

Red-ribbon day



Message of the month: Eagle Elementary School fourth-grade teacher Cheryl Jackson and her class literally stand behind the Sober October theme. All youngsters participated on Monday, Oct. 4, in a ribbon-tying ceremony at the Farmington district school.

Eagle Kids pledge to live healthy

Eagle Elementary School pupils are flying high when it comes to supporting an "intolerant attitude" toward drugs, alcohol and other dangerous habits.

Youngsters at the Farmington district school are taking part in a number of Farmington Families in Action-sponsored activities, for October is Substance Abuse Awareness Month, or "Sober October."

On Friday, Oct. 1, "Eagle Kids" signed a pledge to be "committed to a healthy lifestyle." Those placards will be displayed in the hallways of the 14 Mile-Middlebelt school throughout October.

To augment those pledges, students were encouraged to draw a picture at home illustrating an example of their own healthy lifestyles. Those will decorate the hallways all month.

Then, on Monday, Oct. 4, Eagle pupils tied red ribbons on the fence facing Middlebelt near 14 Mile. The estimated 400 ribbons were constructed during lunch hours by Eagle

SOBER OCTOBER

fifth graders.

Also adorning the fence are banners: "It's Sober October Month" and "Eagle Kids Tie Ribbons," among them.

West Bloomfield police Officer Larry Mifsud, head of the West Bloomfield Canine Unit, will demonstrate 1:30-3 p.m. Monday, Oct. 18, how police dogs are trained to detect illegal drugs. Students will be invited to wear red, the official color of "Sober October," to the assembly. (Eagle is part of the Farmington district, although it is located just across the border in West Bloomfield.)

Meanwhile, Girl Scouts will be planting red tulips at Eagle, to signify the continued commitment to zero tolerance.

Farmington Families in Action is a grassroots parents nonprofit organization with the mission of educating the community about the dangers of substance abuse.



Tie one on: Second graders at Eagle Elementary attach red ribbons on the fence facing Middlebelt near 14 Mile.

Hills leaders testify on House measure

By LARRY O'CONNOR
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Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi and City Attorney John Donohue told state legislators to scrap a House bill, which they and other municipal leaders say will usurp home rule.

Vagnozzi and Donohue testified before the state House Employment Relations, Training and Safety Committee in Lansing on Wednesday morning.

State Rep. Andrew Raczowski (R-Farmington Hills) sits on the committee with state Rep. Robert Gosselin (R-Troy). Raczowski and Gosselin co-sponsor House Bill 4777.

Supporters argue the proposed legislation relieves over-regulation of employers by local governments. They point to prevailing wage laws such as Detroit's, which voters passed.

"How many elections in Detroit is the state going to overturn?" asked Vagnozzi, referring to the elected school board that has been replaced by one appointed by Mayor Dennis Archer.

Those against say the bill has more far-reaching implications than employee wages and no smoking bans.

The bill covers 21 statutes, but a section notes that subject matter covered in the measure is to be "liberally construed." Such broad language makes it "fertile" for potential litigation, Donohue said.

"That should make my colleagues in the bar very active," Donohue said. "I've got two kids to put through college. So, I should be very appreciative of it."

Raczowski asked Donohue if the sentence should be removed.

"I think the whole bill should be dropped and entirely rewritten," Donohue said.

Vagnozzi was also emphatic. He cited Michigan Municipal League opposition as well as similar groups representing townships and counties.

If the bill passed, "We would no longer have government of, for and by the people," Vagnozzi said.

The bill would stifle local governments in dealing with such issues as water pollution, Donohue said. The city attorney added police and zoning enforcement would be adversely affected, too.

A Michigan Restaurant Association spokesman decried over-regulation of business by local

units of government.

The restaurant owner gave Marquette's ban on smoking in restaurants, which is being contested in the state Court of Appeals, and making food handlers wear plastic gloves as examples.

"Unfortunately, if they (local government) delve into these areas, it makes it more difficult to do business," said Jeff Tuma, who owns Embers restaurant in Mount Pleasant.

Detroit's prevailing wage law adversely affects non-profit groups, a Salvation Army major testified.

Companies who bid for city contracts have to pay workers \$10.44 an hour if they don't offer health insurance.

As a result, Salvation Army suspended contracts with the city of Detroit.

At such a wage, the Salvation Army cannot help rehabilitate people recovering from alcoholism or drug abuse by offering them jobs, Major Loren Carter said.

Carter admitted the non-profit organization itself is uncertain if it has to pay prevailing wages, though. If the Salvation Army does, "it would certainly put us out of business," Carter said.

Vagnozzi from page A1

in other communities.

The state representative contends the mayor's attacks are for political gain.

Vagnozzi's term as mayor ends in November. Under term limits, he cannot seek re-election.

Raczowski said he'd encourage Vagnozzi to run.

"I encourage him to run if he wants to run," said Raczowski, who would be seeking his third two-year term in November 2000. "Heck, my parents might run."

Raczowski added, "I'd just hope that Aldo is not playing politics like he is doing with this issue."

Raczowski also took heat from Farmington City Council mem-

bers on the issue during a meeting Sept. 20. Some council members questioned him over who he was representing.

Raczowski has repeatedly denied the bill is on the "fast track," which Vagnozzi contends is the case.

"For someone like Aldo to say I don't represent the community, he is way off base," Raczowski said. "He hasn't been totally truthful with all the facts of the bill."

"He says it will wipe out local control as we know it and that is simply just not the case."

Hills voters overwhelmingly elected Vagnozzi to serve as mayor in 1995 and '97. He had

been on city council since 1989.

Vagnozzi, who is a Democrat, admitted running for a state seat would be "a rough go. It's different running in a partisan race than it is (in) a non-partisan one in this community," Vagnozzi said. "The community is changing, though."

Raczowski upset favored Farmington Board of Education President Cathy Webb in a Republican runoff in August 1996 and swept to an easy victory over Democrat Steve Dibert in the general election a few months later.

Farmington and Farmington Hills voters re-elected Raczowski in 1998.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Cut the cake

Kmart Corp. Tuesday celebrated its 100th anniversary at the Farmington Kmart store on Grand River at Halsted Road.

What was dubbed the "world's largest cake cutting ceremony" celebrated the event.

Second printing

Farmington Observer reporter and author Tim Smith just returned from a book-signing tour in Iowa, Missouri and New York, where he promoted "Miracle Birth Stories of Very Premature Babies - Little Thumbs

Up!"

Smith's book, inspired by the very premature birth of his daughter, Elizabeth, recently went into a second printing.

Also, Smith was profiled during an early Thursday morning segment of "Up Close Today" on WB-20.

Watercolor Artist
Peggy Abrams

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Saturday, October 16
10 am to 2 pm
Birmingham

Saturday, October 16
4 to 8 pm
Rochester

Sunday, October 17
1 to 4 pm
Livonia

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Ornament Signing
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1 to 4 pm
In Trim A Home
Livonia

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