



FARMINGTON Observer

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Our Towns

Lottery winner

Phil Almaki of Farmington Hills recently won \$5,824 from the Michigan Lottery's Change Play game. Almaki, a local restaurant owner, bought the winning ticket at Carmen's Deli and Party Store in Detroit. "I went to a local lottery retailer to pick up a winning number report for that day's drawing," said Almaki. "I couldn't believe it when I realized I had won."

Almaki, 34, said he went directly to the Lottery's regional office in Sterling Heights to claim his winnings upon learning he had won. Almaki, who enjoys watching football in his spare time, said he plans to use his winnings to pay bills.

AAA sampler

Staffers from AAA

Michigan's Farmington Hills branch office will serve free samples of Eximo Kiss Punch and Cafe Getala's Hot Caramel Cider from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 20, in the branch office, 38751 W. 12 Mile between Haledale and Haggerty. The samples are two of 16 nonalcoholic party-drink recipes from The Great Pretenders Party Guide, published by the Auto Club Group of AAA clubs in the Midwest. Free copies of the guide will be handed out during the event, which is open to the public. The Great Pretenders Party Guide, a colorful 20-page booklet, is the main feature of AAA's annual "First a Friend, Then a Host" program to discourage drunken driving during the holiday season by providing recipes party hosts can use to offer nonalcoholic options.

The guide also includes three fancy party-snack recipes. All the recipes were provided by chefs and beverage managers at AAA Diamond-rated restaurants and hotels in the Midwest.

So long, farewell

Everyone is invited to join

Marco Conte and the staff at

Marco's for their last holiday party

ever, at 10 p.m. on New Year's Eve.

The very upscale cocktail/gourmet

appetizer party is being dubbed the restaurant's "Till we meet again" celebration, Marco said.

It's very important to me to say "I'll see you soon" to the public that has become a very large part of my life. It's going to be a very sentimental night for my staff, our patrons and especially myself. The party will run from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. with a cash bar and gourmet food stations all evening and into the morning. Champagne and party favors will be offered at midnight, and a D.J. will keep the crowd dancing. The cover charge will be \$30 per person at the door. Reservations are required; call 248-471-7177.

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Donna Roden believes that moisture from the creek may contribute to health problems her family experiences.

Family traces health issues to creek

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

Mold developing in newer homes has made news in recent years, but what about a house that has mold issues outside?

Farmington Hills resident Donna Roden said a recent health study of indoor and outdoor air around her home in the Woodland Acres subdivision revealed some scary numbers.

The ranch home she shares with her husband Kevin, 1-year-old daughter

Haley and their dog has serious air quality issues, she said. Even her dog has to have weekly allergy injections.

Roden believes the problem should be corrected with the city's help. She uses two air filters and a dehumidifier and that has helped the inside air, but she and her husband are also spending more than \$5,000 to put a liner under the home's crawl space, since stagnant water is developing there, she said.

The problem begins in the subdivision where a creek runs through two parallel properties east of Flanders Elementary

School, Roden said.

These properties used to have natural springs until the city filled them in when sewers were built several years ago, she said. A road scraper filled half of a culvert with dirt as well, preventing runoff to flow properly, she said.

Now water stagnates in the creek, she said.

Roden paid for an air study in November performed by a firm based in Ann Arbor. The numbers revealed unsafe

PLEASE SEE CREEK, A4

Student organizes benefit

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER

Farmington High junior Rachel Button not only wants to help raise money for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, but she wants to lend a helping hand to a couple of cousins.

Getting a good grade on a school project in her leadership class was a plus for her, too. Fortunately, she found a way to do all these things at once.

A concert and fund-raiser for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation is planned for 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 10, in the Farmington High auditorium. Headlining the concert will be

the folk/bluegrass band Four Days, which is recording its first CD in New York and was recently featured on MTV's "FMNation" program. The band also is receiving some air play on a Lansing college radio station.

Kyle Rasche, a Four Days band member and Lansing native, happens to be Button's cousin. He plays acoustic guitar, handles some songwriting and singing duties and plays some other eclectic instruments.

Rasche also can "harmonize like a madman," according to the band's Web site.

PLEASE SEE BENEFIT, A6

North Orchard plans approved

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

Architect Omar Palomarez has been designing Sam's Clubs across the United States for the last five years.

He said Farmington Hills matches just one other city, located in Kansas, for having such a tough city leadership to please when it comes to building one of the "big box" retail stores.

The Farmington Hills City Council might be picky, but members said they want the North Orchard Place development between Northwestern Highway and Orchard Lake to look unique.

And that means an unparalleled-looking Sam's Club.

They got that Monday as the council

approved Phase 1B development site plan that will neighbor a soon-to-open Home Depot in the project area being dubbed by some as the "Golden Triangle." The name comes from its triangular shape and close proximity to affluent homeowners in northern Farmington Hills and West Bloomfield.

Expect a Sam's Club with a brick front, "cultured" stone pillars and a faux second floor with false windows to give the massive building a less industrial appearance.

The shopping corral in the tree-filled parking lot will be surrounded by landscaping to appear friendlier.

Besides a Sam's Club, the Italian family restaurant Buca di Beppo and another 8,000-

PLEASE SEE PLANS, A4



Mentor Dale Countegon notes that Raja Sulaiman's school locker is considerably narrower than the locker Dale had when he was in school.

East kids host mentors

BY JONI HUBBARD
STAFF WRITER

A few of the students attending East Middle School last Thursday morning looked a little too old to be in class.

Volunteers with a mentorship program offered through Farmington Public Schools spent the day at East with the students they'll get to know during the school year. Adults and students in

grades six-eight met for the first time in late November, after a broken sewer line postponed their initial visit scheduled the first week of the month.

On Thursday, students met adults in their homerooms, under the guidance of teachers Marybeth Sikora, Lisa Drane and Brian Toth. They dispersed to classrooms, with most adults staying just through the

PLEASE SEE MENTORS, A5

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LOOKING AHEAD
Focus on wine
California's Anderson Valley may be the best place in the United States to grow chardonnay and pinot noir for sparkling wine.

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