

Farmington students relive the immigrant experience A3

# Farmington Observer

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VOLUME 112 NUMBER 7 FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 74 PAGES • http://observer.eccptinc.com • SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

## THE WEEK AHEAD

**Islamic insight:** Farmington Hills Library hosts a talk about Islam at 2 p.m. Sunday. The library is on 12 Mile Road, between Orchard Lake and Farmington roads.

## MONDAY

**Let's talk:** Harrison High School will host another informational meeting about block scheduling, at 7 p.m. in the auditorium.

## TUESDAY

**Board biz:** Farmington Board of Education meets at 7:30 p.m. at the Lewis Schulman Center.

## WEDNESDAY

**Chat and chew:** The Farmington Neighbors meet for lunch noon at Glen Oaks Country Club

## INDEX

■ Obituaries	A5
■ Crossword	E7
■ Classified Index	H3
■ Autos	J5
■ Home & Service	J5
■ Jobs	III
■ Rentals	E8
■ Taste	B1
■ Sports	D1
■ Arts & Leisure	C1
■ New Homes	F1

## Bands tag up for annual fund-raiser

One of the biggest fund-raisers of the year for Farmington Public Schools' three high school music programs is just around the corner.

The annual "Tag Days" (fund-raiser is set for Friday and Saturday, outside businesses throughout Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Band and orchestra students from Farmington, Harrison and North high schools will don uniforms and concert attire and collect money, which will be used for educational trips, guest clinicians, music scholarships, band camps or special projects.

Proceeds will be divided among the three high schools' music programs. Last fall's program yielded \$6,000 per school, said Jamie Schehr, 1998 Tag Days publicity chairwoman.

For any donation placed in canisters, students will issue a ticket or "tag," good for free admission to one of three special "Band-O-Rama" concerts to be performed by each high school. The concert dates will be listed on the back of the tags, Schehr explained.

Meanwhile, the music programs will also benefit from a separate fund-raiser, Saturday and next Sunday, Oct. 25, at the 7-Eleven store at Orchard Lake and 13 Mile. A portion of Slurpee sales those two days will be donated.

Call 553-3835 or 553-2269 for more information.

## A swing into the future



Hefty nudge: C.J. McGorish, 4, pushes Amy Bakerjian on a swing at Shiawassee Park. Amy's brother Andy pushes a swing in the background.

## Big plans in play for city park

BY TIM SMITH  
tsmith@ec.homecomm.net

The city of Farmington is committed to kicking in \$60,000 toward creating what is envisioned as a "world-class" playscape at Shiawassee Park.

According to Bill Richards, assistant manager for the city, that would be enough money to at least build a formidable playscape just south of existing playground equipment at the park. But he and others connected with the concept have grander things in mind.

"We are going to do something in Shiawassee Park, regarding a 'park-within-a-park' concept, this spring," Richards said last week. "If we don't raise another penny we'll spend the (city budgeted) \$60,000. But it would be more limited in scale."

The city is managing finances for the project.

Richards added that "early indications are the community will be very responsive to the project."

Extra money would go a long way toward creating the kind of "multi-generational," family-oriented playscape the community apparently wants. The project is an outgrowth of the Downtown Visioning Task Force meetings held earlier this year, facilitated by Wayne State University.

Richards and others who have big dreams for the project soon will find out more about who is willing to get

on board.

The community is invited to attend a meeting 7:30 p.m. Thursday at Farmington City Hall to help determine how much support there is for the 130-by-200-foot playscape, which will be patterned after existing structures in Milford, Grosse Pointe Farms and Wayne.

That support can come in the form of contributions of money, services or materials.

"The project will require considerable building material support, such as sand and gravel, wood chips, brick pavers and shrubs — plus people power to put it all into place," Richards said.

Non-cash contributions already are pouring in. Already committed to the project: Allen & Laux, Inc., conceptual planning and architectural duties; Grissim/Metz & Associates, construction drawings; Ameritech, excavating assistance; Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission, video production.

Also, Ron Baker, chairman of Marketing Communications Counsel, Inc. in downtown Farmington, is donating publicity, and will create a graphic design for the project.

"It's really essential," said Baker about the need for such community outreach efforts. "The support for this will come from the community at large. They'll have to understand and know the value of the project."



And Michael Harrison is contributing a logo design to a key fund-raiser for the effort, called "Pick a Picket for our Park." The program will be launched at Thursday's meeting.

Individuals, families and businesses will have the chance to buy wooden pickets for as low as \$25, have their names inscribed on them, and see them installed as part of a fence that will surround the structure, Richards said. The size of the fence itself will depend on the number of pickets sold.

The "Pick a Picket..." program will get a youthful boost during the

## Pupil count soars

BY TIM SMITH  
tsmith@ec.homecomm.net

Enrollment in Farmington Public Schools is higher than flat projections, and district officials aren't exactly sure why.

They aren't complaining. But, James Myers, assistant superintendent of K-12 instruction and student services, has a theory about the 265-student increase, from 11,711 in 1997-98 to the recent Fourth Friday count of 11,976.

The still unofficial count for kindergarten through 12th grade includes early childhood centers, as well as special education students who are mainstreamed into general education classes, but does not include Cloverdale Developmental Center or related special ed programs.

"It's self-serving for me to say we're doing a good job," said Myers, about why enrollment is up. "But what I'm seeing here, kindergarten numbers are really high. A lot of parents are not sending their kids to private day care or parochial centers but to public edu-

Please see PUPILS, A2

## Hills teen faces trial in traffic death

BY DARRELL CLEM  
dclem@ec.homecomm.net

A Farmington Hills teen faces trial for the Aug. 1 death of an 18-year-old pregnant woman whose baby survived a two-car accident in Westland.

Joseph Norman Novell, 17-year-old valedictorian of Clarenceville High School's Class of 1998, has been ordered to stand trial in Wayne County Circuit Court for negligent homicide in the death of Julia Margaret Serda.

The ruling by Westland 18th District Judge Gail McKnight followed testimony that surfaced Thursday during Novell's preliminary hearing.

Serda died after the 1990 Ford Tempo she was riding in collided with Novell's 1990 Chevrolet Beretta in the intersection of Ann Arbor Trail and Middlebelt.

The 18-year-old Novell was declared dead about 45 minutes after the 5:48 p.m. accident, but the baby she carried for 7 1/2 months survived after doctors performed an emergency Caesarean section.

Please see TRIAL, A2



Andrew Raczkowski

## Raczkowski puts premium on service

BY TIM SMITH  
tsmith@ec.homecomm.net

Aspirations to become the youngest floor leader ever on Michigan's House of Representatives wouldn't stop Andrew Raczkowski from listening to his "bosses," the people who live in Farmington and Farmington Hills.

First, of course, the 29-year-old longtime Farmington Hills resident and 1987 Harrison High School graduate would need to be re-elected to a second term. Raczkowski, who describes himself as a "bleeding heart conservative," faces Democrat Steven Dibert in the



Tuesday, Nov. 3, general election.

"I work for 35,000 people. I have 95,000 bosses," said Raczkowski, during an interview last week at the Farmington Observer offices. "And I have to jump when they say jump."

Some might question Raczkowski's political viewpoint on issues. But the

record clearly states that he backs up that statement with hard work. He is a regular visitor to schools, helping children understand the process of how a bill is adopted. He attends community and governmental meetings in the 37th District and he even was one of the celebrity servers at the Farmington Big Bay during the Oct. 7 benefit for Farmington Families in Action.

In late 1997, he followed through when Linda Traczinski, owner of Farmington Florist, sought legislative help to stop a telephone scam that took business away from her downtown

Please see RACZKOWSKI, A3

## Sever eager to tackle county issues

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
loconnor@ec.homecomm.net

Terry Sever's perceived lack of zeal in some circles for the Oakland County Commission seat doesn't mean he doesn't want the job.

He does. His cautiousness has more to do with the unknown.

The Farmington Hills Republican is vying with Democrat Deborah Goldberg to represent the 19th District, which includes all of Farmington and the southern portion of Farmington Hills and a Southfield precinct. The

election is Nov. 3.

"As far as the county, I guess I'm not as aggressive, bold or cocky about that job because I really don't know what I could do with it yet," Sever said.

"I'm apprehensive because it is a different government. You have a strong county executive who wants what he wants. You have a party caucus. There are going to be some party battles. It's all going to get watered down

and the issue is: How are you going to make an impact?"

Those who've followed Sever's 13 years on Farmington Hills City Council might see such cautiousness as political inactivity.

He arrived as a maverick on the city council scene but during the past five years has been a source of wisdom of development and several other issues. He's helped guide the city on the building of the ice arena and lent his expertise on parks, public safety and library tax questions.



Terry Sever

Please see SEVER, A6