animal cruelty seriously ...

but we've seen this type of behavior escalate against persons and we are concerned."

Michigan Anti-Cruelty Society praised the police for swiftly prosecuting the matter. Director of Investigations Mike Killian — who also attended the arraignment — is pleased that the judge set a cash bond, but thinks the defendants should be required to have psychological testing.

Prasher, who is originally from Grand Rapids, was scheduled to start classes this fall at Eastern Michigan University, his attorney said. Woons was to start a new job with an insurance company Sept. 15.

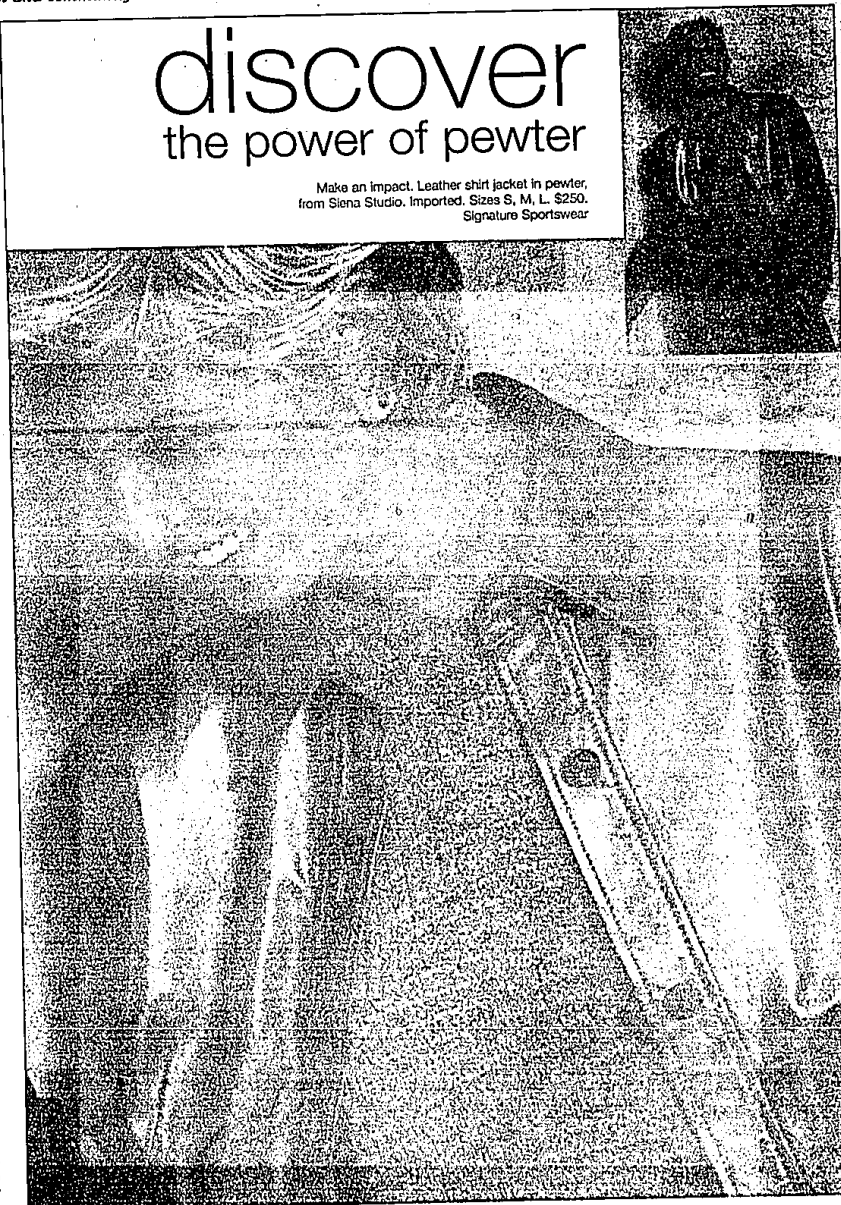
Parker ordered the pair to have no contact. Prasher is also to undergo alcohol screening, the judge said.

Rose Martin had her 3-year-old granddaughter in tow at Thursday's arraignment. They, too, are animal lovers and agnost at what happened.

"I was scared in my bed," said Olivia Rose Martin, who likes to feed ducks. Grandmother Rose Martin added, "We wanted to see what's going to happen. This is not something that should be taken lightly."

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