

Ministries work to fill needs of lonely, 5B



Ford picks U-D, 1B

Mobile home residents organize coalition, 2A

Farmington Observer

Volume 97 Number 56

Monday, April 21, 1986

Farmington, Michigan

40 Pages

Twenty-Five Cents

Farmington FOCUS

If you have a news item, feature story idea or an action picture with a Farmington area connection, send a note to our downtown office at 33263 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

FORMER Farmington Observer editor Steven Barnaby, now Observer & Eccentric Newspapers managing editor, will be among the judges for the second annual Focus: HOPE Journalism Olympics Thursday, May 1, at the Focus: HOPE Industry Mall, Detroit.

Chosen as their school's best, two students from each of the 263 tri-county high schools will compete for \$2,000 in scholarships during the day-long, hands-on exercise in reporting and writing on deadline.

ATTENTION, school art lovers.

The Farmington Area Arts Commission is able to provide a \$50 subsidy toward arts programs — fine arts, poetry, dance and music — this school year.

Direct queries to Farmington Public Schools' principals.

ZEROING IN on energy. Farmington Hills City Council April 14 authorized the public services director to retain State Wide Aluminum Products at a cost of up to \$4,458 to supply and install energy efficient storm windows in the city hall.

The windows will be to city specifications. "This energy-saving project will help make city hall more energy efficient in terms of its use of natural gas for heating in the winter and electricity for cooling in the summer," City Manager William Costick said.

"It is anticipated that this project will pay for itself in two to three years."

NO GO. Both Farmington and Farmington Hills have chosen not to support an Oak Park resolution urging establishment of a branch office of the county clerk in the southeast part of Oakland County.

Both city councils pointed out that a county clerk's office in southeast Oakland County probably wouldn't be much closer than the clerk's main office in the county complex in Pontiac.

SHE'S honored. Melissa Taylor, principal cellist with the University of Michigan Youth Symphony, has won a \$1,150 scholarship to attend Interlochen National Music camp this summer.

The Farmington Hills Mercy High School student also won Farmington Musicale's Excellence in Music first-place award in competition with ninth and 10th graders early this spring.

REMINDER: This is Plastics Week in Michigan, recognizing the contribution of the plastics industry to Michigan's economy. This also is National Consumers Week. President Reagan has proclaimed "Consumers Rate Quality" as the theme.

FOOTNOTES: One year ago this week — While increased building activity in Farmington Hills is a welcome sight for most, it's also causing a maintenance problem on the roads.

Despite a city ordinance requiring builders to clean up the roads near their construction sites, city staff and council members have been getting complaints from residents about the messy roads.

Schools eyeing a similar tax rate

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Farmington Public Schools will likely continue to levy \$2.5 operating mills for 1986-87 and may budget \$2.5 million to begin a districtwide building repair program.

The rate is four mills less than the district's 36.5 millage levy maximum. A mill in the Farmington district equals about \$1.4 million, according to officials.

Preliminary budget figures were released Tuesday at a school board budget study session. The session precedes the required truth-in-taxation hearing scheduled for May 20 where the public's budget voice is heard. Adoption of the district's annual budget is scheduled for June 3.

THE BUDGET includes \$56 million in revenues, \$53.5 million in expenses and \$2.5 million for building repairs. The majority of the budget is salaries.

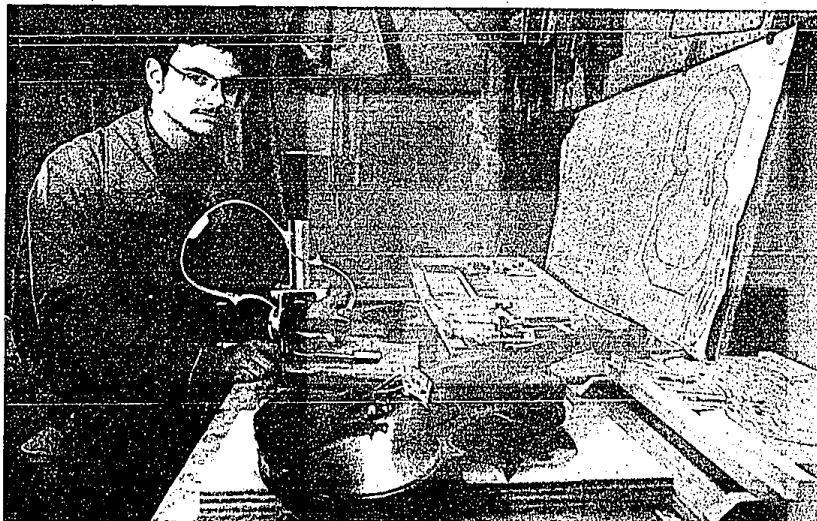
The proposal represents a \$5.2 million increase from the previous year, Michael Flanagan, assistant superintendent for finance, reported.

The increase is due to the inclusion of food services and athletic budgets, which were noted as line items for the first time this year, salary increases, equalization of the district's bus transportation system and increases in elementary and special education staffs due to projected growth in these areas.

IF NO major budget adjustments occur this year, the district will not have to dip into its fund equity of between \$3 and \$3.5 million, Flanagan said. Because of predicted future changes in school funding at the state level, Flanagan predicts the out-of-formula district may need the fund.

Under state law, the board can amend the district's budget monthly, if necessary. What they cannot do, is change the levied millage rate to the

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RANDY DORST/staff photographer

North Farmington senior John Lucas crafts a violin in his garage workshop.

Woodworker Hills teen fashions string instruments

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Shaping and carving the subtle, wooden curves of a traditional violin has become an integral part of John Lucas' life.

While many high school friends spend their money on entertainment, Lucas spends his on specialty woods and hand tools as he develops his craft of creating string instruments. Most of his free time is also spent on projects.

"I dabble in the exotic woods," the North Farmington High School senior said. He scouts specialty lumber yards for woods that add detailing and leave his individual mark on woodworking projects. "It's the special, fine details that add up the time," he added.

Lucas developed the necessary

patience to fine-tune his musical woodworking — a hobby that intrigues him.

"I try to touch on every aspect of the woodworking," he explained. "Basically, I work for the sound and craftsmanship. I have a lot of respect now for the tools."

HIS INTEREST stems from school woodworking courses, which trained him to make everything from a grandfather clock to gun stocks, chess pieces and tables and a recently completed cedar canoe that sits in his family's garage awaiting warmer summer months.

'I try to touch on every aspect of the woodworking. Basically, I work for the sound and craftsmanship. I have a lot of respect now for the tools.'

— John Lucas
North Farmington senior

To Lucas, warm weather is not spent entirely in the garage working with wood. It also means kayaking on area rivers and participating in sports like trout fishing — where he can use his handmade trout net, which he shows with pride. His love of the outdoors followed him on a recent spring break to Florida, where he spent

time in the Keys. His creation of string instruments does not extend to a knowledge of playing them, although Lucas does play the guitar. He recently finished a traditional rosewood violin and a modern-looking fiddle with a natural finish.

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12 Mile bridge to be widened

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Although city officials support the Oakland County Road Commission's planned widening of the 12 Mile Road bridge at Pebble Creek, they are hoping it can be delayed until next year so resurfacing of the county road can be included in the project.

"They are going to consider postponing it," said Thomas Biasell, Farmington Hills public services director, after discussing the project with county engineers Friday.

City officials are requesting the resurfacing of 12 Mile, between Inkster and Orchard Lake roads. The county road commission has also been asked to consider installing left-turn areas along the roadway for subdivision entrances, Biasell said.

The project's postponement would be better financially because by the time bids could be taken in August this year, construction prices will be higher, Biasell said.

The estimated \$500,000 project will be financed primarily by the state and federal governments. The county and Farmington Hills will each pay approximately \$46,000, which includes preliminary costs.

DESPITE CONCERNS about the plans from nearby neighbors and city officials, the Farmington Hills City Council last week approved the

concept of widening the bridge from its current two lanes to five lanes. The 12 Mile bridge is west of Inkster, between Herndonwood and Inkster.

Residents in the nearby neighborhoods are concerned about county plans to close 12 Mile during the widening project because traffic will have to be detoured. City officials — also concerned about detouring traffic — are concerned that the five

lanes on the bridge contradict the city's plan for three lanes on 12 Mile, between Inkster and Middlebelt.

"We might have to rethink three lanes," Councilman Ben Marks said, in light of Southfield considering construction of five lanes on 12 Mile.

The project will be financed primarily by the state and federal governments, with Farmington Hills and the county road commission each paying approximately \$46,000.

The city and road commission's shares includes the cost of preliminary engineering.

Some council members expressed concern over widening the bridge to five lanes, particularly because the city has future plans to widen the two-lane road to three lanes. A fifth lane on the bridge would be wasted, Councilwoman Joan Dudgey said.

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Emotions grab spotlight at 'driving drunk' forum

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Larry Rotta had Farmington Harrison High School students on an emotional rollercoaster Friday.

He carried them from laughter and comic stories about teen lifestyles, into tales of teen deaths due to drinking and driving — a shocking many seated in the gymnasium into a dead silence.

The Michigan director for Students Against Driving Drunk spends 80 percent of his time speaking to high school groups. He was sponsored

Friday by the Harrison SADD chapter, one of 476 in Michigan, which has more chapters than any other state.

Although Rotta is based in Mount Clemens through the Macomb Intermediate School District, the support of private businesses and groups allowed the organization to go statewide, he said. Harrison began its SADD chapter last year, and there are chapters active at North Farmington and Farmington high schools as well.

'When you're dead, it's over. There's nothing. We have to say, never again are we going to allow this (driving drunk) to happen in our community.'

— Larry Rotta, director
SADD-Michigan

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