

## Hills employees honored



**Cultural excellence:** Nancy Coumoundouros, Cultural Arts Coordinator, was named an Outstanding Employee.



**Outstanding fun:** Maureen Wayman reacts to a quip by City Manager Steve Brock. Wayman, an Administrative Secretary in the Police Department, was named an Outstanding Employee during the Friday evening program held at Costick Center.



**Special honor:** Outstanding Employee Karen Birkholz is Special Projects Coordinator in the City Manager's office.



**Planning on success:** Charmaine Kettler-Schultz works as a staff planner in the Planning and Community Development department.

## Committee wrangles over start time info

BY SUE BUCK  
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Some members of the community outreach subcommittee studying the possibility of delaying high school start times say the research about adolescent sleep time research is compelling and convincing.

So much so, in fact, that they wanted to skip objectivity and go right to the crux of their unwavering beliefs in putting together a brochure to market the idea. Proponents favored weighing heavily on the benefits and downplaying the costs.

The small group met Wednesday afternoon at Schulman Administrative Center on Shawassaw.

No other Michigan school district has made changes, although the West Bloomfield School district is expected to this fall. Edina School District in Minnesota was the first in the country to move start times, with reported positive results.

"It seems that at all the meetings people are leaning towards, 'This sounds great, let's do it,'" said Debbie Pevin, a committee member. "We have to be unbiased."

"We need to be objective in our reporting," said Sue Zurvalec, assistant superintendent for staff and community services. "I think the members of this committee are supportive of this. I've run into people, with not much information, whose reactions are

very negative. So we have to remember we need to hear other viewpoints. If we present it too much as a sales or marketing pitch, it will be viewed with skepticism."

Subcommittee co-chair Phil Neuman said that information presented by the school district in writing ought to be as unbiased as possible. But Farmington-area PTA Council president Kim Heath said some people have told her the information is too unbiased.

The brochure will be available at a 7 p.m. Feb. 28 town hall meeting at the William Costick Activities Center, 28600 11 Mile Road in Farmington Hills, as well as in schools, freshman orientations, the public library, the Chamber of Commerce and other locations.

The district is expected to prepare a survey that can be filled out at the town hall meeting and also by students and staff, Zurvalec said.

Diane Bauman, director of school and community relations said she's hearing people wonder how the district could be contemplating spending money on the idea while facing a \$6.2 million budget deficit.

"I don't have an answer for them," Bauman said. "Their concern is that something major is going to have to go to fund this." The district has considered an 8:30 a.m. or 9 a.m. start time for high schoolers, with start-up costs between \$400,000 and

\$600,000 to purchase new buses, hire new bus drivers and a new mechanic. Ongoing costs would be \$171,000 annually under the 9 a.m. time and \$250,000 for the 8:30 a.m. time.

High school students start at about 7:30 a.m. now.

Karen Kopicko, a subcommittee member, said it's unfortunate that such an important topic is under discussion now, when the district is studying serious money issues and there is so much money associated with it.

"Some people said, 'This is so trite and insignificant. Why are you rocking the boat? My kid is doing just fine,'" Kopicko said. Neuman, who ran for school board last June, reiterated his belief that a later start time is what's best for kids. "There's ways this district can save money. One of the things I proposed during my campaign last year was an early teacher buy-out."

He said he discussed with Cheryl Cannon, the assistant superintendent for business, finance and operations, the possibility of leasing school buses.

There's no question about the importance of getting more information out on the subject. Some elementary school parents are misinformed and believe the time change for their children will be earlier than what is being considered, Zurvalec said.

Depending on the high school start time chosen, some elemen-

tary school start times will change. However none will be earlier than the earliest elementary school start time now — 8:03 a.m., Zurvalec said.

## Special from page A1

With the city for more than six years, Tara's job involves helping maintain the department's budget and overseeing the personnel records for the DPW's 34 employees.

She also deals with the public, usually people calling about issues of snow removal or road maintenance.

As expected, most have complaints, but Tara said the way to handle those is just to be positive and pleasant.

"And they'll be pleasant to you," she said, adding, "We do get some thank-yous."

Her boss, DPW Superintendent Dan Rooney, said Tara is an excellent employee, deserving of the award.

"She's very even-tempered and friendly. She has a great attitude toward her work," he said. "They couldn't have made a better selection for employee of the year."

Tara said she previously worked in a similar job with the

City of Walled Lake.

"I came here because of its great reputation," she said of Farmington Hills. "They have some really good people. It's a nice community."

Tara and her husband have two daughters, Alison, 8 and Jillian, 4. She said she enjoys spending time with her kids and especially treasures the moments she shares with them at the family cabin up North. Among her hobbies are reading and gardening, she added.

"I'm just a normal person with a normal life," she said when asked if she had anything she wanted to add about herself. "I'm happy."

Other outstanding employees honored at a recent awards ceremony were:

Karen Birkholz, special projects coordinator, city manager's office.

Nancy Coumoundouros, cultural arts coordinator, special services.

Matthew Dingman, assessor III, finance.

Charmaine Kettler-Schultz, staff planner II, planning and community development.

Maureen Wayman, administrative secretary, police.



Tara Pison

## Officer from page A1

lege.

"I'm busy, I have a full schedule, but it seems to work out," he said.

In his seven years with the department he has arrested more than 600 criminals, 100 of them on serious felony charges.

While he is currently assigned to the patrol division, he has served undercover assignments with the Drug Enforcement Administration and the South Oakland Narcotics Intelligence Consortium (SONIC).

He said working undercover was rewarding. "It was an eye-opening experience," he said.

Working patrol is a way to help people personally, he said.

"If you can help somebody, it feels good," he said. "I also like getting the bad guys."

Police Chief William Dwyer said Rodriguez is an outstanding officer who works hard at his job.

"I'm most proud of Rodriguez's character, loyalty, discipline and the work ethic he consistently displays," the chief said.

Rodriguez has found himself in some high profile cases in the

Hills in the past year.

He and his partner managed to prevent an armed robbery at a 7-Eleven after they kept track of two men looking suspicious outside the store. That intuition paid off after the two men removed ski masks and guns from the trunk of their vehicle.

Rodriguez also managed to be the key person in finding a young man police believe is responsible for attacks on women in two area apartment complexes just this past month.

After finding evidence at the scene of the last attack, Rodriguez found a neighbor in the area who led him to the alleged suspect.

He has been previously awarded the Chief's Citation, two merit citations, two citations, a certificate of commendation and two unit citations. In 2000, he received the Drug Enforcement Administration's highest honor of the DEA Administrators Awards as a result of three investigations that led to the arrest of several multi-kilo drug deals in the Detroit area.

Rodriguez is married to Cynthia and they have two children, daughter Alicia, 3 and Alex, 1.

As far as what the future holds, the young officer said he is not ruling out any possibility — even becoming a chief one day.

"I'm not going to exclude anything," he said with a smile.



Daniel Rodriguez

# EVENTS

## CRITTENTON HOSPITAL MEDICAL CENTER

### calendar of EVENTS

**HOUSECALLS: 7-8:30 p.m. January 23, 2002**  
Lasik Eye Surgery and Vision Correction, Dr. Mark Weingarten.  
For more info: 1-888-90-4HEALTH

**LUNCH AND LEARN SERIES: 12-1:00 p.m.**  
On Jan. 25, Feb. 22 and March 22.  
"Exploring Alternative & Complimentary Medicine"  
Acupuncture (Jan. 25) Aromatherapy (Feb. 22) and  
Massage Therapy (March 22) For more info: 248-652-5269

**CHRISTIANE NORTHRUP: 7:00 p.m. Feb. 14**  
Women's Wellness Conference "The Wisdom of Menopause"  
Shotwell-Gustafson Pavilion, Oakland University.  
For more info: 248-652-5269

**PEOPLE WHO CARE: Reception 6:00 p.m. Dinner 7:00 p.m.**  
"Medical Staff 2002 Healthcare & Volunteer Leadership Awards  
Dinner Dance" For more info: 248-652-5345

**CRITTENTON HOSPITAL  
MEDICAL CENTER**

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## Students asked to submit poster designs

Chief William Dwyer and the Farmington Hills Police Department are inviting school-age artists in the Farmington Hills area to participate in the annual poster contest.

The department is looking for entries from local students in public and parochial schools as well as home-schooled students. The posters will promote the department's 15th annual Open House, to be held from noon-4 p.m. Sunday, May 5.

■ All entries should be submitted on a 18-by-24-inch white poster board with a design incorporating the theme "Children and Police."

■ Colors are not limited.  
■ The deadline for submitting entries is 3:30 p.m. Monday, March 25. All entries are to be submitted to the Farmington Hills Police Department's Crime Prevention Section, 31855 West 11 Mile.

■ Name, school, grade level, home address and phone number of the artist must be on the back of each entry.

■ Prizes will be awarded for first, second and third place.

■ Awards will be presented at the Open House.

■ For more information, contact Juliette McGlinch in the Crime Prevention section of the department at 473-8637 Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.