

Park from page A1

Downtown Development Authority-sponsored Halloween Fun Fest, slated for Saturday, Oct. 31. Members of Longacre Elementary School-based Girl Scout Troop 71 and Cub Scout Pack 45 will wear "Pick a Picket" t-shirts and distribute flyers about the fund-raiser.

Kim Heath, a parent volunteer for Troop 71, said the girls will learn about community service and also "see a tangible reward" when the playhouse goes up. "We'll help raise money for the pickets, and when it's built, they'll ... be very proud."

Richards said the playhouse will be built out of plastic and vinyl-coated steel. Another feature will be the inclusion of "poured in place" foam, for high impact areas such as the base of swings and slides.

The current plan is for the fence surrounding the playhouse to have a single opening, enabling a "psychological benefit for parents," he continued. "All they have to do is watch the opening. We're also intending to have picnic tables, benches, and

er swings," the kind frequented by adults.

If it all comes together, Richards said the playhouse will be an extension of the community feel that exists downtown, and won't merely be another place parents can drop their children off for the day. "We're really trying to make it multi-generational in its use."

Shiawassee Park, located on the southwest corner of Shiawassee-Power, is regularly used by organized sports leagues, as well as family reunions and picnics, which take place under the park's pavilions.

"But the park clearly can accommodate additional uses," Richards said. "I think it (the playhouse) will be a draw for people who aren't going there presently."

Farmington City Hall is at 23600 Liberty Street, south of Grand River and about one block west of Farmington Road. For more information, call Richards at (248) 474-5600, extension 214.

Pupils from page A1

Libby Panetta, of Farmington schools' child accounting department, noted that "We're getting some turnover and younger families are moving in" another indication that "the school district is attracting people."

Other factors include good mortgage rates and continued construction of subdivisions in some areas of the sprawling district.

The enrollment growth has been spread out across the district. That increase included higher upticks at each transitional grade - kindergarten, sixth grade and ninth grade.

Panetta said kindergarten enrollment is up by 71 students, the highest jump of any grade in the district. Fourth Friday counts in the sixth and ninth grades showed increases of 31 and 28 students, respectively.

The overall increase is one thing. Building-by-building impact is yet another. There is hardly any at all at Longacre Elementary School.

"We had a net increase of two students altogether over the Fourth Friday of last year," said Principal William Smith.

Specific building counts were not yet available as of last week.



Feeling the pinch: Longacre Elementary kindergarten teacher Karen Stevens looks at student Kelli Behrend's school-work.

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BEEFELDER

Myers said the Fourth Friday count is used to help determine what the amount of per-pupil funding from the state is. Sixty percent of the so-called "state foundation grant" is based on the fall count; the remaining 40 percent is taken from the previous spring's head count.

"Our reputation keeps getting better," said Myers, adding that school improvements through the district's widespread bond issue construction program are

also so far getting good reviews from the community.

Despite these continuing projects, the enrollment increase is not causing any classroom space crunch.

"It's a little early to say what it would be like in five or 10 years if we still have growth," Myers said.

Smith cited another factor for minimal enrollment change at his school. Longacre and several other schools, wanting to main-

tain kindergarten class sizes at 22 pupils, send overflow enrollment over to the Alameda Early Childhood Center. Other facilities, such as Fairview Early Childhood Center and Farmington Community School, also take kindergartners from other elementary schools.

"We are really operating at our fullest capacity," Smith said. "What would we do without an early childhood center?"

Trial from page A1

Her family is caring for the little girl.

Novell, driving east on Ann Arbor Trail, was turning left onto Middlebelt when his Beretta collided with a west-bound Tempo driven by Serda's roommate, 19-year-old Margaret Louise Bargowski.

Westland police have said both drivers entered the intersection as a green light turned yellow.

Joshua Daniel Krause, a back

seat passenger in Bargowski's car, testified Thursday that he saw the light change while Bargowski was eight to 10 car lengths from it.

"She sped up a little bit," Krause said. "We hit a car as we went through the intersection."

Bargowski and Serda were taking Krause to his Livonia residence before going to work at the Ford-Tel theater in Dearborn Heights, Westland police have

said. Novell was going to a concert with 21-year-old Jonathan Wood of Westland.

"They turned in front of us, and we hit their front right fender," Krause testified.

He estimated that Bargowski was driving 35 mph to 40 mph in the 35 mph zone before she increased her speed to "around 45 mph."

Signal flashing

Krause said he braced himself as he saw a turn signal flashing on Novell's car, and he said Bargowski didn't hit her brakes. Krause said he didn't remember if Bargowski was turned toward passenger Serda and talking when the accident occurred.

Novell's attorney, Stephen Book, argued that Novell shouldn't stand trial for negligent homicide because he was merely trying to complete his left turn

when Bargowski ignored the traffic light.

Book and Assistant Wayne County Prosecutor Wade McCann differed on whether Bargowski had time to stop her car before the light changed.

Book argued that Novell had the legal right of way to complete his turn but that Bargowski kept driving "obviously in an attempt to get through the light before it turned red."

Book said Bargowski refused to yield "as she was required to do under the law."

"Mr. Novell had the right of way. He was not negligent," Book said.

But McCann said drivers like Bargowski, approaching a changing traffic light, "are very likely going to proceed through the intersection because they don't have time to stop."

McCann argued that Novell, not Bargowski, should have yielded.

Westland police Officer Ron Kroll testified that Novell admitted he tried to turn left when the traffic light was yellow.

Police Officer Jack McIntosh, an accident reconstruction specialist, testified that no skidmarks were found on the road. He estimated that Bargowski was driving at or near the posted speed limit.

The accident occurred on a clear, sunny day.

To stand trial

On Thursday, McKnight stated that there was enough evidence to order Novell to trial because he could be "a substantial cause of the death of this young woman."

Westland police have said both Novell and Bargowski had perfect driving records.

Novell could face a maximum sentence of two years in prison if he is convicted as charged of negligent homicide.

For now, he is free on a \$50,000 personal bond. But 18th District Court administrator David Wiecek said Novell has been ordered to abide by judicial orders such as avoiding drugs, appearing for random drug screenings and continuing to attend classes at Wayne State University.

Farmington Observer
(248) 477-5400
Published every Sunday and Thursday by Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Farmington, MI 48039-0910. Personal postage paid at Farmington, MI 48039-0910. Postmaster: Send address changes to Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Farmington, MI 48039-0910. Telephone 477-5400.

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