



Chili cooks and chili lovers will gather at Kellogg Park in downtown Plymouth this Sunday for the Great Lakes Regional Chili Cook Off from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. In addition to some great chili and a Harley Davidson Motorcycle Show, stop by the WYCD 99.5 booth and register to win the "Ultimate Couch Potato Prize Package" which includes a 20-inch TV/VCR from Adray Camera, courtesy of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, prize package from Motor City Harley and a snack package from Brooks and Farmer Jack. Drawing for prize package will be 5 p.m. Also pick up information on the O&E's Fabulous Furniture 2001 contest and October reader promotion. There's live entertainment from Bobby Lewis and the Crackerjack Band, line dancing and lots more.

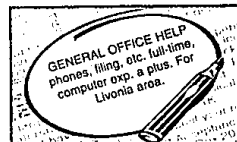
IN THE PAPER TODAY



On ice: The After School Middle School program offers a wide range of activities for 6 to 8th graders in the Farmington Schools. A close-up look is in *Hometown Life*, C-1.

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District notes some MEAP 'drops'



While Farmington Schools' overall MEAP scores showed improvement, officials will have to address significant drops in scores for some classes. They stress parents should exercise care in evaluating test scores.

BY JONI HUBERD
STAFF WRITER
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When you're playing the "ratings game" in schools, the rules can be confusing and the ultimate result can leave room for doubt about winners and losers.

But school officials say when it comes to Michigan Educational Assess-

ment Program testing, parents need to look at their children's scores as a guide to improvement, rather than an indicator of success or failure. The same is true for the entire district, according to Superintendent Dr. Bob Maxfield.

While students generally did well in basic skills - reading, math, social studies, science and writing - some

classes took significant percentage dives from previous years.

"In general there's improvement," Maxfield said of the test scores released last week. "We've got some real drops we have to deal with and there were huge gaps between our highest and lowest achieving schools."

In a diverse district like Farmington, where 86 languages are spoken in students' homes, teachers have to work with language and cultural barriers in addition to preparing students to meet state standards.

But Maxfield added, "We still have to address those kids."

Issues will be dealt with on the class-

room level, he said. "We're asking our classroom teachers to take a kid-by-kid approach."

While a cottage industry has sprung up around test preparation materials, the district tries not to cross the fine line between educating children and "teaching to the test." Maxfield believes good teaching and attention to detail will result in positive test scores. Officials stress the scores should be viewed against the backdrop of state graduation standards, not as a means to compare Farmington to other districts, or even to compare results with-

Please see MEAP, A2

Great White



Puff Daddy: Farmington Hills Naturalist Joe Derek show off two monstrous puffballs, which were found in Farmington Hills. "These are totally edible," Derek said. "If it's pure white outside and pure white inside, they're in prime condition." Derek said the weather conditions this year were just right for the monster versions of the puff ball mushroom. Normally, they just grow in clusters in grassy areas. No puff balls are poisonous, Derek said, but some may taste "woody." Of course, anyone who harvests and eats wild mushrooms should be cautious and make sure to positively identify the plant before consuming it.

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DEBLESER

Barnett set for senate run

Farmington Hills city councilwoman Vicki Barnett has announced her candidacy for the newly created 14th District State Senate seat.

The 47-year-old mother of two hinted last week that her announcement would come soon, after State Rep. Gladia Jacobs, D-Huntington Woods, tossed her hat in the ring. Barnett said she was encouraged by friends, constituents and local elected officials to enter the race. Barnett is also chair of the 11th Congressional District Democratic Committee.

"After 20 years of political involvement and civic activism at the local level, I am ready to bring my energy

Please see BARNETT, A3

Pavilion project gets a big boost

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER
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It's official - the proposed downtown Farmington pavilion is now known as the Walter E. Sundquist Community Pavilion.

Sundquist donated \$75,000 toward the project and is its biggest benefactor. A press conference was planned Wednesday.

The covered, multi-use use structure, which will be located in the downtown center at Grand River and Farmington, is designed for year-round use. The estimated cost of the pavilion with restrooms is about \$150,000.

Downtown Development Authority officials expect the rest of the money to come through donations.

Please see PAVILION, A2

Digging through history

BY SUE BUCK
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The new grand lady of the Warner Mansion is a woman who's not afraid to get her hands dirty. Linda Horvath brings with her a lot of experience in the world of history and has even been on an archaeological dig.

"People go into archeology because they hate the time period they are living in," said Horvath, who was recently appointed the first director of the historic Gov. Warner Mansion.

To tell the story, you have to go back in history, Horvath said. To go back in history, you end up in archeology. That's the connection that binds and brings every-

Please see HORVATH, A3

Direct contact: Linda Horvath is the new director at the Governor Warner Mansion on Grand River in Farmington. She brings a wealth of experience in preserving history, including time with archaeological digs.

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DEBLESER



Here's your chance to



in Observer reader promotion!

Dear Readers:

The Observer's October reader promotion offers a chance to win some exciting prizes.

When you subscribe or renew your current subscription now through Oct. 31, you could win one of the following prizes.

■ A new recliner from Walker/Busenberg Furniture in downtown Plymouth. The recliner is also part of our Fabulous Furniture 2001 contest.

which is featured in today's At Home section.

■ Four tickets to a Detroit Pistons home game.

■ Four VIP tickets to a regular-season home game of the Plymouth Whalers at Compuware Sports Arena in Plymouth and a \$50 gift certificate for dinner at the Gino's Parthenon restaurant inside the arena.

■ Four AMC movie passes.

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Sincerely,

Susan Rosiek

Publisher
Observer Newspapers