

Visitor takes stock of local customs

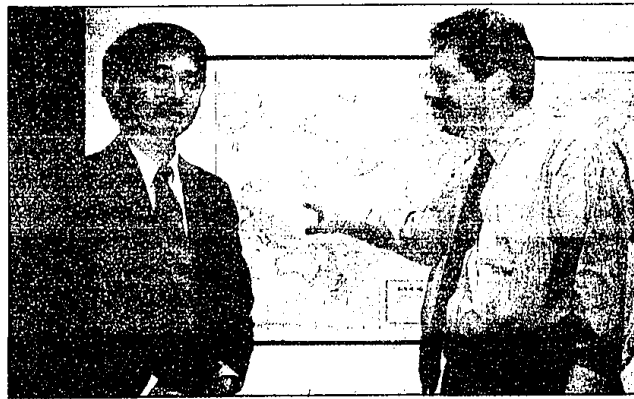
BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A Japanese government official visiting Farmington Hills saw conflict, mayhem and disorderly behavior.

The question is: Was it at the Detroit Red Wings hockey game he attended or the Farmington Hills City Council meeting the previous night?

The Wings game was a knock-down, drag-out affair where Colorado's Claude Lemieux and Detroit's Darren McCarty started fighting three seconds after the puck was dropped. The city's council session was tame by comparison, but jarred Takeshi Miyazaki's impression about American government.

Miyazaki, 35, visited Farmington Hills as part of an international exchange sponsored by The Academy for State and Local Government in Washington, D.C. He stayed at the home of Hills City Manager Daniel Hobbs during his two-week visit.



Visiting here: Farmington Hills City Manager Daniel Hobbs (right) hosted Takeshi Miyazaki as part of an international exchange. The two men check the location of the visitor's home town on a map of Japan.

meet Japanese students in the district's bilingual program.

The atmosphere here is more relaxed compared to Japanese schools where the classroom setup is formal and regimented.

"Japanese families, when they come here, they're concerned about education and security," Miyazaki said. "The American school system accepts Japanese students very nicely and (I'm) happy to see that."

Miyazaki's visit was a learning event for his hosts, too.

"It's been a good experience. I've enjoyed seeing him look at us and the United States through his eyes," said Hobbs.

"He's probably not going to remember all the business meetings. He'll have some contrasts to take back with him."

Miyazaki quickly became a Hobbs family favorite, especially with son 4-year-old Daniel, who

adopted his guest as a big brother.

Miyazaki is married and has a daughter, 5, and a son, 4.

He'll likely tell them about the ice hockey game, which prompted Miyazaki to speak some of the English he has learned during his stay in the U.S.

"I was surprised by the fight at the beginning," said Miyazaki, who played field hockey at Yokohama City University. "I was very surprised."

Miyazaki watched in amazement as residents spoke out passionately against a proposed development at the city council meeting where he was also made an honorary ambassador by Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi.

"In Japan, the citizens can come out, but they don't have a chance to speak out," said Miyazaki through interpreter Yoshiko Ginterich, a Farmington schools bilingual instructor. "They can observe the meeting."

Government discussion is similarly lacking spontaneity, Miyazaki said. "But here, the council members talk freely without limitations," he added.

Miyazaki is getting more than a glimpse of politics American style. He's visiting New York, Alexandria, Va., Tucson, Ariz., and Berkeley, Calif., before returning to New York for his flight home to Kagoshima where he is manager of International Affairs Division of the city's prefecture.

His stay included tours of Farmington City Hall and the recycling center in Southfield. He also stopped by Eagle Elementary where he was able to

County health talks are given in Spanish

Oakland County Community Mental Health's El Centro "La Familia" has launched a series of weekly presentation on mental and physical health issues.

The sessions, which are open to all Oakland County residents and conducted in Spanish, cover such topics as stress, depression and nutrition. Sessions are facilitated by a licensed social worker and a registered nurse. Individual sessions with counselors also are available.

Weekly presentations are held from 9:30-11:30 a.m. at El Centro's offices at 35 West Huron, Suite 200 in Pontiac. The following sessions are scheduled:

- Nov. 26 — How to say no without feeling guilty.
- Dec. 3 — Nutrition and diet.
- Dec. 10 — Loneliness and depression.
- Dec. 17 — Establishing personal goals for the new year.

A new series of classes will begin in January. For more information, call (248) 855-5320.


Silverdome plays host to 'tool man'

The Pontiac Silverdome may face the biggest challenge ever in its 20-year history as it will be asked to survive a visit from "Tim The Tool Man" Taylor and his Home Improvement family.

The Nov. 25 episode of the ABC-TV series Home Improvement revolves around the television family spending Thanksgiving at the Detroit Lions football game at the Silverdome. Detroit native Tim Allen's character Tim Taylor receives a backstage tour and chaos will ensue.

"We don't want to give away the ending," said Eric Walker, executive director of the Pontiac Silverdome. "But suffice it to say that Tim finds a way to stop the football game."


The show airs on WXYZ-TV 1 each Tuesday from 9-9:30 p.m.



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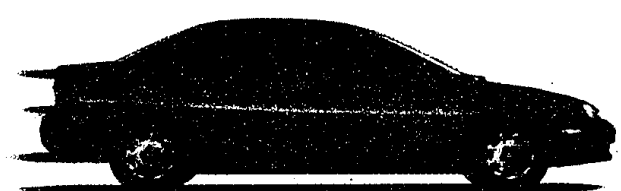
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