

Harrison named to Farmington council

By SUE BUCK
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Mike Harrison

Newly-appointed Farmington City Council member Michael Harrison will let the public decide if he's doing a good job during the next 18 months.

He doesn't have aspirations to pursue a higher office but would consider running for election to Farmington City Council in November 2003.

Attorneys defend council action, A5

"Six months ago I would not have envisioned this scenario to take place," Harrison said. "I know the city council, am fond of them and admire the job they do. I never would have run against any of them to gain a seat on council. I regret never having had the opportunity to work with Bill Hartsock."

He replaces Hartsock, a Farmington councilman for more than 28 years, who resigned recently because he purchased a home in Farmington Hills. He married Carol Basile, a co-worker at Paine Webber in Farmington Hills.

Please see HARRISON, A5

How the council chose Harrison

By SUE BUCK
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Farmington Mayor Jim Mitchell instructed each council member to offer two names to be considered for the appointed council seat Monday night. The seat fills the unexpired term of Bill Hartsock to November 2003. Hartsock resigned because he bought a home in Farmington Hills.

"The action we will be taking tonight is most serious," Mitchell said.

The vote was 9-1 in favor of Michael Harrison, a marketing and promotional products consultant and chairman of the Farmington Historical Commission.

Councilwoman Joanne McShane voted no on his appointment "I wanted more consideration of the other candidates," she explained after the meeting.

"The key to the essence of Farmington is its downtown," said Mitchell. "It is its defining area."

That's one of the reasons why he supported Harrison as someone who will find what's missing in marketing and promoting downtown.

"We're looking for a theme," Mitchell said. "He (Harrison) understands the historical aspects of our community."

Please see COUNCIL, A5



Praise Mom with a poem

Celebrate your mother with a poem and win a prize for her courtesy of the Observer Newspapers. We're inviting our young readers, 18 and under, to submit a poem in praise of their mother. The poem can take any form from haiku to sonnet to free verse. A panel of judges will select their favorite. Seven winning poets will win a gift for mom. The prizes include an 11- by 14-inch portrait for up to 14 people from Focal Point Photography in Farmington and Canton (sitting fee is included), \$100 gift certificate to Ernesto's Restaurant in Plymouth Township, \$100 gift certificate to Antonio's Italian Cucina in Farmington Hills, \$100 gift certificate to Sandtraps in Livonia, and more.

We'll publish the winning entry and other entries on Mother's Day. Entries are due to The Observer by Monday, May 6.

Send entries to Mother's Day Contest, Observer Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or fax to (734)591-7279 or e-mail to hgallagher@oe.homecomm.net.



ARTS

Carnival time: Detroit Dance Collective will premiere Carnival of the Animals April 26 at the Ford Community & Performing Arts Center in Dearborn. /B1

AT HOME

The first: For newlyweds, their wedding reception is the first and most important party they'll give. /C1

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Rhythm of Life



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRISLER

Sweet Charity: "Rhythm of Life" is performed by the North Farmington High School cast of Sweet Charity. The musical, based on a Neil Simon book, directed by Dean and Sue Cobb will open Friday, April 19 with shows on Saturday April 20, Sunday April 21 and Thursday, Friday and Saturday of the following weekend. Curtain rises at 7:30 pm except for Sunday April 21 which is a 2:00 pm matinee. Reserved seats are \$8 for students grades K-12, \$8 for seniors and \$10 for adults. Call for reservations at 248-426-4740.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRISLER

Calming Influence: Oscar (Ben Ryberg) is claustrophobic when stuck in an elevator with Charity (Kathy Bockli). She does her best to calm him down.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRISLER

Singing along: Charity (Kathy Bockli), Helene (Jessica Williams) and Nicki (Lisa Levick) sing the number "Baby, Dream Your Dream."

Natural step considered to combat road noise

By HEATHER NEEDHAM
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Farmington Hills city officials are looking to Europeans - and the plant kingdom - for ways to drown out the noise on I-276 for nearby residents.

Hills Mayor Nancy Bates said she wants to look into installing "living walls" along I-276, which could help

absorb highway noise better than concrete or brick walls, which tend to cause noise to reverberate.

Living walls are being used in Switzerland and in Germany along the autobahn. Bates said that though no studies have been done on living walls in the U.S., they are considered less expensive, more environmentally sound and more aesthetic than tradi-

tional brick or concrete walls.

Hills city engineers are already looking into implementing the idea locally.

"This is a very preliminary stage," Bates said. "To me, it's just an innovative idea that deserves a real good look by the city. It's a quality of life issue."

As part of the information gathering, city engineers are talking to officials in Michigan State University's depart-

ment of engineering and environment.

"We're trying to get the right people to the table," Bates said.

Living walls are different from berms, which are also used as sound barriers, Hills City Manager Steve Brock said.

"Think of (a living wall) as a berm, only with a metal or wood superstruc-

Please see NOISE, A6

Council OKs bond sale for golf course expansion

By HEATHER NEEDHAM
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The San Marino Golf Course expansion came one step closer to teeing off Monday when Farmington Hills City Council approved selling bonds to help cover project costs.

Council voted unanimously to sell

"general obligation capital improvement bonds" for expanding and renovating the city-owned San Marino golf course, located at 11 Mile and Haledale. The nine-hole expansion, which will bring the course up to 18 holes, is expected to be open in 2003.

To pay back the \$7.5 million bond, the city will do two things - one, use

\$4 million from two separate water funds and use future revenues from the golf course. The bond amount cannot exceed \$9 million, according to the resolution.

There is \$22 million in both water funds and both funds have collected significant interest over the years, said City Manager Steve Brock.

Money from the bonds, which will be issued in the spring of 2003, may be used for adding holes, constructing a driving range, facility maintenance, site improvements, utilities and infrastructure and building a clubhouse.

Resident Mary Johnston said she

Please see GOLF, A6