

Honoring Our Country

In response to the many calls, letters and e-mails from our readers requesting a flag, *The Observer Newspaper* is proud to offer one inside today's paper. Look for Old Glory on the back of today's *Observer Sports* (Section B). Show your support of our country and its citizens. Please proudly display this American flag in the front window of your home or business.

THE WEEK AHEAD

Hills City Council: On Monday, Sept. 24, officials will meet in a study session at 6 p.m. to hear an update on the city's emergency preparedness plan and consider a draft ordinance regarding inspection of septic systems. Their regular agenda will be taken up at 7:30 p.m. City Hall is at 11 Mile and Orchard Lake roads.

School Board: On Tuesday, Sept. 25 at 7:30 p.m. officials will hear a legislative update and approve tentative union agreements. The board meets in the Schulman Administrative Center, 32500 Shilohssee.

INDEX

Apartment/E10
Arts/C1
Automotive/H2
Classified/E, G, H
Classified
Index/E4
Crossword
Puzzle/E5
Jobs/G1
Malls/C6
Movies/C4
New Homes/A4
Obituaries/A4
Real Estate/E1
Service Guide/G8
Sports/B1
Taste/D1
Travel/C8

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Oakland millage vote is Tuesday



Voters will go to the polls Tuesday to decide the fate of special education and vocational millages proposed by Oakland Schools intermediate district. Both would bring funds to Farmington Public Schools.

BY SUZ RUCK
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Expect a phone call sometime between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. Monday, voters, urging you to vote Tuesday.

The polls, located in Farmington Hills, will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. "They will work in shifts," said Kim Heath, chair of the millage advocacy

committee, who is coordinating the volunteers. "We expect about 30-50 people."

The group will start with a list provided by the Oakland County Intermediate School District which was generated by a research company, Heath said. The list contains the numbers of voters most likely to vote yes.

The Farmington Michigan Education Association on Hills Tech Drive in

Farmington Hills is providing use of their phones, she said.

Because some school open houses were canceled Sept. 11 due to the tragedy at the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D. C., election information couldn't be dispensed. Some school newsletters contained election information, but didn't contain the cost to voters.

Voters in 28 Oakland County School districts, including Farmington, will go to the polls Tuesday.

District officials say they need more money for special education than is provided by the state and federal gov-

ernment. The amount of aid has not increased as fast as the costs of the program.

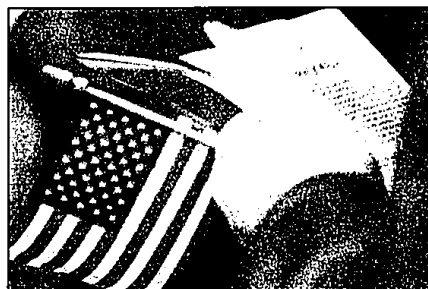
To get more money for special education, local school districts have tapped into their general operating budgets for up to 60 percent of the cost for mandated special education programs, according to literature provided by Farmington Schools.

The special education tax will be distributed among all the school districts in Oakland County.

The vocational education proposal will provide students with access to the

Please see ELECTION, A2

Proud to be Americans



Natural patriotism: At right, Selina Chen waves the flag before the ceremony. Selina, her mom Xing and dad Xie all became U.S. citizens at the Costick Center. Pictured left, Sarbrinder Singh takes time after the ceremony to register to vote. Above, a new citizen reads the Oath of Allegiance.

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRISLER



Security's tight as new citizens are sworn in

BY KEVIN BROWN
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"This is the best country for anyone to be in. Freedom is very practiced here."

So said Shukumar Gurne on Friday, minutes after the Canton engineer, 35, joined 175 new U.S. citizens at a swearing in ceremony at the

Costick Center in Farmington Hills.

"It's great," added wife Shubhangi Gurne. Both were from India.

A round of speeches on what it's like to be American glowed with meaning and provoked thought Friday, as the country prepares to make war on terrorists who attacked New York and Washington, D.C., Sept. 11.

In a stark demonstration of how life in the United States is changing, 60

officers from the Farmington Hills police, FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms were on hand. Officers used hand-held metal detectors to search event-goers at all entrances. They were joined by bomb-sniffing dogs.

"There's heightened security around the country for these type of events. This is going to be the standard, unfortunately," said Farmington Hills

Police Chief William Dwyer.

Farmington Mayor William Hartsock joined a host of local and federal dignitaries for the ceremony. Over-sized American flags were displayed on either side of the stage.

Soon-to-be Americans milled about with smiling family members, some holding cameras or camcorders.

Please see CITIZENS, A3

Firefighters raise funds; event today

BY KEVIN BROWN
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Local firemen were out in public this week seeking donations to aid the families of more than 250 New York City firefighters killed Sept. 11.

It wasn't a hard sell. Outside Busch's Valu Land on Drake Road, Farmington Hills firefighters seeking donations met people with tears in their eyes, young kids with fists full of coins, and people who said they'd be back with checks - and who did return.

A teenage girl with long braided hair and a U.S. flag sticker on her T-shirt ran from a blue minivan toward Firefighter Mike Haase. "Thank you very much," he said, as the girl dropped money in the

Please see FUNDS, A3

Husband in 'slave' trial sentenced

BY KEVIN BROWN
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Joseph Djoumessi of Farmington Hills was sentenced Thursday to 9 to 15 years in prison for having sexual intercourse with a 16-year-old girl from Cameroon who lived in his house.

Oakland Circuit Judge Alice Gilbert sentenced Djoumessi on the charge of third-degree criminal sexual conduct with Fridine Fru, now 18. The charge involves coercion of a minor to have sexual intercourse.

Djoumessi was also sentenced to one year in jail on a charge of third-degree child abuse. He has already spent 416 days in jail since his arrest on the charges in 2000. The time has been credited toward the one-year sentence.

"I'm very happy about the sentence; he deserves every day for what he did to her," said Assistant Prosecutor Cheryl Matthews. "Hopefully after 9-to-15 years he will stop being so arrogant and more filled with remorse."

Fru testified in court that Djoumessi told her he held her life in his hands; that he raped her and that he and wife Evelyn Djoumessi wouldn't let her attend school.

Fru is now attending school in Pontiac, and is learning at the 11th grade level. "She's doing well," Matthews said.

The assistant prosecutor said Fru will not be able to

Please see TRIAL, A3



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRISLER

Sentenced: Convicted of criminal sexual conduct, Joseph Djoumessi will serve 9 to 15 years.