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Soggy weather

Farmington Hills resident Joanne Fournes had to contend with a soggy yard Thursday. Water started to fill her yard Thursday morning during the thunderstorm. The water level continued to rise when another storm struck early Friday. Fournes' home is on

Green Acres Street. Ardmore Street, near her home, was also flooded, as was some of the property on the nearby site of the old Bond School.

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Candidates talk about concerns

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

The ideas, concerns and opinions of this year's Farmington School Board hopefuls are numerous, reflecting the record number of candidates seeking election.

Without any hard-fast issues to grapple with in this race for two seats on the school board, candidates have had the opportunity to discuss whatever topics have interested them.

The 13 candidates met at the invitation of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and the Farmington Parent-Teacher Association Council at Dunckel Middle School Thursday for the last public debate of the race.

At the end of the debate, the candidates were given a one-minute opportunity to discuss additional concerns or recap their viewpoints. Although J.Tom Buck was present at the start of the debate, he was absent from this portion.

Here's what the candidates had to say:

JEAN MORAN: "I think we have a very fine school system. I don't think we live in utopia though." Consequently, there's always room for improvement and a move in "a positive direction," she added.

Moran's greatest concern is that the leaders of the Farmington School District maintain the quality education for which the district is known.

MARTY KROHNER: "It's time to keep going forward."

The district, he said, has the wealth and ability to provide quality programs. School officials should continue to strive for excellence even though most consider the district to be excellent.

"I would like to see more community involvement," Krohner said, both in planning curriculum and attending school board meetings.

ROXANNE FITZPATRICK: (a spokeswoman represented her Thursday) The candidate is opposed to Farmington Hills' proposed use of the Tax Increment Financing Act (TIFA) to help pay for improvements along the 12 Mile office corridor.

Two reasons were presented for her opposition. TIFA is used as a means of helping a deteriorating area or as a means of making improvements to enhance business to relocate in the area. "It's a poor assumption," her spokesman said, adding that Farmington Hills is not lacking in new business.

The second reason given for opposition to TIFA is that the school district would lose a portion of its revenue while TIFA was in effect.

RICK KNAUER: "I really don't have any serious concerns about the school district." In reminding both the audience and fellow candidates about the purpose of a school board, Knaauer added that the professionals who are employed by the district are the ones who should be making recommendations on which the school board is to make decisions. The school board, he said, is the body which makes sure its decisions are implemented throughout the district.

"Because things are so good in this district," Knaauer said he is concerned that voters won't go to the polls and won't become involved in the school district.

MICHAEL KING: "Quite frankly I would like to see more debate," he said, adding that governmental bodies

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Aid formula slated for change

By Jean Adamczak
staff writer

Farmington Public Schools may be \$112,000 richer in 1985-86 if the Michigan Legislature adopts a budget amendment to reduce the amount of state aid the district is required to return to state coffers.

The proposed amendment, now in Senate committee, calls for reducing the amount of money an out-of-formula district must return to the state from 66 to 60 percent, says Michael Flanagan, assistant superintendent of finances and services for the district.

Because Farmington generates more revenue through local taxes based on its State Equalized Valuation (SEV), it

is classified as an out-of-formula school district. The district is not eligible to receive state aid.

The district's categorical programs, however, are exempt from this rule because the state has committed itself to fund programs such as vocational education, special education and transportation, which the school district provides in addition to its regular K-12 school programs.

State aid received by the school district for its categorical programs is subject to a 66 percent recapture rate by the state. If the new legislation should pass, this percentage would be decreased to 60 percent, says Flanagan.

Currently, Farmington is entitled to

\$3.7 million in categorical state aid. Because of the present recapture rate of 66 percent, Farmington only receives \$2.5 million, says Flanagan.

If the legislation to decrease the recapture rate to 60 percent is adopted, the district will receive \$2.6 million in aid, an increase of \$112,000, Flanagan says.

Although \$112,000 may seem like a substantial amount, it is less than one-quarter of 1 percent of the total district budget of \$50 million, Flanagan says.

"We were unhappy with the 66 percent issue anyway," says Flanagan, adding, "we're happy to pick up any amount (of aid) we can."

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'The formula just doesn't seem to be working. Until we can go in and create a whole new formula, we'll just have to continue with these patchwork adjustments to the present system.'

— Rep. Wilbur Brotherton
R-Farmington

Biblical city target of archaeologist's work

By Julie Brown
staff writer

It's a long way from Israel to the Detroit area, but Aaron Demsky chose to make that trip recently.

Demsky, an archaeologist and biblical scholar, is on the faculty at Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel.

Wednesday, Demsky spoke at Farmington Hills' Adat Shalom Synagogue at a meeting sponsored by the synagogue and by the Detroit Friends of Bar-Ilan University.

Demsky is a native American and a graduate of New York's Jewish Theological Seminary. He and his family

live in Efrat, Israel, a suburb of Jerusalem.

"I came back to speak about some of the archaeological finds we've made through Bar-Ilan University," he said in an interview Thursday.

During the last four years, the archaeological team has conducted excavations at Shiloh, related to the area's

11th-century B.C. history. "It was the political and religious center of Israel, prior to Jerusalem," he said of Shiloh.

"Shiloh, of course, was of primary importance. That was basically what I spoke about."

THE EXCAVATIONS have been directed by Israel Finkelstein, a faculty member at Bar-Ilan University. The archaeological team has some 15 permanent staff members.

Archaeology students have also been involved, including "American students who want to spend the summer in Israel and learn about archaeology, and get some field experience."

The summer excavation season lasts five or six weeks, during July and August. That season falls between the university's two exam periods, Demsky said.

The day begins for the archaeological team at approximately 6 a.m., continuing into the early afternoon.

"That's our work day," Demsky said. "We take a break for lunch and rest."

From the late afternoon until nightfall, team members work on sorting

through the pottery. "Through the pottery, we can date the different strata of the tell. Our work is exploring those levels."

The "tell" refers to the hill that reflects the settlement of a site. "On the tell, people began to build a village." That particular site may have been chosen for such reasons as being defensible and being close to a water supply.

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, subsequent settlements have then been made on the same site.

"Our job is to uncover that and to interpret what we find," Demsky said. "It's somewhat like a layer cake, but the layers are not all equally distant."

For more recent historical periods, archaeologists may discover coins, complete with dates, making their work a little easier.

The Bar-Ilan team's work includes photographing the materials.

"We take pictures so we know what it looks like." Restoration of the pottery is time-consuming.

"It's a very meticulous type of work."



Aaron Demsky

The materials will be put on display at Bar-Ilan University, he said. "We've completed this series of excavations, but we'll probably be coming back, perhaps going back to other sites," he said.

Filling job on agenda

Choosing Gordon Lewis' successor as director of the Farmington Community Library will most likely be a subject for discussion at Thursday's regular meeting of the Farmington Library Board.

Lewis resigned on May 15, following his suspension without pay on May 2.

That suspension had followed the release of results of an audit done by the Plante and Moran accounting firm. The audit of the library system's financial records had disclosed evidence of possible personal uses of public money.

The position vacancy has not been posted, said Acting Library Director Beverly Papal.

"It will be up to the library board to name a search committee," she said Friday.

MEMBERS OF the Farmington Community Library Board of Trustees will develop a description of the position, she said, and determine "the latitude they wish to take in the search process."

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'As far as I know, I'm not trying to be evasive or vague. This will be a topic at the next board meeting in June.'

— Jim Wibby
library trustee

Hills hikes fees, adds personnel

By Julie Brown
staff writer

Several new employees will soon be joining the Department of Public Services staff in Farmington Hills.

City Council members in Farmington Hills voted Tuesday to authorize the city manager to hire additional personnel for the engineering and community development divisions.

The community development division will have two additional building inspectors. In the engineering division, one engineering aide and one civil engineer will be hired, in addition to two seasonal inspectors for the summer construction season.

The additional personnel are needed because of an increase in new develop-

ment in the city, said Tom Blaisell, Farmington Hills' director of public services.

"We're busy. We haven't had this kind of development since the late 1970s, and there's every indication it's going to continue."

"Both engineering and community development are tied very closely with development," he said. Layoffs were made in both divisions in the 1980s, when new development in the city decreased.

CITY STAFFERS reviewed the workloads in the two divisions, and found that they had increased.

Single-family residential permits, for example, were found to have increased over the last several years,

from 61 in 1982, to 400 in 1983, to 519 in 1984, and to 246 during the first 4 1/2 months of 1985.

The projected total for 1985 is 650 single-family residential permits.

"As a result, we found we were very busy and had to add additional staff in order to meet the demand that's there," Blaisell said.

The estimated cost for the community development division expansion is \$66,400, which includes fringe benefits for the employees.

"That's an annual allotment," Blaisell said.

Within the engineering division, the additional expenditures are estimated to be \$91,900.

"We have advertised for the positions already," he said. "Realizing we

had the potential for it, we went out and advertised the positions."

Costs for the additional personnel shouldn't have an impact on the general taxpayer, Blaisell said, because the city charges fees for review, inspection and design services.

"We charge fees for that work to the developer."

CITY COUNCIL members also authorized a new fee structure for the engineering division at last Tuesday's meeting. Last month, council members approved an adjusted fee schedule for building permit fees.

"Some of the fees were initiated at fixed costs a number of years ago, and

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