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FIFTY CENTS

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IN THE PAPER TODAY

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OPINION

Holiday traditions: *Unfortunately, there are candlelight vigils, police stings and the DADs program in the Farmington area.* /22A

On property taxes: *There are many good reasons why property taxes should not be scuttled.* /22A

Write on! *The Farmington area has some opinionated folks, who like writing letters to the editor.* /22A

SPORTS



Like to spike: *Harrison volleyball team off to best start ever* /1B

Nice going, Carey! *Harrison High's Carey Perkins was selected to the Observer's All Area Girls Basketball team.* /5B

ENTERTAINMENT

Movies: *Julia Roberts and Denzel Washington star in the suspense thriller, "The Pelican Brief"* /9B

SUBURBAN LIFE

Wet beds be gone: *Enuresis Treatment Center in Farmington Hills helps children and adults overcome bed-wetting. People often say they wish they had heard of the center earlier.* /1C

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Maxfield picked to lead schools



The school board has spoken, and the word is . . . Maxfield, Berkley school chief C. Robert Maxfield was named superintendent of the Farmington Public Schools Tuesday.

BY TOM BAEK
STAFF WRITER

Dorothy Schmidt has a quip ready for certain callers. "Oh, we don't return calls from Farmington," said Schmidt, secretary to C. Robert Maxfield, superintendent of the Berkley Public Schools. On Tuesday her boss accepted a similar

post in the Farmington District.

"You lucky people . . . you have him now," Schmidt said. The popular Maxfield, Berkley school chief since 1988, was the survivor of an intensive superintendent search launched by the Farmington Board of Education after Superintendent Michael Flanagan announced

his resignation in September.

"I'm honored and delighted to have been selected," said the 62-year old Maxfield, a Birmingham resident. "For me, it's a wonderful professional opportunity," he added. "I just see Farmington as a place where the sky's the limit in terms of what can be accomplished."

Early next year Flanagan will become superintendent of the Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency.

More than 70 candidates applied for Flanagan's job in Farmington. The field was narrowed to seven and

then to just two — Maxfield and Thomas Shorkey, superintendent of the East China Schools near Marine City.

Maxfield was the unanimous choice of the board of education at a special meeting Tuesday evening.

"He just feels right to me," said Farmington trustee Bobbie Feldman. Added board colleague David York, "I see Dr. Maxwell as drawing in those who may be at odds with our programs."

The subject of ethnic, cultural and

See MAXFIELD, 2A

A Christmas tree for the Harma family



SHARON LEMER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A lot of trees: Tina Harma, daughter Katie and husband Eric (not pictured) shop for a Christmas tree at Orchard Lake and 10 Mile, where Cash Tryban has been in business for six years. He and lot owner Sam Sheena donated a tree to the Warner Mansion's gazebo. Said Tina, "I like (trees) short and fat, and he likes them tall and skinny." They compromise, she said.

Center goes it a loan to integrate area housing

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Until people are willing to live it, social and ethnic harmony will be just an empty platitude.

That's the message Ann Wettlaufer and Deborah Wright Taylor of the Oakland County Center for Open Housing brought to the Farmington/Farmington Hills Multicultural/Multiracial Community Council Tuesday morning at the Farmington Training/Conference Center.

"We have a legacy of segregation through legislation," said Wettlaufer, who explained a new incentive loan program designed to encourage open housing. "We have to stop saying that blacks like to live together as an excuse."

Wettlaufer and Taylor, who is a Realtor, cited statistics and involved those attending in a discussion of open housing.

Wettlaufer said 48 of 61 Oakland County communities had already en-

dorsed the center's mission, which is: "To build community understanding and support for fair and open housing and to achieve a stable and integrated housing process in Oakland County."

The center maintains that multi-ethnic communities "provide a life-enhancing environment for personal and family growth." Expanding housing options is the way to accomplish that goal.

The black population of Oakland County increased 61 percent during

the 1980s compared to 13 percent in Macomb County and only 2 percent in Wayne County, Wettlaufer said.

But 80 percent of Oakland County's black population lives in three cities: Pontiac, Southfield and Oak Park.

Through private donations and support from the city of Southfield, the center came up with a loan incentive program that offers \$5,000 at 6

See CENTER, 4A

Y hopes to pool \$1.6 million for improvements

BY TOM BAEK
STAFF WRITER

A swimming pool specially designed and equipped for use by the handicapped and a teen center are among several improvements planned for the Farmington Area YMCA if \$1.6 million can be raised by next June.

"The funds will come from "philanthropic giving," said Farmington YMCA executive director Kevin C. Bush in a recent interview.

"The majority of our funding will come from contact with corporations, businesses and individuals," Bush said. "There'll be no big fund-raising event."

The Farmington YMCA, in the Farmington Road/12 Mile area, serves about 4,000 families and has 12,000 members from the Farmington area, West Bloomfield and Commerce Township.

"We're very much a family organization," Bush said. "With this project

we're trying to address some needs that our studies show aren't being met."

The \$337,800 swimming pool, the most expensive of the renovations and additions, will have a special ramp to provide access for the handicapped. It won't be as deep as normal pools and the water will be warmer, Bush said.

"We need to serve the physically challenged," he added, "and there's no pool of this kind in the region.

Possibly we could network with the area's schools and hospitals."

A tank worth about \$200,000 already has been donated by an anonymous benefactor, Bush said.

The teen center and activity room (\$240,270) will be "a permanent place where they can hang their hats," Bush said. Middle school teens would be targeted, and seniors could use the facility when the teens are in school.

See YMCA, 3A

BABES needs volunteers

Attention, Farmington-area adults who would like to bring the anti-substance abuse message to the community's third-graders: BABES might be just for you.

Farmington Families in Action's BABES program needs volunteers to bring information about drug and alcohol abuse to third-graders in the Farmington District.

The trained volunteers will interact with the students, while telling stories and using puppets. The BABES people will discuss peer pressure, coping skills and understanding feelings.

For more information about BABES, call Cindy Helisek at 471-4476.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

In holiday voice

Put on the winter coats and limber up those voices . . . you're invited to join a traditional Christmas caroling party sponsored by the Farmington Branch Library.

The singing starts at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 20, at the library, 23500 Liberty St., Farmington. People of all ages and voices are invited to participate.

Music sheets will be provided. Singers should dress warmly, bring a flashlight and maybe some cookies to share. After caroling in the nearby neighborhood, participants will return to the library for hot chocolate and a Christmas video.

Anyone interested should call the library at 474-7770 to register.

Memory Lane

From the Dec. 17, 1953, edition of the Farmington Enterprise:

■ A record \$2,300 was collected by the Farmington Goodfellows during the group's annual paper sale the previous Friday, said Fred Menke Jr., president.

■ Farmington High posted a 48-38 prep basketball victory over Southfield.

■ A Gilbert microscope set was advertised at Henton's Farmington Hardware on Grand River for \$8.75.
Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336; dropped off at the newspaper office; or faxed to 477-9722.