

THE WEEK AHEAD

Hills Council: The Farmington Hills City Council last Monday held a public hearing for a proposed special assessment district, which, if established, would pave Alycekey Road north of 12 Mile near Highmeadow Common Campus. Residents turned out to express opposition to paving the hilly gravel road, because paving it could lead to excessive speed and serious accidents in their subdivision. The council tabled any action on the special assessment district, because a map did not clearly define which parcels would be impacted by the project. Council members want a better idea which property owners are for or against the project, or ambivalent. The topic will be revisited at Monday's 7:30 p.m. regular meeting, held at City Hall, 11 Mile and Orchard Lake Roads.

MONDAY

Farmington City Council: Plans for a renovation of the Downtown Farmington Business Center will be reviewed at Monday night's meeting, held at City Hall. The \$1.5 million project may include a pavilion that could be the site for a Farmer's Market and special events, while still providing parking spaces when it is not in use.

INDEX

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Apartments/E11 | Malls/C6 |
| Arts/C1 | Movies/C4 |
| Automotive/G8 | New Homes/E1 |
| Classified/E,G,H | Obituaries/A7 |
| Classified | Real Estate/E1 |
| Index/E6 | Service Guide/G9 |
| Crossword | Sports/B1 |
| Puzzle/E10 | Taste/D1 |
| Jobs/D1 | Travel/C10 |

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Voters asked to renew millage



BY SUE BUCK
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A proposed millage renewal that will appear on the June 11 ballot is a 'must win' for Farmington School District, because it represents more than a third of the money officials use to pay for teachers, books and programs.

While homeowners won't notice any difference if a June 11 millage renewal for Farmington Public Schools is approved, supporters of the measure say voting it down would be "devastating" for the district.

More than a third of the money used to pay staff and run district programs

is derived from the non-homestead and hold harmless homestead tax. The renewal will not provide money for new programs and is the same level of taxation approved five years ago, according to materials distributed by the "Renewal for Excellence: Great Schools-Great Communities" millage renewal campaign.

"For the past two or three years, budget adjustments and reduction have

been necessary to present a balanced budget," according to materials presented by the community-based group.

"The millage renewal will not prevent further adjustments and reduction in the future."

Chairpersons are Janet Holm, PTA council president, Mary Ebrat, Highmeadow PTA president, and Dick Wallace, a former board member and member of the citizens Blue Ribbon Financial Strategies Committee.

The Blue Ribbon committee recommended five years would be the appropriate term for the tax renewal, because it's hard to predict future financial needs or changes in state school financing beyond five years.

The local "hold harmless" tax was permitted by state lawmakers when Proposal A was passed. Districts receiving more than the base foundation allowance at the time were allowed to continue receiving revenue at that level with the approval of local residents.

"The hold harmless levy allows the district to maintain its quality features," committee members said.

A yes vote on the local tax would authorize the district to levy 13.7 mills on residences and 18 mills on business properties and second residences, such

Please see VOTE, A2

Brave New World



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL HEDERER

Colonization: Above, Jill Rosa pulls a "bad crop" card from an envelope. Left, Eric Blankinship's Oshawa Colony starved due to bad weather, population and food supply.

Hands on history lessons hit home

This story is the next-to-last installment of our series following Highmeadow Common Campus teacher Karen Quigley during her first year as a faculty member.

BY TIM SMITH
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In many social studies classes, learning about world history entails spinning globes and flipping through encyclopedias.

But in Karen Quigley's class, students learned

in a unique, active way - creating their own "colonies" and dealing with the kinds of aspects actual settlers did in past centuries. Those included staving off starvation, encountering tribes of Indians, perhaps dealing with economic or meteorological conditions.

For starters, the Highmeadow Common Campus fifth grade class broke off into five groups. Each group represented a country, from where they would bolt in search of

colonization in their New World.

"It's a hands-on experience of what it was like to come to the New World," said Quigley recently. "They enjoy it and learn at the same time. You can't ask for more than that."

During a month-long lesson, Zaldarica became Zeldaricann, Platform Island became New Platform, Shamrockton became Clover Hill, Zingaro became Oshawa and Safari Isle became JAPAN. Teams had reasons for coining colonies in the

Please see LESSONS, A2

School Board Election 2001



Pam Charleston-Lyons
Age: 46
Occupation: Counselor, Avondale High School
Education: Bachelor of Science, Cleveland State, masters, Pennsylvania State, doctorate, U of M



Frank Reid
Age: 49
Occupation: manager of engineering operations, Johnson Controls
Education: Bachelor's degree, Grand Valley State; graduate studies, University of Illinois



Pam Christian
Age: 39
Occupation: Stay-at-home mother, volunteer
Education: Bachelor of Science in nursing, Oakland University; certified critical care nurse

School board candidates discuss issues

Two open seats on the Farmington school board have drawn interest from six candidates, three of whom are profiled in this issue of the Observer. To meet the candidates, attend the Farmington Area PTA Council's forum held at 7 p.m. Thursday, May 24, at the Lewis Schulman Administrative Center, 32500 Shiloh.

Charleston-Lyons seeks teamwork

BY SUE BUCK
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Pam Charleston-Lyons, a Farmington resident, wants to be a voice for the families in the Farmington Public School district.

Charleston-Lyons, 46, a counselor at Avondale High School, has an extensive background in education, having

Please see CHARLESTON-LYONS, A3

Reid: Solutions don't come easy

BY SUE BUCK
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While he found his first term of office exhilarating, incumbent Farmington School Board member Frank Reid also learned there can be no "silver bullets."

"Anytime you have a big organization, things take time," Reid said. It's

Please see REID, A3

Christian brings volunteer spirit

BY SUE BUCK
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Volunteer activities are important to Farmington Public School board candidate Pam Christian.

A stay-at-home mom, Christian, 39, a Walnut Lane resident in Farmington Hills, had an extensive career in nursing.

Please see CHRISTIAN, A3