

Farmington Observer

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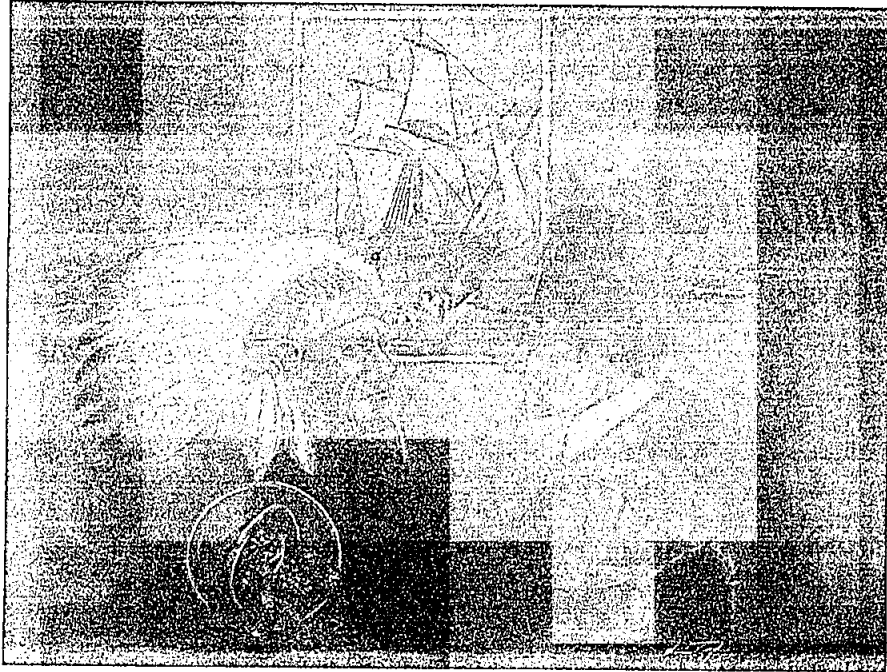
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Farmington, Michigan

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MARVIN TEEPLES/illustrator

Giving thanks

This is the time of year that families around the community gather to give thanks for the year's blessings. We at the Observer & Ec-

centric Newspapers wish you the best during the upcoming holidays.

Principal vows to follow rules on religion

By Tom Baer
staff writer

Yes, North Farmington Principal Clayton Graham does support Campus Life, the Christian social group which has created a controversy by trying to deliver its message in and around Graham's school for the past two years.

And yes, Graham did attend the now-famous Burger Bash, a Campus Life activity held at a Lutheran church — but aimed at North Farmington students — about a month ago.

But the longtime Farmington administrator has vowed to follow the district's policy forbidding religious activities in its schools.

"The district's policy is pretty clear, and I have to keep my personal view separate from the school district posture on some of these kinds of things," said the white-haired Graham in a recent interview.

"I happen to be a Christian, and I have a strong conviction about operating under the principle of authority. If my boss — the superintendent or the board of education — tells me to do something, then I think I ought to obey, even though I might not individually believe in it."

Residents, both parents and students, turned out in force at the Nov. 8 school board meeting, which quickly turned into a debate over the role religious groups like Campus Life should play in the lives of public school students.

SEVERAL ANGRY parents said they believed that religious groups have no right in or around the public schools. They accused Graham and other North teachers and administrators of supporting Campus Life by allowing its posters to be placed on bulletin boards and by wearing lapel buttons advertising the Burger Bash.

One resident, Mandel Foner, called for the resignation of North Farmington teachers and administrators who are responsible for allowing Campus Life activities to go on in the school.

Graham, a principal in the district since 1967, said he supports Youth for Christ, which sponsors Campus Life. "One of the things I happen to do with my personal life is to support Youth for Christ in Detroit," he said. "In that capacity, I have been at their fund-raising meetings and so forth. But I go to a lot of fund-raising meetings and I support a lot of groups."

"I also happen to be active in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and the two things kind of come together quite often."

Graham said that parents of North students often ask him about the Campus Life organization.

"I encourage them to call the headquarters and chat with them," he said. "On occasion, a parent has asked me, 'Well, what is your personal impression? If you had kids in school, would you want them in a program like that?' And I've always said yes."

GRAHAM SAID he was at the Burger Bash — and some of our teachers were over, too," he added — but denied wearing a lapel pin to advertise it. Did teachers wear them?

"Somebody said that two staff members — maybe they used the word



Clayton Graham

'I happen to be a Christian and I have a strong conviction about operating under the principle of authority. If my boss tells me to do something, then I think I ought to obey, even though I might not individually believe in it.'

— Clayton Graham

teachers — were wearing little round signs which said, 'Burger Bash', Graham said.

Please turn to Page 4

Others take action

Editors note: The problem of religious values in conflict with public rights is a situation which far surpasses the borders of Farmington and Farmington Hills. The following story is an example of how the problem is handled in another community.

By Karen Hermes Smith
staff writer

Bloomfield Hills teachers and administrators will soon follow a new set of rules to avoid offending students in their classrooms of mixed religions.

The rules, reviewed by the school board last week, accompany a policy complying with the Constitutional provision for separation of church and state and mandating respect for religious preferences.

Please turn to Page 5

Orchard Lake Road gears up for bit of beautification

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

"Orchard Lake Road among residents' pet peeves," read the Farmington Observer's first Oral Quarrel headline in the fall of 1982.

Quick to heed residents' concerns about the thoroughfare, city officials encouraged property owners and residents to join forces and improve the appearance of what has become Farmington Hills' central shopping area.

Now, a year later, Orchard Lake Road is about to boast a spruced-up look. If the weather remains mild, 332 decorative trees will be planted between 12 and 13 Mile roads before the year's end.

Orchard Lake's look, or lack of it, became more obvious when it was widened in 1981, leaving five lanes of concrete dominating the area's appearance.

"When you looked down the road, it looked kind of bland," said William Costick, assistant city manager, particularly when compared to West Bloomfield's landscaped portion of the road.

DEVELOPED BY the fairly new Orchard Lake Road Beautification Committee, the tree program will "hopefully serve as a catalyst to generate interest among property owners in beautifying the Orchard Lake Road frontages and improving on maintenance conditions, particularly along the roadway," Costick indicated.

Like it or not, that's downtown Farmington Hills," said Councilwoman Jan Dolan, remarking on the need for Orchard Lake Road property owners to better maintain the area.

Of the 332 trees which city officials will be taking bids on within two weeks, 71 will be Bradford pear, 58 honey locust, 10 summit ash, 72 Rosehill ash, 15 Amur maple and 28 crab apple trees.

Each species of the salt-resistant

trees will be planted in half-mile groups with landscape architects determining which type will best serve a particular area along the two-mile stretch, Costick said.

The trees will be planted 12 inches from the curb with a minimum of 30 feet between the trees. When mature in five to 10 years, the trees should stand about 25 to 30 feet tall.

WHILE DECISIONS about the types

of trees to be planted have been made, city officials are still gathering the 54 signatures required on a petition to get the program moving.

But City Council members last week established a special assessment district along Orchard Lake to pay for the trees. Optimistic that the required number of signatures will be gathered, council members scheduled a public hearing at 7:30 p.m. next Monday on

costs to be charged property owners.

Opposition to the tree program has not been a problem in getting the required signatures, Costick said. "The major problem has been contacting absentee landlords," he said.

Property owners along the two-mile stretch targeted for tree planting

Please turn to Page 5



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Orchard Lake Road's appearance will be seeing better days soon when 332 decorative trees are planted along the thoroughfare between 12 and

14 Mile roads. The idea is to spruce-up what's become downtown Farmington Hills.

what's inside

Classifieds . . . Section C
Community Calendar . . . 7B
Editorials . . . 6A
Inside Angles . . . 3A
Letters . . . 6A
Obituaries . . . 2A
Oral Quarrel . . . 6A
Shopping Cart . . . 1-4
Sports . . . 1-3C
Suburban Life . . . 5-7B

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