

# International flavor

## Wooddale Elementary students travel a world of cultures



Teaming up: *Kyale Crane and Lisa Aglamishian perform an Armenian dance.*

music, lots of food, maps, flags, books, cultural and historical information, children and adults in native costume, laughter and pride.

Among countries featured in booths were the United States, India, Armenia, Sweden, Nigeria, France, Norway, Poland, Netherlands, Greece, Mexico, England, Malta, Russia, China, Nicaragua, Japan, Scotland and Israel.

The booths enabled students — many with ethnic backgrounds — to show off their country and culture.

"The key word for the whole night was pride and to show off your background," said Wooddale parent and PTA member Sharon McGladdery. "And (to show) pride in your friends' background. It was real supportive and nice."

Attendance was an estimated 250, including Wooddale students, parents, grandparents, relatives and staff. Guests were greeted by dozens of international flags hung in the hallway.

A greeting committee, Sandra Brown and Mary Ann Wood, welcomed each visitor and presented each with a program and a passport for each child, a large plate and utensils. As they entered the crowded gymnasium guests were able to see, smell and hear an international cacophony.

At the American table, children were invited to games and crafts as well as food and music. Kroger (12 Mile and Halsted), McDon-

ald's (12 Mile and Halsted) and A&W (Grand River) donated gift certificates used to purchase soft drinks, cups, juice and hot dogs, respectively.

Entertainment was provided by Kevin and Lea Nash, sponsors of the Scottish booth, who brought "a Scottish bagpiper and a beautiful Scottish lass to perform traditional dance," McGladdery said.

Other highlights included the following:

- The Cowley sisters, Wooddale students, performed traditional Irish dances in Gaelic costumes;

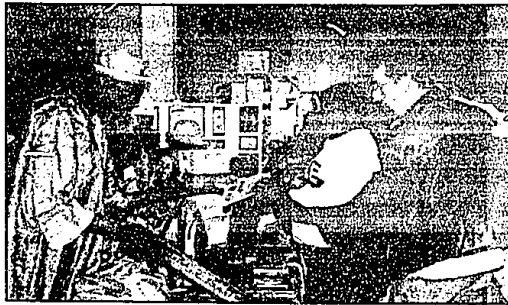
- Frank Yelian, a Wooddale dad, brought a traditional Chinese instrument and entertained with Chinese music;

- The Israel booth got several children dancing the "horah";

- Lisa Aglamishian and Kyale Crane performed a traditional Armenian dance, also in Armenian costume.

Visitors went from booth to booth, tasting, reading, laughing, exchanging stories, listening and learning. As they left each booth the children received a stamp or sticker in their passports from that country or culture.

The children seemed to very much



On display: *Oluyemi and Olugesin Akande show Nigerian items to Ben Harris and Charlie Johnston.*

enjoy seeing their friends in native costume, discussing ethnic foods and customs and learning from and teaching each other, McGladdery said.

Wooddale parents are already discussing plans and ideas and are looking forward to another international night next year.

The flavor of international life came through during the recent "International Night" at Wooddale Elementary School.

During the first annual program Thursday, April 22, visitors could walk up to 21 booths representing various cultures and countries. The booths were sponsored by Wooddale families.

The gymnasium was filled with



Just like Paris: *Gisele Wittbrodt, a native of France, poses with her daughters Gabriella (left) and Audelia, who attend third grade and fifth grade at Wooddale, respectively.*

## State Sen. Bullard proposes mandatory seat belt use

BY MIKE MALOTT  
STAFF WRITER

Not wearing your seat belt may be illegal, but police aren't supposed to stop you for it. Referred to as a "secondary offense," cops can only write the ticket when they have pulled you over for something else.

That all changes if State Sen. Bill Bullard (R-Highland) has his way. His proposal to make wearing a seat belt mandatory and to make it a "primary offense" — meaning officers can pull you over if they notice your shoulder belt hanging unused inside the car — becomes law.

SB 335 is expected to come up for final passage in the House of Representatives in the coming week, Bullard said. It has already been approved by the Senate in a 21-16 vote in March.

"There are arguments for this — 100 lives save every year, 3,000 injuries avoided each year and \$170 million saved. The figure comes from the fact there will be less deaths and less costs in reimbursement for injuries and damages from insurance companies and welfare," Bullard said.

Additionally, Bullard argued, statistics provided by the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration show that when adults buckle up, 82

percent of children riding in the same vehicle also buckled.

Bullard suggests it is probably because those adults are more sensitive to the need to make sure their children are strapped in. But for those who drive without belts, the number of children riding in the same vehicle who are buckled drops to 62 percent.

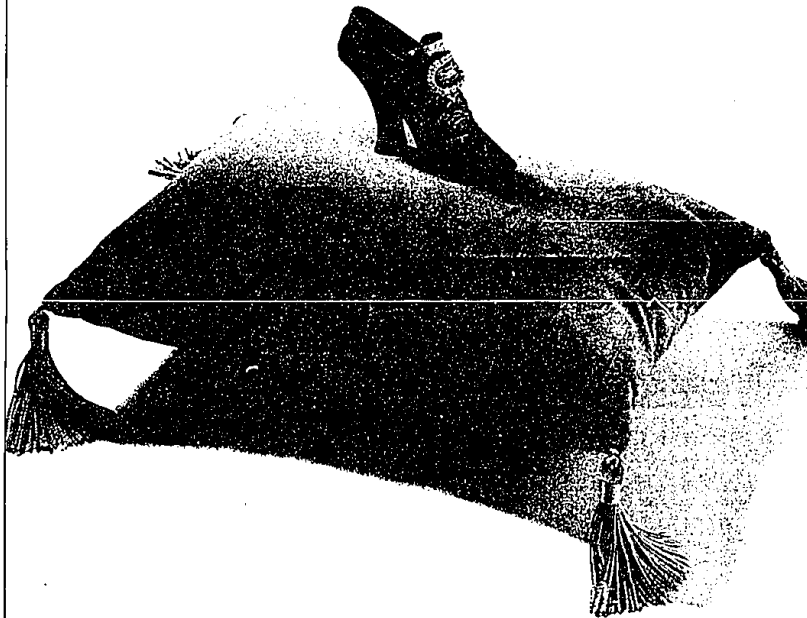
Bullard said he believes the change will increase compliance with the mandatory seat belt law. Michigan has been stuck at 71 percent compliance for several years, he said. But other states have found that making belt use a primary offense raises compliance 10 to 15 percent.

Bullard's proposal would allow local ordinances to set the amount of the fines levied for seat belt violations, but typically the penalty runs at about \$40, he said. No points will be applied to a driver's record.

Opponents to the bill argue that wearing a seat belt should be a matter of personal choice and that may use it as an excuse to harass some driver, particularly motorists.

Rep. Lingg Brewer (D-Holt) this week announced plans to introduce legislation requiring insurance companies to refund to customers any savings they receive as a result of primary enforcement of the seat belt law.

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