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FARMINGTON Observer

Sugar plums

Aspiring dancers
performing in the
Nutcracker Ballet.

B1



Sam's, Buca headed for the Hills

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

Gary Sakwa has plunked down \$20 million so far to develop what is known as the "Golden Triangle," aka North Orchard Place, nestled between Northwestern Highway and Orchard Lake.

The developer made it clear to the

Farmington Hills City Council Monday that:

A) He's willing to work with the city staff, planning commission and city council to get some high profile retailers ready to start building for Phase 1B.

B) He can't buy remaining homes in a proposed project area in West until he has a retailer willing to build on it.

And C) He and the proposed retailers

can't wait forever for the staff, the planning commission and the council to make up their collective minds about how they want the project to look.

The council, in a nearly three-hour discussion Monday, granted conditional approval of the next phase, providing that council members' suggestions are taken to heart. The vote was 6-1 with councilman Jon Grant dissenting.

Grant said the project had too many issues to address, and he didn't want to approve a "moving target."

If all goes well, the council could see the latest plans at its Dec. 16 meeting, with the planning commission reviewing them before that date.

While Home Depot is nearly complete

PLEASE SEE COMING, A2

Our Towns

Grand Opening

Burger King at 32704 Grand River, will kick off its Grand Re-Opening Celebration beginning with a ribbon cutting ceremony at 1:30 p.m. today, Nov. 21.

Other events will include an appearance by WDRO 93.1, giveaways, and an appearance by Butterfly the Clown for balloon sculptures and face-painting. Visitors can also register to win a variety of prizes including a Moss stereo boombox and a Dr. Pepper Mountain Bike. Drawing for the bike will be at 4 p.m. Festivities run until 5 p.m.

Recycling reward

Monique Pothoff of Farmington Hills was one of the latest \$50 winners in Take Another Look, a program sponsored by the Resource Recovery and Recycling Authority of Southwest Oakland County.

Take Another Look is an incentive program to encourage increased recycling and waste reduction, with a focus on proper preparation of recyclable material.

RRASC staff members tour curbsides prior to the arrival of garbage and recycling trucks and randomly select winners for the program each month.

Our Town

Mercy High School will present "Our Town" at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday Nov. 15-16 and 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 17. Tickets are \$7 at the Mercy



Stage Manager Emily Gruber

High School Auditorium at 11 Mile and Middlebelt in Farmington Hills.

In the classic play, Thornton Wilder, through his narrator, the Stage Manager, reveals to the audience a generation of hopes, joys, dreams and sorrows in Grover's Corners as seen through the eyes of the Webb and Gibbs families.

Cast members are students at Mercy High, Brother Rice High School, Catholic Central High School, Crestwood High School, Our Lady of Sorrows School and University of Detroit Jesuit High School.

For more information, call (248) 476-8020 ext. 1223.

Top hats

Arnette Carter and Carolee Waddell chat at the first-ever Red Hat Ladies lunch, held at Botsford Commons this week. Learn more about their adventures on page A3.



BILL BRESLER / OBSERVER

Committee explores senior project

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Public Schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield sent letters to principals last week clarifying goals in developing the senior project, which was approved by the school board in concept last spring as a district graduation requirement.

Senior projects are extensive, intensive and done by students in their senior year to demonstrate a student's knowledge of a topic they choose to research. No timeline has been established for implementing the requirement, and officials are awaiting the findings of a committee before they move forward.

Parents have expressed concern over making the project a requirement; some have lobbied to offer it as an elective, because of the extra work a senior project may create for busy seniors. After their comments at a Nov. 5 board

PLEASE SEE SENIORS, A5

Nextel tower would end 'dropped' cell phone calls

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

Nextel cellular phone users tend to experience "dropped" calls in one of Farmington Hills' busiest intersections: the 13 Mile corridor along Orchard Lake.

Company officials know this and are proposing to build a signal and antenna operation on top of the Bond Building on 13 Mile west of Orchard Lake to cure the problem.

Todd Wells, attorney representing the company at the Hills City Council meeting Monday, said the tower would be made to look like a typical unit enclosure. The walls surrounding the unit would match the facade of the building.

"We've had complaints from our customers that they have to go outdoors in the area there to use their phones," Wells told the council.

He asked the council to consider approval of the request with two exceptions to the city's cell tower ordinance.

PLEASE SEE TOWER, A2

Main Street consultants think big, bold

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

National Main Street executive Nicholas Kalogeris issued a challenge Tuesday to Farmington Downtown Development Authority board members, business owners and others gathered at the Masonic Temple.

"Take it or leave it. I like to be a little

bit bold when I work with communities. You really need to look at your downtown center area and think on a grand scale. Make it look nicer. Make it more pedestrian-oriented. Make it connect to this downtown core so people are more encouraged to walk."

Kalogeris is part of a team that spent two days listening to residents to begin a three-year grant from the

Main Street program, which will provide technological assistance from Oakland County.

Accompanying Kalogeris were Bob Donohue Jr. and Russ Lewis, both planners with Oakland County's Downtown Redevelopment office. The group held court in Farmington City Council chambers Monday and the

PLEASE SEE MAIN STREET, A7

Salvation Army seeks bell-ringers

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

Bell ringers for the Salvation Army of Farmington Hills' Red Kettle Drive say the same thing.

"They feel good about doing it. Volunteers are needed to help the chapter meet its goal of collecting \$140,000 this holiday season."

The money raised helps people in the area year 'round, said Karen Guerrero, office manager.

People are needed to stand outside area stores in Farmington Hills, Novi and Southfield and



BILL BRESLER / OBSERVER

Captain Yong Kim and Tony Tatum inspect Salvation Army kettles that are ready to go.

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LOOKING AHEAD

Focus on Wine
In Sunday's Taste section:
Choose zinfandel for your Thanksgiving feast



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