

North Farmington play

# Actors to tilt with windmills

FARMINGTON HILLS—Drama students at North Farmington High School will be tilting at windmills in the school's musical production of "Man of La Mancha."

The play, to be staged May 9-10 and 16-17, is a digression from musical productions of the past which have relied on elaborate sets, costumes and choreography.

In the school's upcoming production, the cast is small,

costumes dull and the stage set is a naked platform without embellishment.

The production utilizes a play-within-a-play to take Don Quixote and his sidekick Sancho Panza on their windmill tilting spree.

Tickets are available at the school. Curtain time is 8 p.m.



Karen Ziembka is Dulcinea.



Larry Lichtman portrays Don Quixote.

Staff photos by Craig Newman.

## Middlebelt's big welcome buoys school custodian

By SUSAN AVERILL

FARMINGTON—Bill Gardner sat with a trembling hand to his forehead. His voice was unsteady, and he occasionally shook his head impatiently, as if annoyed with the strength of his feelings.

"I'm choked up ... I'm surprised," he said, then fiercely added, "They're all mine, all the teachers, all the kids ... all mine."

Sitting in the teachers' lounge at Middlebelt Elementary School, as well-wishers wandered in and out. Gardner explained that he had arrived a half hour earlier, hoping to visit friends among the school staff.

He had worked there as custodian for five years until March, when he went into the hospital to have some

kidney stones removed. Complications from the operation had caused a blood clot in his left leg, which became gangrenous and was eventually amputated.

THE VISIT was only going to be a short and quiet "hello" so he wasn't prepared for the welcome he received. A banner across the front of the school read, "WE LOVE YOU, MR. GARDNER" in tall red letters. Students packed the halls and the school's band provided background music to greet him.

It was a spontaneous event, said principal Philip Townsend, and not something that was planned by teachers or administrators.

Gardner was deeply impressed. "When I came and saw the band and all the kids in the hall ... every

kid in the school was in the hallway ... He shook his head as if to complete the sentence, and then looked up.

"I love these people. I love the principal. I love the kids ... they're all beautiful."

A message to vote in the April 29 millage election was also posted on the building, and it was with some humor that Gardner added, "I didn't know if they wanted to vote 'yes' for me or what."

A TEACHER walked into the lounge and delivered a note from one of her students. Decorated with a thumb print, it contained a simple get-well message. Gardner took the note, glanced at it and hastily placed it on the table.

"I can't read it yet," he said. And then he talked about the cards he had received from the students while in the hospital.

"They sent me big manila envelopes, filled with cards. I think every kid in the school must have sent one."

"He had a grocery bag full, and that was only about half of it," said his mother, who had accompanied him to the school.

Gardner said he hadn't had time to read all the cards, but it was something he was planning to do in the near future. And he intends to save every one of them.

Townsend said teachers and parents were constantly stopping by, asking for news of the 35-year-old custodian, and another custodian said he was often asked about Gardner.

"EVERYBODY ASKED. Everybody asked wherever I went; they all wanted to know how you were," he told Gardner.

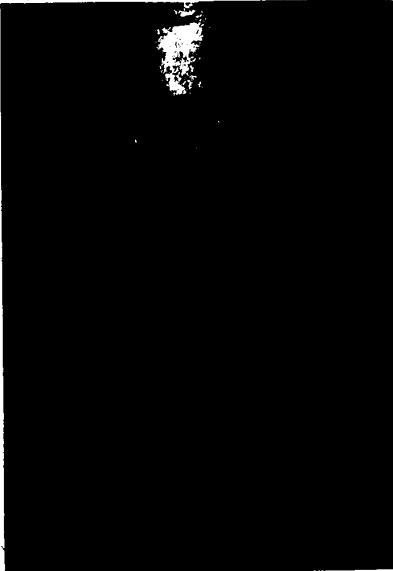
Gardner was walking with the aid of crutches. He had reduced from two weeks to four days the time usually necessary to learn to manipulate them, by practicing with them as soon as he was able.

"I fell, but I practiced. After the fifth (of May), when I get my prosthesis, I'll be able to get anything with it."

Gardner plans to come back to work as soon as he becomes used to his prosthesis, or artificial limb. Positiveness sparkled throughout his talk and was clearly evident when he spoke of returning to work.

"I feel like I'm ready to come back to school tomorrow. I'm coming back here, you know," he said to Townsend. Townsend smiled.

"You sure are," he said.



BILL GARDNER

MicMac flavors  
your summer with the  
savory essences of  
French fun-dressing

Encounter MicMac's ultra-spirited new arrivals for the sun-glossed season at Northland. A simply sensational assembling of super summer sweaters, T's, tops, trousers and easy skirts. Here, from our newest group of immigrants a 'la St. Tropez, the kimono sleeved tunic sweater of acrylic/wool, white with blue, \$64 and slim pants of cotton, blue, \$56. 8 to 12. In The Individualist Shop at Northland

*WoodwardShops-Hudson's*

