

Students

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HARRISON HIGH SCHOOL

At school, they've been able to count on bilingual instructor Frank Ivezaj, who speaks Albanian but is shocked by the stories they have told. 'And they're only teenagers,' Ivezaj said.

ning water, being schooled in houses with no books or supplies and trying to survive.

Gjetaj and Sinistaj are the newest members of the Farmington area's Albanian community. Though physically removed, the ongoing conflict in Kosovo dominates their lives. Since last February, 2,000 people have been killed and another 300,000 have fled since Serb forces have attacked separatists in the province.

Sinistaj, 18, had a circle of 10 or so friends in the Albanian-majority province in Serbia, the main republic in Yugoslavia. At least two of those people are dead. Some others' whereabouts are unknown.

Serbian forces take away Albanian teenagers in the middle of the night, Sinistaj related. They're given the option to join the army and fight against other Albanians, many of whom are separatists. Those who refuse are killed, Sinistaj said.

Sometimes they don't even wait until the night but strike during the day in a busy center.

"If they could get you out of sight there, they would kill you," said Sinistaj, who came here with his family 11 months ago.

Sinistaj tells of other horrors: torture, mutilation and mass murder.

When he's not attending school or working, Sinistaj exhaustively searches the Internet, listens to the radio and watches TV news to get updates about his former

home. He also counts on the Albanian Information Center for news.

When possible, he talks to uncles and cousins who are still there by telephone.

The area network of native Albanians has been very supportive, he said. Many Catholics and Muslims alike meet at St. Paul Albanian Catholic Church to raise money and talk about the situation in Kosovo.

Since coming here, Gjetaj's and Sinistaj's families have started over.

Gjetaj's mother and father work as a dishwasher and cook respectively at the same restaurant. In Kosovo, her mother was a nurse and her father a social worker.

"Sometimes when my mother has a headache, I'll go to work for her," said Gjetaj, whose 18-year-old brother also works at the restaurant. She has another brother who is 14.

After working 20 hours, her dad will watch TV for three hours to get any news from Kosovo, she said. He sometimes falls asleep sitting up in the chair.

To get here, their families largely count on relatives — no matter how distant — already living in the U.S.

"At this time, when it's your second cousin, he's your brother

or," Sinistaj said.

At school, they've been able to count on bilingual instructor Frank Ivezaj, who speaks Albanian but is shocked by the stories they have told. "And they're only teenagers," Ivezaj said.

Through Ivezaj and others, Sinistaj decided to remain in school. "I thought about not going to school because I didn't think I could afford it," he said.

Other students are starting to ask about the Kosovo situation. Sinistaj is ready to inform them.

Heightened interest may lead to the rest of the world to intervene.

"It's pretty easy for them (to sit back), but people are getting killed everyday," he said. "As soon as possible, they should get there to help."

Schools to sell bonds early

By The Staff
of the Observer & Eccentric!

Farmington school officials intend to go to the bond market early, and homeowners could wind up with extra spending money in the process.

On Tuesday, board members are expected to sanction a plan to immediately sell \$18.25 million in "Series II" bonds — largely to tap into rock-bottom interest rates of 4.75 percent — rather than wait until June, as first recommended.

The board also will likely authorize paying off the second (and lesser) series of bonds over 11 years, instead of the 22 years projected in September 1997, when voters approved a two-part bond issue totaling \$93.1 million.

General obligation bonds will be used for renovations and other improvements to district school buildings.

Selling bonds now for the second series, and requiring 11 years for property owners to

pay them off, means the \$18.25 million will save more than \$2,700 over the life of the bonds, parts of the bond issue, Ivezaj said.

He paid off \$10 million of the 1997 bond issue last week, if it would come to \$10 million, he said. Instead, the district paid \$10.1 million, he said.

"Our intent was to pay off the sale of the Series II bonds in mid-1999," stated Ivezaj, assistant superintendent of business and finance. "However, due to the current low interest rates, it is recommended that the district pursue the sale now."

Cannon, on Tuesday explained the complicated bond selling process.

"There are companies that buy school bonds and they

However, due to the current low interest rates, it is recommended that the district pursue the sale now."

Cheryl Cannon, assistant superintendent of business and finance

will sell them to investment companies," Cannon said. "The school taxes paid by property owners in designated for paying off those bonds."

The Series II bonds were originally \$18.25 million. But the district's lawyers whittled that down to \$18.25 million and the total of the combined bond issues to \$85.1 million, by allocating \$7.7 million in proceeds from the 1997 bond issue toward reducing the second series.

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Botsford
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Farmington Public Schools' kindergarten round-ups for the 1999-2000 school year begin Monday, Feb. 22 and continue through Friday, Feb. 26.

To be eligible for kindergarten, students must turn 5 by Dec. 1999. To register your child, visit your home school and bring two proofs of residency plus your child's original birth certificate.

If you do not know which school your child will attend, please call Student Services at 489-3329 or School/Community Relations at 489-3349.

If possible, please bring your

child's immunization record with you during kindergarten registration week.

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