Garr writes to FHS band

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Melissa Garr's miracle continues to unfold.

During Monday night's awards night for the Farmington High School Marching Band, a letter written by Melissa was read by band parent Holly Owen to the audience of about 250.

"There was absolutely overpowering support to Melissa, as it's always been," Owen said Tuesday. "The group of parents and students always keep her in their prayers."

Melissa wrote her letter congratulating her Falcon schoolmates in blue, green, purple, red, orange and brown-colored felt pens. She wrote the letter at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ann Arbor, where she continues to amaze with her progress from a serious head injury that left her in a coma for nearly two months.

"I really miss marching band, color guard and choir," her letter said. "You are all winners to me."

According to Owen, the fact that Melissa wrote the letter herself was the reason it drew such an emotional response from the audience, in Farmington High School's auditorium.

"Coming from Melissa, it has a strong impact," Owen said. "Especially when she calls them winners. It reassures the members of the band that one of their peers, who is struggling herself to be a winner, gives compliments."

Owen, who said she is "witnessing a miracle" in Melissa, recalled a recent conversation with the 16-year-old daughter of Mike and Susan Garr that revealed her positive attitude.

"She told me, 'Mrs. Owen, I've been asleep for two months,' " Owen said. "She has a strong *awareness of everything. I think* her unwavering personality is helping her, (she) doesn't get down often."

Melissa still is unable to talk freely, however. She needs to place her index finger over a small tracheotomy opening in her throat in order to speak. Mike Garr, a lieutenant with the Farmington Hills Fire Department, said it will have to remain until Melissa is able to swallow more consistently.

Through physical and occupational therapy, she is increasing how much she can walk – with assistance. Mike Garr said Melissa recently walked 15 feet on the parallel bars, at a slow pace.

Owen said Melissa's letter was the high point of the awards night. The low point was the realization that Melissa won't be able to accompany the band on its 10-day trip to England and Scotland. The 154-member band, directed by Norm Logan, leaves Friday.

But a commemorative sweat shirt will be presented this week to Melissa, along with a videotape of this season's marching band performances, Owen said.

"We wish she can come with us," Owen said. "That's the only sad (part) about the whole thing."

Melissa was injured in a freakish poolside accident on July 23 while babysitting three neighborhood children at the Farmington Glen Aquatic Center. A heavy tree branch fell 40 feet and struck her on the head, breaking her skull and knocking her unconscious.

Following is Melissa Garr's hand-written letter congratulating the Farmington High School Marching Band for a fine season. The letter was read during Monday's awards night.

"Hey Winners, Congratulations!

"Sorry I can't be with you all tonight. I had a problem with being in the hospital! I really miss marching band, color guard, and choir! You are all winners to me. Thank you all for prayers, love and support! Hopefully I'll see you all soon! Check back! Love always, Melissa Garr"

At the helm

McShane passes mayoral gavel to Bush

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

New Farmington Mayor Mary Bush had a lot of company when she officially took over the city helm at approximately 8:15 p.m. Monday.

As Bush began her two-year term, shortly after being unanimously elected by her colleagues, she had three former mayors sitting in the audience and three more up at the council table. Among those in the near-capacity crowd were Shirley and John Richardson and Dick Tupper. Up front were ex-mayors Bill Hartsock, Arnold Campbell and the person who passed the gavel to her, JoAnne McShane.

Bush's first official act as mayor was to present McShane with an engraved gavel, a dozen roses and some flowery compliments.

"I can only hope I can do as good a job as you did," said Bush, who on Nov. 4 was re-elected to a four-year council term. ". . .I would like to say that I am very proud and honored to be mayor of this wonderful community."

Also Monday:

■ Hartsock was unanimously elected Mayor pro-tem;

■ the recently re-elected Bush, Campbell and James Mitchell were sworn in for their new terms by clerk/treasurer Patsy Cantrell;

■ McShane thanked the council, city staff and community for helping her during her two years as mayor and then summarized some key accomplishments.

■ 'I would like to say that I am very proud and honored to be mayor of this wonderful community'

Mary Bush

–mayor, Farmington

According to Hartsock, "It's always interesting and really a joy to see how well the council works in the transition every two years for a new mayor."

McShane and Bush also were each presented with a dozen roses by Campbell, representing the men on the council.

"This is truly a historical event," Campbell said. "Here in the city, this is the first time that we have had two female members pass the gavel and I think it's very significant. I'm very proud to be part of the council in which that has happened."

Campbell then presented the roses and prompted some laughter in the council chambers, with his comment congratulating "two fine ladies. . .even though that might be sexist."

Going once, twice

Bush's first official meeting was short and sweet, albeit one with a false ending.

At about 8:50 p.m., Bush adjourned – she thought – the meeting and authoritatively pounded the gavel.

But the meeting was back on again for two reasons. First, explained city manager Frank Lauhoff later, Bush did not entertain a motion to adjourn and secondly, a presumed no-show for a scheduled presentation finally arrived.

Sue Bess, 1997-98 Michigan Municipal League president, briefed the council about the role of the Michigan Municipal League in being a valuable resource for local governments of all sizes, through the platform "Interest, Education and Advocacy."

At about 9:10 p.m., Bush had a second chance to adjourn and did so, ending a brief, but eventful, first meeting to kick off her mayoral stint.

Parting words

Before officially ending her term as mayor, McShane served up some of her personal hopes for the city's future.

"I charge this council to maintain the historic flavor of Farmington while simultaneously advancing the city into the 21st Century," she said, reading prepared comments. "In so doing, the downtown must not be our sole focus. We must also promote our neighborhoods and shopping centers."

About Farmington's senior adult population, McShane said the council's mandate "should be to maintain this city as an affordable place to live and work."

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CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN
CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

DATE: DECEMBER 8, 1997
TIME: 7:30 P.M.
PLACE: Farmington Hills City Hall
31555 Eleven Mile Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48336
ITEM: Application for permit for drilling of oil and/or gas well on property east of Haggerty Road, west of I-275, north of Eight Mile and south of Nine Mile Road.
Tax I.D. #: 23-31-101-010

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the City Council will conduct a Public Hearing upon the application of West Bay Exploration Company for a permit to construct and operate an oil and/or gas drilling and pumping facility at the above described location.

The Hearing shall be conducted pursuant to Chapter 16.5, Natural Resources, of the City Code.

Any person who is interested in this application is invited to participate in the discussion at the Public Hearing. Anyone who cannot attend, or otherwise desires, may submit comments in writing prior to the hearing, to the City Clerk at the above address for inclusion in the record. Copies of the Application and the City Code may be reviewed at the City Clerk's Office on any business day between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

KATHRYN A. DORNAN, City Clerk
City of Farmington Hills

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