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3 file for 2 seats on C'ville board

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER
hneedham@homecomm.net

A full-time mother, a print shop co-owner and a school board incumbent make up the list of those vying for seats on the Clarenceville Board of Education in the June 10 election.

Incumbent Gary Garrison and newcomers Ebonne Meili and Kimberly Bibik all filed their petitions by the April 8 deadline. All are vying for two four-year terms. The two receiving the highest numbers of votes will win the seats.

Trustee John Shaw, whose term expires June 30, has decided not to run again.

Clarenceville school board members earn \$25 per meeting and attend an average of 20 meetings annually, totaling about \$500. An estimated 1,923 students from Livonia, Redford and Farmington Hills encompass the Clarenceville district, which has one high school, one middle school and two elementary schools.

Meili, 32, of Livonia who co-owns Ross Printing in Southfield with her husband Ross, said she was not drawn to a school board bid because of any burning issue.

"The opportunity presented itself and I figured it was a good way to give back to the community," Meili said.

She has been married to Ross for five years and has four children — Brian, 20 months; Sarah, 3; Caitlin, 12 and Mick, 15.

The ongoing North Central Association on Accreditation and School Improvement process and implementing block scheduling at the high school are among the exciting things the board has worked on as of late, Meili said.

Clarenceville's small student body is particularly attractive to parents, Meili said.

"I like the fact that we're a small school (district) in a big city," she said.

Bibik, 40, a full-time mother and Livonia resident, has lived in the Clarenceville district nearly all her life. She is married to Dave and has four children — Thad, 12; Jacob, 10; Reba, 8 and Aaron, 6.

"I have a great interest in the well-being of the children of tomorrow," she said.

Bibik said she cultivates her interest in children by leading a 17-member Girl Scout troop and by getting involved in her sons' scouting activities as well.

Like Meili, Bibik said she wasn't drawn to a school board bid because of any burning issue. Also like Meili, she said she thought the North Central accreditation process and block scheduling were important current board issues.

"I really respect the direction the board has been going and I want to be a part of that," Bibik said.

Incumbent candidate Garrison has been on the Clarenceville board for two four-year terms and said he initially planned for this term to be his last.

"I thought it was too important of a job to just leave behind," said Garrison, who is an equipment maintenance foreman for the city of Livonia. He lives in Livonia with his wife, Lori and two children, Mark, a college freshman and Steven, a Clarenceville High School freshman.

He said technology is one of the district's primary bringing points. The district is offering some classes on-line, and plans to offer video classes as well.

Garrison said he likes that he's not the only one running for a board seat.

"I really believe it's important that people have a choice," he said.

Zoning changed for new dentist office

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER
hneedham@homecomm.net

A rezoning request that sparked some debate among Farmington Hills City Council members has paved the way for a longtime dentist to move into new digs less than a mile away.

Council voted 5-2 to approve the rezoning request.

Dr. David Clark, who practices in rented office space on 30330 Middlebelt, plans to build his own office on 29330 Middlebelt, east of 12 Mile, and open it to his estimated 2,000 patients within 18 months.

Clark co-owns the business with his wife of 18 years, Carolyn Romick, who also is a dentist. The office space will expand from 1,500 to 3,300 with the new building.

"I'm just thrilled that the rezoning went through," Clark said. "We've been pursuing the property for a long time."

He agreed to purchase the .7 acre parcel of land — for an undisclosed price — from private owner Marilyn Catherine Brady-Unger contingent on the rezoning.

With the council's 5-2 vote, the land was rezoned from residential use to office service district, which is the designated use in the city's master plan.

Mayor Pro-Tem Chris McRae moved to deny the request, with Councilwoman Vicki Barnett supporting him.

"I think (the land use) is out of character for the area," McRae said.

The proposed site is located within an area of both residential and commercial uses.

Barnett agreed.

"I think that's a dangerous precedent," she said. "There's no reason to think residential can't go in there now."

The other five council members voted against McRae's denial, citing the office use being listed in the city's master plan for 20 years.

"I just can't support denying the request," Councilman Jerry Ellis said. "This has been master planned (office service district) for over 20 years."

Obee's debut benefits All Night committee

Obee's Soup, Salad & Subs, located at 33328 Farmington Road, just north of 12 Mile in the Farmer Jack Shopping Plaza in Farmington Hills, is celebrating its grand opening with a special promotion to benefit North Farmington High School graduates.

Beginning Monday, April 22, through Friday, May 3, Obee's will donate 25 cents from every sandwich sold to the North Farmington High School 2002 All Night Party Committee.

The promotion will culminate at 11:30 a.m. Friday, May 3, with a special ribbon cutting ceremony at the restaurant attended by local dignitaries.

"We're very happy to be a new part of the Farmington area," states Obee's owner, Raj Reddy. "This promotion is a way we can demonstrate our commitment to the community by helping to create a healthy and safe environment for our students."

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