

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Get vision: Farmington still has space for folks who want to help shape changes to downtown. /A4

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Back pain: These chairs support you. Here's the scoop on good seats. /B4

TASTE

Beer: If you hop to it, there's time to make your own specialty brew for the holidays. /B1

SPORTS

Clash: Matching unbeaten records, Farmington Harrison met Walled Lake Western Friday in a key game. /E1

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Kenbrook parents want more

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Bringing in a part-time paraprofessional to help teachers deal with the burden of overcrowded fourth-grade classrooms at Kenbrook Elementary School is an unsatisfactory solution to some parents.

But the decision for a paraprofessional to divide 10 hours of her time between three classrooms apparently will stand, said Donald Cowan, the district's executive director of K-12 instruction and student services.

"This is the first time the district has ever given parapro time for above the first grade," Cowan said last week. "And we're going to be losing two more kids" who now help comprise fourth grade classrooms with enrollment of 30, 29 and 29 students. The desired number per classroom is 26 or lower.

"Obviously, parents are going to negotiate for as much as they can get," Cowan added. "My feeling is the district has been more than reasonable."

Parents, led by Barbara and Jack Guthrie, want one full-time parapro hired to assist in the classrooms, because they don't think teachers can provide full attention to 30 children at once. The district's decision to hire a 10-hour assistant followed a meeting with parents, Cowan and Principal Peggy McKinley.

But although they want a full-timer on board, Guthrie, in a telephone interview, said parents would probably settle for any additional parapro time.

In the Guthries' Sept. 22 letter to McKinley, also sent to Cowan and Superintendent Bob Maxfield, they wrote:

"It seemed to me that overwhelming support was for at least one full-time paraprofessional dedicated to the fourth grade. Your letter of September 17th, wherein you indicate that the (district) supports 'up to 10 hours per week,' or three hours per classroom per week, as sufficient relief, is far off the mark."

Another letter with the same message

Please see KENBROOK, A3

Developer, neighbors make peace



Farmington Hills officials stepped out of the way to let a developer and a neighboring homeowners group work out a solution, instead of going to court. It allows Hickory Oaks, a new 37-lot subdivision, to be built.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A Farmington Hills homeowners group and a developer are using a piece of open land to make their peace. The city and Phoenix Land Development have agreed to enter a consent judgment after a deal was worked out with Woodcreek Homeowners Association.

tion over the 37-lot Hickory Oaks development, avoiding further court action.

The settlement centers around eight acres initially designated as an open space area required by city ordinance. By entering a consent judgment, and letting both sides negotiate directly, the city waived the open space stipula-

tion. Instead, open space will be incorporated into the individual lots to make them larger - more than an acre in some cases. That will achieve the main objective of the homeowners association, which was that the new development mirror the character of those in the adjoining Woodcreek Hills and Woodcreek Farms subdivisions.

The proposed agreement also calls for extended preservation of trees up to 30 feet from the lot lines.

"From my perspective, it worked out great for both parties - happy ending," said Schaefer, who is involved in six

developments in the city.

Said Woodcreek spokesman Hank Murawski: "It was a compromise. We would have preferred fewer lots and larger ones, but on the average I think we did pretty well."

The key was the city agreeing to let both sides negotiate, Schaefer said.

But that only came about after the city first made sure the development met zoning ordinance in terms of density, width and area of lots, said Dale Couteau, Hills Planning/Community Development director.

"It (consent judgment) is prudent

Please see PEACE, A4

Her crowning moment



PHOTOS BY BILL HANSEN



Pride and pageantry: North Farmington High School senior Lauren Fleming shared her big day at the school's Homecoming festivities Saturday, Sept. 20. At top, she's walked across the field at halftime of the football game by her father, Peter. Above, dad chokes with pride as she's about to be crowned. At left, Lauren shares her excitement with friends. For more on the homecoming festivities, please see Page A2.

Toddler nearing road is rescued

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A pair of Independence Green Apartments employees were guardian angels to a 18-month-old toddler, who they rescued after the little girl nearly wandered out into afternoon traffic on Grand River near Middlebelt Thursday.

Stassa Warren and Wendy Conway were on Grand River looking for a place to buy chairs for the apartment clubhouse when one of them spotted the child walking towards Grand River off Wheeler around 2 p.m.

"I said, 'Oh my gosh, there's a baby there all by herself. We got to go over there,'" said Conway to Warren, who was driving. "We cut across three lanes of Grand River and went around the block."

"She was about to walk into Grand River."

Another motorist stopped and asked Warren and Conway if either one of them was the parent. The pair took the child to Farmington police.

The toddler was then turned over to Farmington Hills police who were contacted by the child's parents.

A 14-year-old sister was supposed to be watching the child, when the toddler escaped through a screen door and walked approximately 100 yards from the family's home, Hills police said.

"One of the kids was supposed to be watching the little tyke while the mom was caring for her 2-month-old," said Richard Murphy, Hills police assistant chief. "The kid went to get a doughnut for a minute and, as soon as you know it, dad comes home and wants to know where the child is."

"They (the parents) were pretty shook up. The dad is going to secure the screen door."

Police will file a report with Children Protective Services - as required - to document the incident, Murphy said. It's uncertain whether charges will be filed.

Please see TODDLER, A4

Hills recycling chief spreads word on trash

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

When comes to recycling, some people tend to say: bin there, done that.

New Farmington Hills special projects coordinator Haven King wants to lift the lid for enthusiasm on the need for conservation. King was hired in August and replaces Karen Birkholz, who is working in the city manager's

office.

As special projects coordinator, King oversees recycling programs for Farmington and Farmington Hills.

"It's become old hat to some people," said King, who previously worked for the city of Oak Park. "They have their bins and they throw a few things in there, but it's not pressing on their minds."

Roughly 70-75 percent of garbage collected ends up in landfills. The other 25 percent is either composted or recycled, King said.

City folks would like to see that rise to at least 30 percent, King said.

The plan to rekindle enthusiasm for recycling is simple: Give residents something to talk about.

A video demonstrating how to much

leaves instead of raking them is in the works. Updates are also planned for the city's newsletter Farmington Hills Focus.

King wants to speak to residents, too. She and Hills City Manager Daniel Hobbs recently tackled recycling at a Farmington Optimist Club meeting.

Please see RECYCLER, A4

City wins award

The city of Farmington won an award during the 99th Annual Convention of the Michigan Municipal League, held Sept. 22-26 in Muskegon.

The competition recognizes outstanding efforts by Michigan local governments to meet the challenges of community leadership and provide new or improved public services.

Farmington took honorable mention in the category for communities with a population from 10,001 to 25,000, for creating its Interactive Public Access Internet Web Site in spring 1996.

Singing star

Look out middle schools and high schools. Stacie Guerrero, a fourth grader at William Grace Elementary School, entertained the school board at its

FARMINGTON FOCUS

audience at the beginning of Tuesday's meeting, with a rendition of "Everything's Coming Up Roses." She belted the show tune out with poise and confidence, her voice easily heard above the song's music blasting out of a portable stereo.

Stacie's performance of the same tune also helped her win the Miss North American Scholarship Pageant in New York City on July 4.

After the song Tuesday, school board President Linda Enberg made a prediction: "I think the high school musical directors are going to be fighting over you!"

Join town talk

Got a question for the mayor? How about the school board president or the Farmington Hills police chief?

Join in person or call in your questions from 10 a.m. to noon Thursday during the Town Meeting hosted by Farmington Observer Editor Dave Varga and WXYT-AM Radio's Jimmy Darrett Thursday at Ginopolis on the Grill on Middlebelt in Farmington Hills.

Guests will be school board President Linda Enberg, Farmington Hills police Chief William Dwyer, Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnorzi and Farmington Mayor JoAnne McShane. Visitors are welcome to ask questions or telephone them by calling 248-559-1270.