



Chat Room

Eleanor Blum

## Meet the State Board of Education

We vote for members of the State Board of Education every four years and read about MEAP scores, and few have ever seen the faces of the State Board or know what they do. I attended the August meeting and to bring those of us in Farmington up to date, here is what they are working on with State Superintendent Tom Watkins in Lansing.

Member Sharon Wise reported about the Early Literacy Task Force. This is something important to all of us. The goals of the task force are to ensure: 1) all children enter school ready to learn, 2) all children become independent leaders/communicators who can understand and apply information within their daily lives, 3) all schools are ready to meet the needs of all children.

Putting reading materials into new parents' hands as quickly as possible is a major goal. New parents need to receive learning materials while in the hospital with their newborns.

Partnerships need to be built with local libraries, including the University of Michigan, to encourage use of the library to promote reading readiness and early literacy and to develop children and family programs that support acquisitions of early reading skills. READY Kits need to be distributed to new mothers. They are materials mothers can use for stimulating learning and preparing children to read.

Member Marianne Yared McGuire chaired a committee whose goals are to decipher what it takes to make a good principal. Identifying what makes a good school leader and what schools and their leaders can do to close the achievement gap is what McGuire and her committee have spent much time on.

Governor John Engler said remarks made to the Republican State Convention on Aug. 23, 2002, "We need good, qualified principals to lead our schools and not people who are there because of seniority. Let's do away with seniority lists and get qualified principals."

Chairperson McGuire's committee seeks to bring about changes in the placement of principals. Coming quickly, I believe principals will need to meet certain criteria to be certified and receive an endorsement from the State.

Much discussion took place regarding the Education YES accreditation timeline. By December 2002, the criteria and scores of individual state schools will be ready and made public. The committee is still working on this project. Superintendent Tom Watkins said, "Education criteria needs to be defendable."

To assist schools in achieving excellence, all Title I Schools must have qualified teachers, certified in their area by 2006. Member Michael Warren is concerned that the timeline for Education YES is not moving along as planned. He believes that the cut-score, which is criteria for each school grade A-D, ought to have been set in the elementary and middle schools by now. "I am skip-



Nancy Maxwell, Marie Borri, Kathleen Donnelly and Jill Purtan-Swoish are in their new office space and planning this year's program.

PHOTOS BY BILL BRUESLER/OBSERVER

## Sweet Dreamzzz moves into new headquarters on Grand River

BY JON HUBRED  
STAFF WRITER

A passion that started at Kathleen Donnelly's kitchen table has a new home.

Sweet Dreamzzz Detroit, a local non-profit organization, relocated this month to 32729 Grand River, in Farmington. The group didn't move far - they spent the past 18 months in office space just down the street, donated by Paul Wensson, owner of Mystic Medical Supplies. The office space was valued at \$2,000 a month.

"The lease was up and it was time for us to find something on our own," said Nancy Maxwell, Director of Operations.

"We wanted to stay in Farmington," Donnelly added. "Many of our volunteers are in Farmington, and the community has been very supportive."

The move was made possible with help from Adrian Owens, owner, Papa John's Pizza of Farmington, David Judge, owner, Judge Asset Management, Brian Golden, low voltage assistant, and Power Carpentry Company, Donnelly said.

Founded in 1991, Sweet Dreamzzz Detroit has been an official non-profit since 2001. The events of Sept. 11 last year did result in some difficulty getting financial support, but the organization deals primarily in goods and services - and those were always in good supply.

Sweet Dreamzzz provides children in need with sleeping kits that include a pillow, a sleeping bag, nightshirt, toothbrush and other goodies. Volunteers also provide sleep education, teaching kids what to do to ensure a good night's sleep and why sleep is important to their well being.

Because education is part of the package, Sweet Dreamzzz has gotten assistance from groups like the National Sleep Foundation and Henry Ford Hospital's Sleep Center, Donnelly said. Walmart has been a big contributor this year, along with Ronald McDonald



Marie Borri, Kathleen Donnelly, Jill Purtan-Swoish and Nancy Maxwell have moved out of their kitchens and into office space.

House Charities, Maxwell added.

The group has targeted schools where large numbers of children receive free hot lunch, which is an indicator that they live at or below the poverty level.

Sweet Dreamzzz's goal for this year is to serve 10,000 children, and they're well on their way. So far,

they've reached out to 8,000 kids, with plans to serve another 2,000 in November.

Donnelly, Maxwell, Program Manager Maria Borri and Long-term Fundraising Manager Jill Purtan-

PLEASE SEE DREAMS, C9

## New synagogue opens doors for Sephardic Jews

BY SUSAN B. TAUBER  
STAFF WRITER

Rabbi Michael Cohen believes people are works in progress.

So is the synagogue where he leads religious services and education classes. Keter Torah Synagogue at 5480 Orchard Lake Road at Walnut Lake Road has been under construction for the past year.

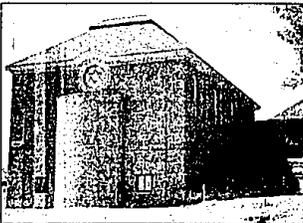
While it's not complete, Cohen is leading High Holiday services in the building Sunday and Monday, Sept. 15-16 followed by a class on the next holiday, Succot, which celebrates the harvest, at 7:45 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 17 and Sabbath services at 9 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 21.

The building isn't elaborate or fancy on the outside. A round window is visible from Orchard Lake Road. In it is the Star of David, representative of the Jewish faith.

It's inside where the house of worship really shines. Sunlight streams through the colored round window, adding warmth to the sanctuary. The most striking element is the ark, which holds the synagogue's Torahs, or books of Moses, handwritten in Hebrew. The ark doors are made from inlaid wood and other materials, representing the 12 tribes of Israel. The ark and doors were handcrafted by Alex Gruss, who lives in Rock and New York.

The sanctuary is based on the design of a synagogue in Nice, France.

People may notice a difference from what they're used to if they attend services or a class at Keter



Keter Torah, the first Sephardic Jewish synagogue in the area, was recently completed at the corner of Orchard Lake Road and Walnut Lake Road in West Bloomfield.

Torah, which means Crown of the Torah.

The synagogue follows the Sephardic, or Spanish, traditions of Judaism. It's the first and only Sephardic house of worship in Michigan. Many other congregations in the area are based on Ashkenazic, or Eastern European traditions.

The synagogue has been in progress for 85 years.

Rick Behar, of Farmington Hills, knows the history well.

His grandparents, Jacob and Judith Chlorel, came to America from Izmir, Turkey in 1917.

"My grandfather was a trained chazzan (person who

leads the congregation in prayer). When he came to this area, he was seeking a synagogue that used the same melodies and order of prayers that he was used to," said Behar.

Chlorel went to a number of Ashkenazic synagogues but they weren't the same, Behar said. And although Chlorel spoke many languages, he didn't speak the same form of Yiddish that the Ashkenazic Jews spoke. Instead, he spoke Ladino, a combination of Spanish and Yiddish.

Behar said his grandfather decided to start an organization with the few other Sephardim in the community.

Over the years, the congregation, the Sephardic Community of Greater Detroit, attracted people from 20-30 different countries, such as Spain, Greece, Turkey, Salonika, North Africa, Egypt, Tunisia, Israel and Persia.

### NEW HOME

For 85 years, they met in homes and buildings. They never had a rabbi or a permanent place of their own. Until now.

The congregation, which has about 70 families, had its first service in its new home on Thursday, Sept. 5 when it had a celebration for moving its Torahs (each containing the five books of Moses) into the building. Anyone is welcome to attend a service or a class at the Sephardic congregation.

PLEASE SEE SYNAGOGUE, C7