

Two-wheeling it into summer, 1D



Regional softball, 1C

Sherman to leave C'ville board, 3A

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TODAY is election day. Voters in the Farmington and Clarenceville school districts will go to the polls from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. In Farmington, voters will fill two four-year school board seats from among incumbents Helen Prutow and James Abernethy and challenger Bruce Jacob. Clarenceville voters will consider a waiver of the effects of the Headlee Tax Limitation Amendment. They will fill two board seats; incumbents Michael Manore and Richard Wood are the only candidates.

TIME to evaluate. Sgt. Dennis Green called the Farmington Hills Police Department's first open house Sunday a success. Held under sunny skies, the open house included a tug of war between the police and fire departments, the Blue Pigs Band and a helicopter from the Detroit Police Department, the Oakland County Mounted Division, police and fire vehicle displays, and station tours. "I'm very pleased," said Green, who coordinated the daylong events. "It was a learning experience. We hope to improve the program every year. There are some things we'll do different next year. We want to make it better."

DID you know this year marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Farmington Enterprise, predecessor to the Farmington Observer? In honor of that milestone, the Observer will publish a special centennial section that will be distributed at community events this summer and included in a fall issue of the newspaper.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Twins on parade

More than 100 identical twins paraded, pair by pair, into the ANC Old Orchard Theatre in Farmington Hills Tuesday night for the Detroit-area premiere of Touchstone Pictures' new comedy, "Big Business." The movie, starring Bette Midler and Lily Tomlin in dual roles, is about two pairs of identical twins who are mismatched at birth and reunited 30 years later in a bizarre high-level corporate confrontation. Thanks to the Michigan Twins Association (MTA), the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Club and a local cattle call, identical twins ranging in age from 10 to 60 came to the premiere from as far away as Grand Rapids.

Above are twins Craig and Jason Charanas, 11, MTA co-presidents Janet Spigner and Joyce Hodess, and twins Kelly and Erin LaCosse, 11. All are from Farmington Hills. "Big Business" opened area-wide Friday.

Howard Hill, 48, who worked as a pharmacist in a Farmington Ferry drug store, died unexpectedly at home in Livonia late Tuesday afternoon after suffering a heart attack.

'88 tax hearings in Hills produce flood of appeals

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

In a year when property tax assessment increases sent shockwaves through Farmington Hills' residential community, assessor Dean Babb expected a lot of appeals. And that's what the three-member Farmington Hills Board of Review got: 1,035 appeals with 69 percent of them from residential property owners. But 75 percent of the \$14.4 million in assessment reductions granted by the review board were for commercial and industrial property owners, who unlike residential owners, did not receive property assessment increases this year.

AVOIDING THE \$14.4 million assessments reduction could not have prevented the city's proposed less than quarter-mill tax increase for 1988-89, Babb said. "The (1988-89 \$24 million) budget is predicated on an assessment roll of \$1.7 billion. That number is after these reductions."

Under the state Truth-in-Taxation Act, the city is required to roll back the current 9.2 mills to 8.6 mills to produce the same amount of revenue as in the current fiscal year, ending June 30. By publicly announcing its intentions to increase the tax rate,

city officials can levy more than the rolled-back rate.

If the review board had not reduced assessments by \$14.4 million, the rolled-back 8.6 mills would have generated only \$126,000 for the city. Approximately \$1.4 million was needed to balance the proposed budget.

"You can't balance the budget with \$124,000," Babb said.

Following the 15-day appeals session — considered one of the longest in the city's history — the board granted reductions in 473 of the total appeals and denied 539, of which 439 were residential.

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY assessment increases averaging 12-15 percent, with some as high as 20 percent, played a great role in the significantly increased number of appeals this year. Of the 1,035 appeals, 712 were residential, 144 commercial, 97 personal property (commercial equipment, furnishings, fixtures) and 82 hardship cases, Babb said.

"That's significantly more than we usually have. I expected it. I'm disappointed we had that many, but I expected it," Babb said. "A certain amount of appeals were just out of concern. A lot of them were simply surprised when they got a 15-percent

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Girl kept from class after father's death

By Janice Brunson staff writer

A Livonia girl's grief over the unexpected death of her father last week was compounded, relatives say, when school officials would not let her attend school the day after he died.

School officials say the girl was not permitted to attend because she was unable to benefit from the educational process and her presence was disruptive to other students who were sympathizing with the girl.

Howard Hill, 48, who worked as a pharmacist in a Farmington Ferry drug store, died unexpectedly at home in Livonia late Tuesday afternoon after suffering a heart attack.

A DAUGHTER, Erin, 14, wanted to at-

tend school Wednesday at Holmes Middle School where, according to her mother, Helen Hill, she is "almost" an A student.

"It was her way of dealing with her grief. She wanted to be with her friends," Hill said, adding she could understand her daughter's decision. "I plan to get back to work as soon as possible." Hill is employed by Farmington Public Schools.

Hill asked a cousin, Julia Dessert, to accompany Erin to her first class on Wednesday, offering the girl "additional support" on the way to school.

The Hills live less than one mile from Holmes school. Erin normally walks the distance.

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Mike Sarafa

Owe no favors — rep hopeful

This is the first in a series profiling candidates for the 69th state House district seat. Their positions on specific campaign issues will be detailed in upcoming coverage.

By Casey Hans staff writer

Mike Sarafa's age shows only through his apparent eagerness to jump into the political arena and get started.

"I'm young, energetic and I want to be visible," said the youngest Republican challenger for the state House seat in the 69th District. The 22-year-old from Farmington

Hills discounts comments about his age, stressing his views on the issues and his motivation for running.

"I don't have any political baggage. I just want to do a good job. I don't owe anybody any favors," he said. "I'll owe my election to the voters, and nobody else."

"I just try and have an open mind and listen." A newcomer to Farmington Hills and a first-time candidate, Sarafa considers himself no newcomer to politics.

His interest began as a child with his immigrant father's Republican upbringing, which guided him down the political path. "Even when I was a little kid, I always found some-



thing attractive about it," he said.

SARAFI STUDIED political science and public policy at Michigan State University and worked for the state Republican Party as a finance division field coordinator, learning every facet of political operation. Attending this year's Republican caucuses in Grand Rapids encour-

aged him to run and has made him determined to strive for Republican party unity — something he feels is lacking.

"To me, a young person involved in the Republican Party is something we can build on," he said. "I think I can help the party a lot."

Sarafa doesn't lean to the far right, politically, and places himself in the middle of the Republican political spectrum.

"I don't consider myself a diehard conservative," he said. "I voted for (President Ronald) Reagan, but I don't necessarily agree with everything he does."

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Schools, support union agree on pact

By Casey Hans staff writer

After a year of bargaining, a tentative agreement was reached last week between Farmington Public Schools and the union representing nearly 300 secretaries and paraprofessionals in the district.

The 3-year agreement with the Educational Support Personnel/Michigan Education Association unit is retroactive to July 1, 1987, and gives an employee at the top of the wage scale a 7-percent pay increase, improved health insurance and other benefits. It also calls for a joint committee of three

ESP members and three school administrators to study pay equity and comparable work — major issues raised by the union during bargaining.

"I think it's a fair contract for both sides," said Robert Coleman, personnel director for the district. "A lot of issues . . . went unresolved up until this time."

ESP chief negotiator Zan Alley. "We always knew we were too far behind to try to accomplish everything in one year," Alley said on the issue of pay equity. "We wanted a plan — that's what we feel we have."

way to handle it," although, he added, it will be a "lot of work" for committee members.

THE COMMITTEE, working under no set time frame, will bring recommendations to both the union membership and school board for ratification. The committee is not precluded from making its recommendation retroactive to July 1987, Alley said.

The ESP contract was the longest ever negotiated in the Farmington district. It took 13 months of negotiations plus several months of preparation, Alley said. ESP members took steps this spring to push for a contract, includ-

ing wearing "unity" buttons and attending a bond meeting en masse. A political action committee including the ESP and three other MEA units made no endorsements for today's school election.

The tentative contract agreement was reached early last week, and approval was given by a 219 to 216 vote of the membership Thursday night. It is expected to be presented to the school board for ratification June 21.

OTHER CONTRACT highlights include:

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