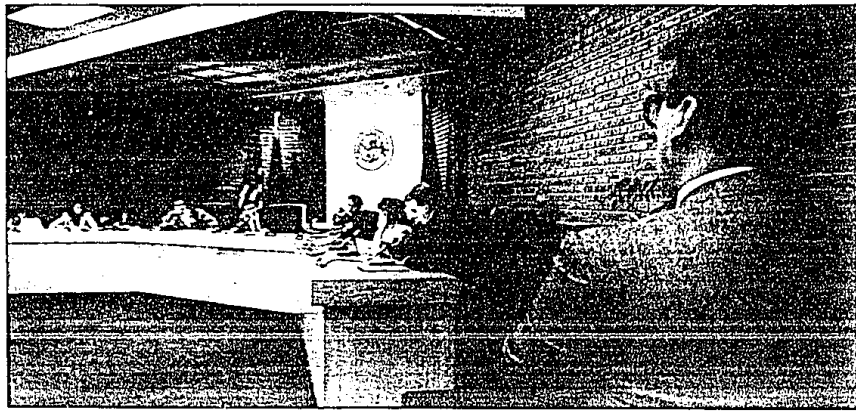




Jason Biederman, a North Farmington senior, served as mayor for Student Government Day.



Farmington Hills Mayor Terry Sever (right) watches over the Student Government Day city council, composed of students from Harrison and North Farmington. Sever gave the students advice on how to run a council meeting.

Teen politicians

Students try hands at running city

By Joanne Mallacragno
staff writer

A later goodie sale was the best way North Farmington High School senior Katie McPhillips could think of to finance a multi-million-dollar Farmington Hills-sponsored teen center.

Harrison High senior Matt Paletta figured that taking parents wouldn't be a bad way either of paying for the center for their children.

Another classmate, Harrison senior Michael Coleman, thought a teen center should be so much more than a place to hang out. How about a night club, swimming pool and gym?

"We thought the first answer from North Farmington High School would be good for us," North Farmington senior Darcy Lockman said.

The teens, students of North Farmington teacher Bill Brunker and Harrison teacher Richard Skene, have come of their adult city counterparts — city manager, public services director, public works director, mayor, council member — at the annual Student Government Day last Tuesday.

THE EVENT was sponsored by the Farmington Rotary Club and the city. The daylong program was coordinated by the rotary club's Robert O'Hara and Steve Brock, assistant to Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick.

Each of the 40 participating students, in their adopted roles, helped run the city for a day, including a mock city council meeting.

"They were a good bunch of kids," Brock said. "They seemed to have a good idea of what was going on."

As teen city attorney, Harrison senior Ray Vucinaj warned his colleagues about "wildness and rowdiness" associated with a teen center. "We basically can go to court over something like this if we make a teen nightclub," Vucinaj said.

The teens handled a new technological age with ease. When teen city manager Paletta was asked whether other communities have teen centers, he said he had no idea the "fax machine was down."

UNLIKE THE real city council, the

teen's meeting moved swiftly, addressing the required issues and brushing aside rhetoric to make a decision.

The teen politicians imitated their adult counterparts when two irate residents — played by councilman Ben Marks and councilwoman Nancy Bates — arrived with complaints. "Referred to the city manager for further study," the teen mayor ordered.

"I'm asking you to do something about the running dogs and noise it creates," begged Marks.

Succinctly, teen Mayor Jason Biederman, a North Farmington senior, responded. "Thank you, we'll look into it." Laughing at the swiftness of Biederman's decision, Marks shot back: "You learn fast."

Bates, alias Nancy Switches, demanded sidewalks on major roads for her two teenagers and six little kids. "You've talked about it for a long time. I want a sidewalk on Farmington Road. And I want to know what you're going to do about it," she said.

Playing an irate resident, city assessor Dean Habb modulated the usually calm waters of the mock council meeting with an opposing viewpoint. "You put a sidewalk there and we're going to have chaos."



RANDY BORGST staff photographer

Harrison student Mill Coleman (right) portrays the special services director while North Farmington student Darcy Lockman acts as his assistant during

the Student Government Day city council meeting. They are shown answering a question about financing for a proposed teen center.

Briggs pitches youth as he goes after Broomfield

By Brian Lyasgh
staff writer

Walter O. Briggs IV acknowledges that he chose a tough task in running for the congressional seat of incumbent William Broomfield, who hasn't lost an election since 1956.

But Briggs, a 33-year-old Democrat, says he brings youth and energy to the assignment, and that even if he doesn't succeed this time, he will eventually.

"I have no illusions about how tough this race will be," said Briggs, a Birmingham resident and computer systems consultant for an accounting firm.

"We're going to wear out a lot of shoes to get to people." The election is next November and Briggs, who said he had considered for several years seeking elective office, held his first fund-raiser last month. Over 100 people attended, he said.

Briggs hopes he won't have to fend off another Democrat in the primary. He estimates the election will cost \$500,000, but adds, "We'll spend whatever we can raise."

"CERTAINLY ANYONE can run who wants to, but I'm expecting Walter will be the only Democratic candidate," said Darlene Berent, executive director of the Oakland County Democrats.

Broomfield, who hasn't lost a congressional race in 30 years, will run again next year, an aide said. He is a Republican in what is considered to be a heavily Republican 18th district, which presents another obstacle for Briggs. The incumbent captured more than 70 percent of the votes in his last two elections.

Broomfield, 67, is the ranking Republican on the House Foreign Relations Committee. His longevity is advantageous for the district, said Broomfield administrative aide Jack Sinclair.

"Seniority is the way this place operates," Sinclair said from Washington. Broomfield has leased two north Oakland County billboards to get his message to voters, Sinclair said.



Walter O. Briggs IV chose tough task

But Briggs, whose great-grandfather owned the Detroit Tigers and whose great uncle was Philip Hart, the late U.S. senator from Michigan, believes the district is potentially for the taking.

BRIGGS SAID many 18th District residents are relatively young and have a relatively short length of residency in the district. Both factors will work in his favor, he said.

To those people, Briggs, the father of two young children, said he will put forth his desire to preserve the middle class for future generations, make government more efficient, protect the environment and cut the deficit.

He is pro-choice and said government should be more to ease parents' child care burdens. Government needs to streamline current levels of social spending, but to better coordinate its efforts, he said.

Briggs is developing positions in many issues, and declined to get into specifics on these.

But he said Broomfield has "flop-flopped" and "put in the center" in several issues.

"I think we need some 'materialism.' We are a district of leaders," Briggs said.

THIS 18TH district is certainly a diverse one, centered in Oakland County but including parts of Livingston and Macomb, stretching from Brighton to Rochester and including Troy, Birmingham, the Bloomfield Hills, Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Briggs was raised in Bloomfield Hills, but moved with his family to Harbor Springs at age 18. He earned a mathematics degree from Duke University in North Carolina, taught at a private school in Connecticut and earned a CPA certificate in 1984.

He said he moved back to Birmingham several years ago. His wife, Andrea, is a tax accountant, and his children are Walter, 4, and Aaron, 2.

Briggs said he will depend on volunteers for his campaign, and is now putting together a staff. His mother-in-law, Lillian Gillis, is his campaign coordinator.

"Regardless of what happens, we're going to have a good time doing this," Briggs said.

Downtown authority wants to buy house

Farmington's Downtown Development Authority will negotiate to purchase the house at 33213 Orchard Street, which sits alone amidst a recently developed city parking lot.

On Dec. 5, the DDA board passed a resolution giving executive director Wendy Strip Sittsamer authority to negotiate the purchase on behalf of the board. The property is owned by

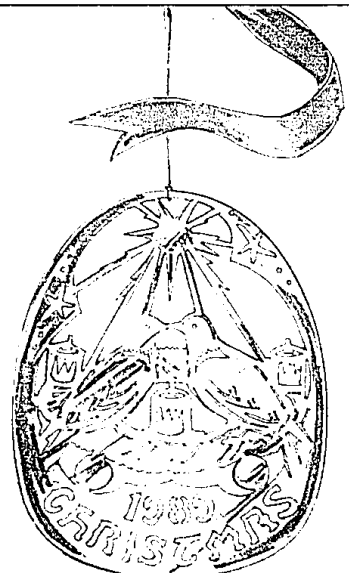
Raymond Perla, and is currently occupied by his relatives. Orchard Street runs between the Downtown Farmington Center and the Farmington Post Office.

According to information presented Dec. 5, the property will soon be vacated and the property put on the market.

If the property is purchased, the DDA will consider what might be the best use for it, whether parking or other development, said city manager and DDA board member Robert Deadman. The house is in the DDA district, considered part of the final phase of development for the downtown rejuvenation project.

At the east end of the street, a 14-unit, three-story condominium development is planned by private developers, maintaining a residential flavor to the area. Other commercial development and improvement has also been sparked in the immediate area.

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