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# Farmington Observer

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**Puck drops:** The Plymouth Whalers are ready for the first faceoff of a new hockey season this weekend./C1

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## Planners send a message

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER  
[loconnor@eccentric.com](mailto:loconnor@eccentric.com)

A wireless communications company says it needs a cell tower in Farmington Hills in order to keep customers talking while on I-696.

Motorists' cellular phone service often is distorted or cuts out, a Nextel Communications representative said. A tower north of 11 Mile and east of Middlebelt would rectify the problem, the company official added.

## CELL TOWERS

"There is a signal and frequency in the air," said Randall Reeves of Nextel, "but it's woefully inadequate."

At Thursday's meeting, Farmington Hills planning commissioners made their message clear: There is a need for a tower, but the cellular company needs to sell members of Farmington Hills City Council on the idea.

The commission approved Nextel's certificate of need in a 6-2 vote, with commissioners Bob Bruckner and David Haron dissenting. In a separate vote, the commission approved the tower site plan, 7-1, with Haron in opposition.

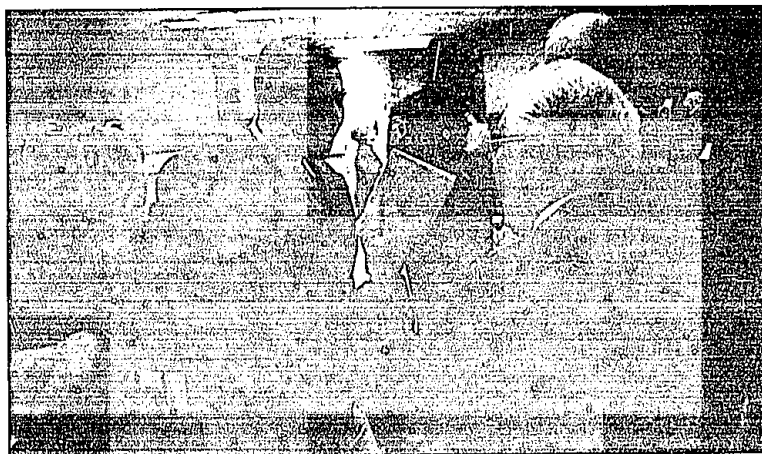
Commissioner Glen Fleischhacker, who works for AT&T, abstained from both votes and discussions.

Please see TOWER, A6



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## Electeds march on state capitol



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRINKER

Hear this: State Rep. Andrew Raczowski showed up at the early morning meeting to refute statements made by Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi regarding House Bill 4777. Raczowski is a co-sponsor of the bill.

Elected officials converged on Lansing to let legislators know what they think about the controversial home rule bill.

BY RICHARD PEARL  
STAFF WRITER  
[rpearl@eccentric.com](mailto:rpearl@eccentric.com)

A cadre of officials from Farmington Hills led their fellows from across Michigan into the state capitol for a counterattack Wednesday morning against what has come to be known as the anti-Home Rule bill.

It was the first volley of what Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi said later would be a continuing assault on House Bill 4777.

Many in local government fear the state legislation, if passed, will undermine their authority to regulate and thereby safeguard the well-being of their individual communities.

"We're going to keep the pressure on," vowed Vagnozzi, despite assurances from such as State Rep. Andrew Raczowski (R-Farmington Hills), a main co-sponsor of the bill, that 4777 likely will be a dead issue soon.

Hills Mayor Pro Tem Nancy Bates and Councilwoman Vicki Barnett joined Vagnozzi in leading more than 25 of their fellow metro Detroiters and an equal number from the Grand

Please see MARCH, A4

## Ouch

### State Rep. takes rap for controversial legislation

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
[tsmith@eccentric.com](mailto:tsmith@eccentric.com)

State Rep. Andrew Raczowski sure is taking his lumps over House Bill 4777, most recently Monday night at the hands of the Farmington City Council.

"I'm glad to see the democratic process is working," said Mayor Pro-Tem Bill Hartsock. "I'm not sure the representative process of government was working."

Ouch.  
"You knew the bill had items that were very sensitive to the city of Farmington," said council member Arnold Campbell.

Ouch.  
And this, from council member

James Mitchell. "I have a question in my mind which constituency you were addressing when you signed on to this bill."

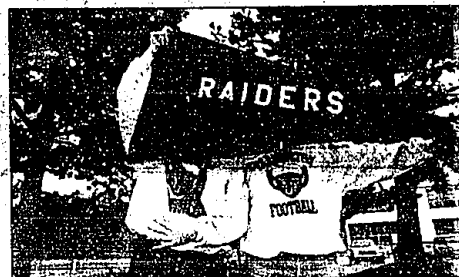
Ouch again.  
Raczowski, the state House floor leader and co-sponsor of House Bill 4777, and council members discussed the proposed bill for nearly an hour Monday night. Municipal officials claim the measure would take away local control on issues such as the regulation of restaurant building signs.

Last week, Raczowski was similarly grilled by the Farmington Hills City Council.

A group of city and township leaders bused up to Lansing yesterday to protest the bill. Among those leading

Please see OUCH, A4

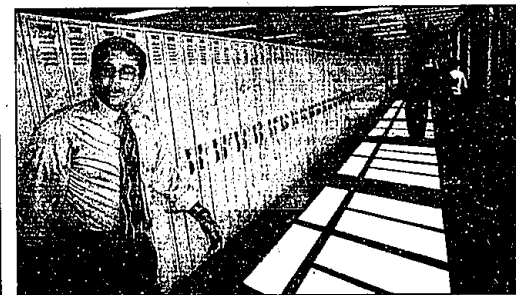
## Spirited



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRINKER

Humility: They lost the game and the bet but not their spirit. North Farmington staffers Linda Lanigan and Dave Brubaker hide from the shame of it all. Forced to wear their rival's colors after Farmington's football team beat North, 21-13, last Friday night for the Little Blue and Brown Jug, they vowed revenge next year.

## Stroll through year tough, but livable



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRINKER

Checking it out: Harrison High School Principal Rande Horn walks down a hallway he described as "dusty."

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
[tsmith@eccentric.com](mailto:tsmith@eccentric.com)

Throughout this entire school year, going to Harrison High School will almost seem like a walk in the basement instead of a walk in the park. The bare, cement floors throughout the campus contribute to that assessment more than anything else.

With construction continuing throughout the 1999-2000 school year, it is something students and staffers will need to get used to. Other inconveniences facing them include dirt, dust, ugly drywall, construction noise and even a faulty air-conditioning unit that shuts off from time to time.

Despite complaints from some parents about the learning environment being hindered by the current atmosphere, most students and teachers are coping surprisingly well.

"I met with a group of kids today," said Harrison Principal Rande Horn

last week. "There were 17 kids there. I asked 'What would your parents think?' Three or four said (parents) would call it a real mess, but the others said would say that it's no big deal."

Parents who have called the Farmington Observer about the situation at Harrison, asking to not be identified, reported that levels of dirt and dust were not acceptable, especially for students who have allergies.

But, Horn said an environmentalist's testing of air samples indicated that "the level of dust is well within tolerable levels" and that there are no students who suffer from asthma.

The cement floors are contributing to the situation. Horn said tiles were removed from the building, constructed about 30 years ago, because they contained levels of asbestos. The district now is considering putting down a cement sealant.

Please see HARRISON, A7

## New O&E general manager named

Banks Dishmon has been named vice president and general manager of The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. He replaces Steve Pope who resigned in August.

Dishmon was publisher of the Observer Newspapers from April 1995 until January of this year when he left to become president and publisher of the Central Michigan Newspapers in Mount Pleasant.

"We're just delighted that Banks Dishmon is coming home," said Philip Power, chairman of HomeTown Communications Network, the parent company of The Observer & Eccentric. "In the years he worked as publisher of

■ 'In the years he worked as publisher of The Observer Newspapers he showed enormous skill, management competence, and consideration for readers, customers and company employees alike.'

Philip Power

—Chairman, HomeTown Communications Network

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Richard Aginian, president of HomeTown Communications Network, said,

"I welcome Banks back with the confidence that he will bring his leadership and other broad skills to this very important position. The challenges that the O&E must address are significant.

Please see MANAGER, A4



Banks Dishmon