

THE WEEK AHEAD

Lest we forget: Post offices and banks will be closed Monday in observance of Veterans Day. City Halls will be open.

MONDAY

Farmington Hills City Council: Newly elected Mayor Nancy Bates and council members Jerry Ellis, Jon Grant and Cheryl Oliverio will be sworn in before Monday night's regular meeting, which begins in council chambers at 7:30 p.m. The regular agenda includes a public hearing on the vacation of Clariview Drive and Clairview Court, a request to transfer ownership of a Class C licensed business on Golf Point, consideration of a special ordinance to convey city property and an ordinance amendment regarding sewer discharges. City Hall is located at Orchard Lake and 11 Mile roads.

THURSDAY

Hills Planning Commission: Public hearings on Planned Unit Development plans for Lowe's Home Center and property on the north side of Grand River east and west of Waldron Road will be on the commission's agenda. The meeting, which is broadcast on Channel 8, begins at 7:30 p.m.

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Should kids start school later?



Farmington Schools has formed a committee charged with looking at the impacts of delaying school start times to give students an extra hour of sleep every day. A forum will be held in Walled Lake on Nov. 12.

BY SUE BUCK
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Sleep-deprived high school students who catch their zzzs during first hour may be able to set their biorythmic clock right, if a new committee concurs with studies of school starting times. The committee was appointed this week by Farmington School Superin-

tendent Bob Maxfield. An organizational meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Monday, Nov. 12, at the Farmington Training Center, 33000 Thomas.

School superintendents have discussed the issue of delaying start times for some time after they learned several school districts in the Minneapolis, Minn., made the change with reportedly positive results. Those invited to serve on the commit-

tee include parents who have expressed interest about the subject in the past, Maxfield said. There's elementary, middle school and high school representation. Student Round Table members selected one student from each high school.

"There was no particular brilliant way of doing it," he said when asked about criteria used.

Maxfield said he talked with the Northville School Superintendent Leonard Rezmierski for two years about this subject. Some time ago Maxfield posed the question to other school districts to determine interest. The Michigan Association of School

Boards in Lansing could find no other school district in the state that has made a time change decision based on this data. Maxfield also says he knows of none but points to the success in Minnesota.

Regional talks

The "Regional Forum Discussion on High School Start Times" is scheduled for 7 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 28 at the Walled Lake Central High School, 1600 Oakley Park Road, at the corner of South Commerce and Oakley Park in Walled Lake.

A flyer promoting the event indicates Please see **START, A2**

Making Magic



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRISLER

Mystified: Longacre students watch as artistic magic is performed before their eyes by illustrator Gijbert Van Frankenhuyzen.

Spruced up

Author, illustrator visit Longacre

BY SUE BUCK
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When Mario Cuomo, then governor of New York, wanted to write a children's book based on a story his father told him, he turned to an author and illustrator who visited Longacre Elementary recently. Michigan author Kathy-Jo Wargin was Cuomo's ghost writer and Gijbert Van Frankenhuyzen illustrated *The Blue Spruce*, which earned the 2000 National Arbor Day award. Wargin and Van Frankenhuyzen

planned a two-week visit to more than 2,500 elementary students in the district.

"You wait and you wait and you never give up," Van Frankenhuyzen said was Cuomo's message.

They spoke in a private interview after presentations at Longacre Elementary.

Cuomo reportedly told the blue spruce tree all his dreams as he grew up and was horrified when one day it was uprooted following a lightning storm. He and his father righted the tree, carefully replanting its roots. It

still stands as a symbol of determination, though the Cuomo family no longer lives in that house, Van Frankenhuyzen said.

The book was intended to especially appeal to boys about 9 or 10 years old, Van Frankenhuyzen said.

The illustrator remembers his conversations with Cuomo as genuine and down-to-earth. Van Frankenhuyzen was impressed with the politician's interest in his work as a children's book illustrator.

Please see **BOOK, A4**

Election dates may change

School district officials oppose bills in the state senate that would unify election dates, but city officials believe the consolidation would boost turnout and save taxpayer dollars.

BY SUE BUCK
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Keeping school and city elections separate is Farmington School Superintendent Bob Maxfield's main concern.

With several bills in the Senate, legislators are debating the number of times districts and municipalities can schedule elections, putting school elections under the control of municipal clerks, and changing the month to hold board elections.

"This is a solution looking for a problem," Maxfield said. "Forcing election consolidation won't create a more informed electorate."

He has written Senator Bill Bullard expressing his viewpoints on moving school elections to the November ballot, telling him, "I would appreciate your opposition."

"What's right about it?" Maxfield asked.

The school district works closely with the Farmington Hills City Clerk's office. School precincts are located in Farmington Hills.

Long-held system

School elections have been handled in the same manner for 100 years, before Farmington Hills even became a city, he said.

"We've functioned very well for a long time," Maxfield said. "These are two parallel entities. That's our system. We need to have community control of schools. It's the principle of the thing. Mushing it up with the city is awkward."

Further, because Maxfield anticipates the school board section would be at the bottom of a November ballot,

Please see **ELECTIONS, A3**

Property owner may fight fire station expansion

While city officials are poised to upgrade Fire Station No. 3, the owner of an adjacent property isn't interested in selling to accommodate the project.

BY KEVIN BROWN
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The completion of a city-wide fire station upgrade in Farmington Hills may not be a sure thing.

City officials are acting to upgrade Fire Station No. 3, the city's oldest. It is the last of the five Hills fire stations scheduled for renovation or rebuilding in the past few years.

"It was built in the '40s. It needs to be built better," said City Manager Steve Brock.

But a manager of a property just south of the fire station says the owner is not interested in selling.

Don Vickery, general manager of Duffy's & Associates Inc. plumbing supplies, 28250 Grand River, said the business got a letter from the city three or four months ago, expressing interest in buying the property.

"We told them at that time we

did not want to sell. We've been in business at this location over 50 years." He said the shop is a prime source of income for owner JoEllen Gerbeck. "I don't know how it's going to happen," Vickery said.

Brock responded, "He's not the owner."

The city recently bought a house on Wheeler Street, across from the fire station. The \$200,000 purchase was approved by city council Oct. 16. Brock said negotiations are underway to buy Duffy's and another property southwest of the current fire station.

Once all the property is controlled by the city, plans will be formed to build a larger fire station with access to Grand River, south of the current station. "We are still a couple of years away from that," Brock said.

The goal is not to increase staff

Please see **STATION, A4**



Expansion: Farmington Hills has plans for the fire station on Wheeler Street north of Grand River. However, the owner of a property to the south is apparently unwilling to sell, which could put those plans in jeopardy.

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRISLER