

Volunteer wins a Heart of Gold, 1C



Cage report, 1B

School study tips draw spotlight, 3A

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40 Pages

Twenty-Five Cents

Equalized school funding seen

By Casey Hane
staff writer

Farmington educators are eyeing growing support that would change the way Michigan finances public schools — making them less dependent on property taxes.

Although such dollar equalizing wouldn't place Farmington schools in the poorhouse, officials said, they are taking steps for an "inevitable change" statewide that will reduce local funding — probably in the next two years.

"Farmington will definitely be im-

acted," said deputy superintendent Michael Flanagan. He said district officials here have accepted equalization as a definite for the future.

Support statewide is increasing as more interested groups get involved, according to state House Speaker Gary Owen, D-Ypsilanti. "There's a gross disparity there and people are beginning to recognize it."

THE EQUALIZATION trend will eventually mean less money for districts such as Farmington, based in wealthier areas where growing property values bring more tax mon-

ey for education. In out-of-formula districts like Farmington, property taxes account for most of the annual budget.

Farmington is watching the coming changes carefully and has already taken steps to plan for the change, which could touch every facet of the district's operations, Flanagan said.

"Years ago, it was heresy to say there's a direct relation between the quality of education and the dollars," he said, adding that such a relation is now a common link. "It's my opinion there's absolutely no question that

the equity issue is here to stay."

And, he added, "philosophically, you can't be opposed to it."

Future staff recruitment efforts will have the most effect on how the district handles the financing change, Flanagan said, as employees take advantage of early retirement options. The district is reviewing each position and determining whether a replacement is necessary before hiring someone. Flanagan views this as "reducing costs without any pain."

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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 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

BUILDING boom continues

Farmington Hills still ranks among the leaders in new land development.

Reflecting 1986 building trends, the planning commission reviewed 40 rezoning requests, 69 site plans and eight new subdivision plans.

The year before, the commission reviewed 46 rezoning requests, 76 site plans and five plans.

The Community Development Division responded to last year's building activity by issuing 644 building permits for new single family units and 911 permits for new multiple family units — a slight decrease from 1985, but indicative of the city's rapid growth over the past two years.

The city also issued permits for the construction of 977,000 square feet of offices and 453,000 square feet of industrial space.

These and other tidbits make interesting reading in Farmington Hills' January/February Newsletter.

TO help fund the Farmington Founders Festival, the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce is planning a drawing where the top prize is a 1987 Chevrolet Corvete.

To help improve the odds of winning, only 750 tickets will be sold. Each ticket will cost \$100. A wine and cheese drawing is anticipated for mid-May. Details of ticket sales will be announced soon.

The intent is to prevent having to tap chamber revenue to subsidize the annual summertime festival.

Corporate sponsors also are sought for the festival's three major events — the parade, the fireworks and the showrobbie. Botsford General Hospital will sponsor the 1987 parade.

SIGNUP set

Farmington Public Schools kindergarten registration is scheduled for March 9-13. If you have a child who is going to be 5 years old on or before Dec. 1, go to your local elementary school and enroll your child.

Kindergarten orientation for all new kindergarten students will take place May 15.

DO you have a concern or beef about Michigan law or policy?

Write your elected legislators in Lansing: state Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, in care of the State Senate, P.O. Box 30038, and state Rep. Wilbur Brotherton, R-Farmington, in care of the State House, P.O. 30014. The ZIP code is 48909.

KEEP these numbers handy for reference when calling the Farmington Observer: news line, 477-5450; sports line, 591-2313; home delivery, 591-0500; classified ads, 591-0500; display ads, 591-2300.

FOOTNOTES: One year ago this week — Botsford Inn incumbent John Anhalt, president of the Michigan State Chamber of Commerce, served up a host of Michigan products during a five-minute appearance on the Today show Feb. 7 (1986).

'It's my opinion there's absolutely no question that the equity issue is here to stay.'

— Michael Flanagan, deputy superintendent

Right to Life is rallying support

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

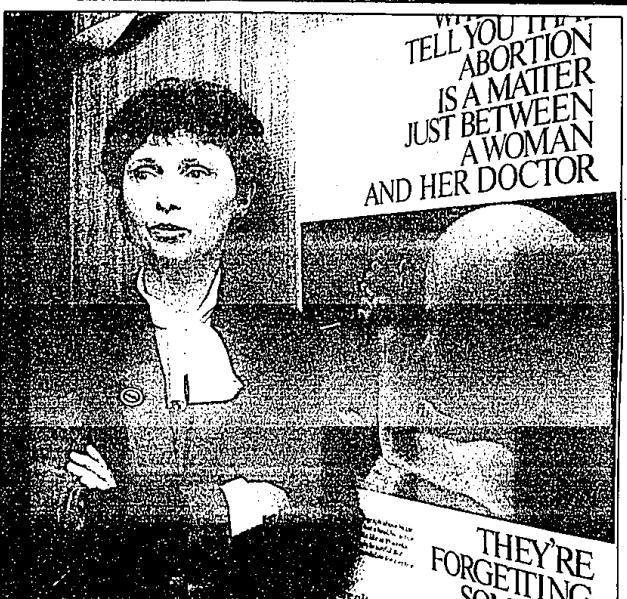
Farmington Hills is the newest battle station — at least temporarily — of Right to Life of Michigan's campaign to outlaw spending Medicaid dollars on poor women's abortions.

The leased Farmington Hills office — at 27380 Orchard Lake Road, just north of 12 Mile — officially opened Thursday — less than a week after the anti-abortion organization began its petition initiative to end tax-funded abortions.

Volunteers in the Farmington Hills office are charged with spearheading the petition drive in southeastern Michigan that, if successful, is expected to give the state Legislature a veto-proof way to end Medicaid abortions. Farmington Hills resident Liz Collins is manager of the temporary office.

"The approach is new but the issue is not new," said Barbara Listing, Right to Life of Michigan president, on hand Thursday for the office's opening.

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Barbara Listing, Right to Life of Michigan president, was on hand for the official opening of the organization's southeastern Michigan office in Farmington Hills.

Ballistic match prompts arrests

By Casey Hane
staff writer

A telephone call from a Michigan State Police ballistic expert prompted Farmington Hills police to arrest two Livonia brothers at their high school in 1985, where they were being questioned about a sniper shooting, according to Oakland County Circuit Court testimony Friday.

Paul Dober and Phil Dober — 17 and 16, respectively, at the time of their arrest — were taken into custody at Livonia Stevenson High School Sept. 6, 1985, in connection with the wounding of a security guard at the Putt 'N Games miniature golf course on Grand River in Farmington Hills.

The trial has taken on racial overtones because of testimony describing Paul Dober's racial slurs against another black guard at the golf course, a summertime gathering place for young people. Dober is white.

Paul Dober is standing trial before Oakland County Circuit Judge James Thorburn on charges of assault with intent to commit murder, and possession of a firearm in the

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Helping kids help themselves in a fire

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Mike Garr has never dashed back into a burning building and made a heroic rescue.

But the Farmington Hills firefighter has saved perhaps hundreds of lives simply by telling and retailing to people — especially children — how to help themselves in a fire.

Just ask 7-year-old Ray Rudzki

who knew exactly what to do when his clothing caught fire while playing with older boys at a family friend's house last summer.

The Gill Elementary student credits Garr — known as Firefighter Mike to youngsters — with teaching him Stop, Drop and Roll. The boy used the technique to extinguish the fire, which had engulfed his clothing, and saved his life.

"Ray's story was really satisfying.

people

I have never made a heroic rescue in a fire. But I got the same feeling when his mom called me (to tell the firefighter the boy saved his own life)," said Garr, 36.

It's moments like those that keep

Garr striving toward his goal of "creating a future generation of fire safe adults." He's convinced there's little reason for fire fatalities.

AND HE looks to Japan as an example of how not to burn. When a fire occurs in Japan — with fatalities or not — it makes the evening news because it's considered a disgrace.

In America, though, many still have a cavalier attitude toward fire. It's the "it will never happen me" attitude. Statistics show otherwise, and Americans continue to be hurt and killed needlessly in fires, Garr said.

That's why Garr pours his heart and energy into doing his part to

change the statistics and the attitudes.

He has worked quietly for years to spread fire safety — traveling harder each year to enlist more of the schools, businesses and civic organizations in growing numbers of programs. And his work has not gone unnoticed.

The Farmington Area Jaycees recently presented him with their 1986 Distinguished Citizen Award. But he's humble about it.

"They honored the individual, but it really was for the whole department."

Garr, who began working with the

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"Where is the safest place to be in a fire?" asked Firefighter Mike (Garr) of the Farmington Hills Fire Department. "Outside," responded the children in the Pathways to Learning program at Christ Community Church on 10 Mile. Repetition and simple concepts go a long way in making fire safety almost instinctive in children, Garr said.

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