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**Winner's circle**

Mom makes a habit of winning cooking contests. B1



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## OUR TOWNS

**Bridging the gap**

State Rep. Aldo Vagnozzi (D Farmington Hills) has hit the ground running, attaching his name to proposed



Vagnozzi

legislation addressing the importation of Canadian garbage.

Vagnozzi and other lawmakers will be at the Ambassador Bridge at 11 a.m. Monday to talk about a bill that would require Canadian haulers to meet the same regulations and requirements as those who bring into state.

That includes not bringing in hazardous waste or recyclables.

Vagnozzi said the group will also propose a resolution asking the U.S. Congress to stop Canadians from bringing their trash into Michigan. "I don't know how much we can do," he said. "It's a federal issue."

He has been able to accomplish a little more in the area of unemployment benefits. Since word got out that he was willing to help local residents resolve issues created by the closure of so many employment offices, Vagnozzi said a half-dozen residents have contacted him.

**Board honored**

Clarenceville Schools is joining In School Board Recognition Month, designated as a time to salute the work of school board members and celebrate public education.

"The foundation of school leadership is ensuring equal learning opportunities for all students," said Cheryl Leach, superintendent of schools. "We're proud of our district, and School Board Recognition Month is the time to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of our elected trustees."

During the past year, the board has overseen implementation of bays scheduling at Clarenceville High School, approved new courses, balanced the district budget and approved a number of sinking fund projects to maintain and improve district facilities.

Board members are Bryan Bentley, four years; Kimberly Gibb, one year; Matthew Boelcher, five years; Jennifer Carbonneau, two years; Gary I. Garrison, eight years; John Kanyo, five years; and Sharon Simpson, three years.



Sue Zurvalec is the 2003 Chair Award recipient honored by the Multicultural/Multiracial Community Council.

## Zurvalec honored for dedication

BY JOHN HUBBRO  
STAFF WRITER

Community members honored Sue Zurvalec's years of working behind the scenes to further the cause of diversity Thursday, as she received the annual Rainbow Recognition Chair Award.

The Rainbow Awards Breakfast recognizes dozens of local residents, both adults and students, who support the work of the Farmington/Farmington Hills

Multicultural/Multiracial Community Council.

Speaking on behalf of Farmington School District, School Board Vice President Priscilla Brouillette - herself an honoree - has watched the program grow. With Farmington Mayor Jim Mitchell and Farmington Hills Mayor Nancy Bates, she praised the community's dedication to diversity.

"Each year, there's a greater and greater commitment to the legacy of Dr. Martin

Luther King," she said.

Mitchell said events like the breakfast and those that continue the dialogue about cultural diversity keep the issue in the forefront.

"I've always been proud of our community's commitment to diversity," Bates said.

More than 70 people, along with Adat Shalom Synagogue, the Tweed Center, Bobo Ford Hospital and the National Conference for Community & Justice received certificates of appreciation.

Employed as an Assistant Superintendent in Farmington Public Schools, Zurvalec organized the District's Diversity Committee six years ago. Originally a few staff members and parents, the group now includes representation from every school facility and even more area residents, said MCMR co-chair Jim Hall, who presented the award with co-chair Karen Bolsen.

PLEASE SEE HONORED, A6

## Akebono looks at options

Company officials took offense at council's reaction

BY PAUL R. PACE  
STAFF WRITER

The Akebono Corp., an automotive brake supplier with its North American headquarters based in Farmington Hills, is pursuing an option to buy a vacant building in Northville Township on Five Mile and Beck, to expand engineering and testing operations.

A company spokesman said it's possible the company could move its headquarters to that location as well.

The state has offered to give the company a high technology single business tax credit worth \$3.6 million over 10 years to expand its engineering and sales operations in Northville.

That's bad news for Farmington Hills, as the company last September approached the city council to expand its headquarters on 12 Mile. The company needed approval of an employee tax break from the state, which, in turn, required a property tax break from the city.

Akebono officials said they took offense to the council's displeasure with the state's system of offering

PLEASE SEE AKEBONO, A6

## Wooddale earns Blue Ribbon

BY SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

Wooddale Elementary students in Farmington Hills learned Friday that they are among the best in the state.

They were named a Michigan Blue Ribbon Exemplary School.

"We will share the excitement with the students today," said Wooddale Principal Lasean Jones, adding that an assembly will be planned later.

The school, located on Oak Forest, is among 11 Michigan elementary schools - five in Oakland County - to receive the state honor.

Schools that apply must go through an extensive application process, which for Wooddale started last April. "It was hundreds of hours," said Jones, who has been principal for 10 years. "It's an intensive self-reflection to get all the things they expect done. Everybody is part of the picture, every single staff member."

The process is an assessment, which documents accomplishments all in one

PLEASE SEE SCHOOL, A6

## School districts will be OK - this year

BY JOHN HUBBRO  
STAFF WRITER

For tiny Clarenceville and sprawling Farmington school districts, the cash effects of an executive order cutting foundation aid differ, but the over-

all impact is the same. Farmington will take a \$600,000 hit on a \$10 million budget, split between foundation aid (\$570,000) and categorical aid (\$30,000). Clarenceville expects the loss to total about

\$90,000 out of \$17 million. Officials from both districts believe they are well-positioned to absorb the impact this year.

"You've already got a commitment to staff and programs," Farmington Supt.

Bob Masfield said. "No one's going to get laid off this year. The impact will be on next year's budget."

Clarenceville's new chief Cheryl Leach said, "It will not

PLEASE SEE DISTRICTS, A6

## Deep freeze affects Purebred Cat Rescue

BY SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

The bitterly cold weather is taking its toll on cats and Anne Klein, owner of Backdoor Friends Purebred Cat Rescue, is asking for help.

The rescue, a 501(c) nonprofit organization, is located in the Mulmston Plaza on Grand River at Drake in Farmington Hills.

"We're being deluged by phone calls," Klein said. "People are noticing cats outside and cats are coming up to their homes. We're taking as many as we can, but we don't have the funds or enough foster homes. Our capacity is limited by

the number of foster homes." Klein saw an increase in strays beginning a month before Christmas. She's looking for both funds to offset the cost of caring for the cats and foster homes.

All cats are taken for checkups and shots with Dr. David Carron of Plaza Veterinary Care on Mooney in Farmington.

Klein praised Carron for being so understanding of the rescue's efforts and the running veterinary bill, which is about \$3,000. Private owners are charged about \$75 when a cat is relinquished; those funds are applied

PLEASE SEE RESCUE, A6



Susan Oller and the other folks at Backdoor Friends are looking for foster families for Ella, a Himalayan cat and 20 other animals of the feline persuasion.

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**LOOKING AHEAD**

Special setting  
Coming in this week's At Home section: A spectacular Bloomfield Hills house will be the scene of this year's Snow Ball charity event.

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