

Bread pudding has its devotees, 1B



Grid coach chosen, 1C

East meets West with saki, song, 1D

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SELECTED to sing. Farmington Community Chorus has been selected as one of the National Anthem performers for the Detroit Pistons this season. The 90 voices will be belting out The Star Spangled Banner at 7:30 p.m. before the game starts Tuesday evening. The game will be televised on WKBD, Channel 50.

The singers are under the direction of Donald Stromberg and are accompanied by Susan Garr.

BUSY spring. Farmington school officials will be busy this spring, not only with ongoing building projects but with curriculum concerns.

In March, trustees will hear a report on proposed programs for the new Hillside Elementary. Later in the spring, they will hear more about gifted education and a final recommendation on the Highmeadow Common Campus pilot. Stay tuned.

Memory lane

25 years ago:
Hunters Ridge — a 100-acre, 1,000-unit residential development — was proposed to the Farmington Township zoning board, south of 14 Mile, west of Orchard Lake Road.
Farmington Township voters made it clear at the polls that they were strongly opposed to granting pay raises in the amount so proposed to the supervisor, clerk and treasurer.
Robert Lindberk, Farmington's longest serving mayor, is stepping down after 12 years of service on the city council.

— Farmington Enterprise, Feb. 10-17, 1965

This week

THE CHRISTIAN season of Lent is launched this week with a series titled "His Small World" at 7:30 p.m. Sunday in First United Methodist Church of Farmington, 33112 Grand River. Using an International theme, the series continues on Sundays through April 1.

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WAYNE COUNTY 591-0900



RAUNDY BORSST/staff photographer

This stretch of Halsted, about a quarter of a mile south of 14 Mile in Farmington Hills, flooded during Thursday's rains. This part of the road is near the Minnow Pond area.

Rain and snow

Late winter one-two poses flooding threat

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills resident Bill Smith watched flooding waters swell 15 feet away from his Normandy Hills house late Thursday.

Meanwhile, 35 Farmington businesses and residents were ticked for failing to shovel the ice and slushy snow from their sidewalks.

"It's surrounding me. I'm like a little island. It's the (Rouge) river and the drainage system — that's where it's coming from," Smith said.

Warmer temperatures and almost three inches of rain Thursday wreaked havoc in some areas of Farmington and Farmington Hills as ice-covered culverts and filled catch basins flooded some roads, subdivisions and basements.

As the rains fell, many in Farmington Hills crossed their fingers that there wouldn't be a replay of last June's major flooding.

"Once it can't get down the culverts I flood," said Smith, who had more than \$2,500 in damage from flooding in June.

Though not as bad as the 1989 floods, Thursday's rain caused flooding in some basements in the Kendallwood subdivision, east and west of Farmington Road, north of 12 Mile.

The Lincolnshire subdivision, south of 11 Mile, east of Middlebelt, experienced the same.

The Evergreen-Farmington Interceptor that runs down Middlebelt was already overloaded by

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— Bill Smith
Hills resident

5 p.m. Thursday, causing basement backups, said Tom Blossell, Farmington Hills public services director.

ONE OF THE first areas of Farmington Hills to flood — Halsted, south of 14 Mile — also lived up to its notoriety as water again spilled over the roadway.

"A lot of this is due to culverts covered with ice any as a result it backs up," Binsell said.

The amount of the rain wasn't so much the problem, he continued, as much as it was the warm temperatures that melted the existing mounds of ice and snow.

Farmington didn't escape unscathed as basements flooded in the Bel Aire subdivision, south of 19 Mile, west of Orchard Lake Road, said Commander Tom Cox of the Farmington Department of Public Safety.

Farmington police were also dealing with the problem of unshoveled snow from an earlier

storm by issuing tickets. "We started getting a lot of complaints from residents and mail carriers," Cox said.

As Friday brought colder temperatures and rain turned to snow, a new set of problems arrived for the community.

"We've had our share of accidents this morning," said Cox.

Sgt. Ray Cranston of the Farmington Hills Police Department traffic section had the same news Friday. "We haven't had bad or major multiple injury accidents. But we brought the day support shift in early primarily because of the snow."

During the Thursday's heavy rainfall, Farmington Hills police recorded one weather-related accident. "Today (Friday), we're getting mobbed."

A Farmington Hills motorist Thursday suffered a broken nose as the warm temperatures caused melting blocks of ice to drop from the Harrison High School footbridge over I-696. The ice shattered his car windshield, causing an estimated \$700 damage, according to a police report.

Early Friday, seven cars in three separate accidents, collided on Farmington Road, north of 10 Mile, within seconds of each other. The motorists suffered minor injuries, Cranston said.

"Between 7:30 and 9 a.m. (Friday), we had a real rash of accidents," Cranston added.

Highway sign check finds danger

By Wayne Pool
staff writer

Testing of Michigan highway signs may have prevented at least five additional tragedies, state transportation department said Saturday.

A potentially hazardous overhead sign was discovered and removed during Wednesday's first day of statewide testing, Michigan Department of Transportation officials said. Among the other signs found to be defective were three located on I-75 near Monroe.

The sign found on Wednesday, on US-127 south of I-96 near Lansing, showed the same kind of weakness that may have led to the recent collapse of signs on the Southfield-Free-

way in Dearborn and on I-75 in Monroe County.

Martha Topik, 41, of Detroit was killed when the Southfield freeway sign collapsed Feb. 16. Two other motorists were injured. No one was injured when an Erie/Temperance exit sign fell Jan. 25, though a LaSalle man's truck was destroyed.

The second incident was made public in the wake of Topik's death. The accidents called the safety of Michigan's overhead highway signs into question. Though MDOT officials said the signs are safe, they remained uncertain as to why the two signs fell. Officials noted that support rods had broken in each instance.

"WE KNOW what happened —

those rods broke — but we don't know why," deputy highway director William MacCreery said.

MDOT officials suggested the collapse of each sign could have been caused by improperly aligned support rods, but they said it might take a month to provide a definitive answer.

All 377 of the state's overhead highway signs were to have been checked for loose bolts and structural weakness in initial testing which was completed Friday. Roughly half the signs tested are in southeast Michigan, including signs in Wayne and Oakland counties.

Testing involved signs known as Cantilever Type G & H. Eighteen teams of MDOT workers

soured the state for signs, striking bolts with hammers, then using large wrenches to test for loose bolts.

Signs on the Southfield and I-696 freeways and Telegraph Road were among those examined during Wednesday's first day of testing.

Dismantling a sign was to be the "first action" taken if a loose bolt or other weakness were discovered, MacCreery said.

"WEARNESS IN one (bolt) will not cause the sign to come down, but we're being cautious," he said.

Weather permitting, the defective signs were to be removed by crews

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Man asks tougher light pole checks

By Joe Bauman
staff writer

A Farmington Hills man who narrowly escaped injury when a Detroit Edison light pole fell in front of his car last month in Livonia wants the utility to toughen its inspection standards.

But an Edison spokeswoman said Thursday the utility is satisfied its existing policies are adequate. No changes are being planned, she said.

Mark Kerstein was traveling on Farmington road north of Seven Mile at 5:45 p.m. Jan. 29 when the light pole broke off at its base and crashed down across the two northbound lanes directly in front of Kerstein's 1980 Camaro.

To avoid hitting the pole, Kerstein swerved into

the middle lane of the five-lane roadway. But Kerstein said the fact he was unharmed does not reduce the seriousness of the incident.

"It is incredible to me that Edison would allow a pole to deteriorate to an extent that it is toppled by a wind storm. At first I was relieved that I was not hurt, but then I became angry that the company would allow such a situation to occur."

ACCORDING to Edison records, the fallen light pole was last inspected between October 1987 and February 1988. It was installed in either late 1987 or early 1988.

Kerstein said a recent incident in which a Detroit woman was killed in Dearborn when a road sign broke off from its base and crashed on top of

a car in which she was riding strengthened his resolve to make sure a similar tragedy is not repeated involving an Edison pole.

"I think the company needs to inspect its equipment on a more-regular basis. The light pole that fell was so corroded, most of the base was eaten away by rust."

Kerstein said he called Edison immediately following the accident but did not feel it was necessary to "go public" about the accident until he heard of the Dearborn incident.

"I just feel that people have a right to know when dangerous situations exist. People shouldn't have to worry about such things."

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Tests delay Bonelli trial

Defense calls its own expert

By Darrell Clom
staff writer

The trial of Anthony Bonelli, charged in the drowning death of Kristina Marie Fracchia, has been delayed again — this time so that a defense-chosen expert will have more time to complete a psychiatric evaluation of Bonelli.

In another development, a preliminary hearing scheduled Tuesday for James Nader, charged as an accessory, has been postponed for two months at the request of defense attorneys.

The two developments marked the latest of several delays in the case stemming from the drowning death of 17-year-old Fracchia, who was found dead last March 17 in Orchard Lake.

Bonelli could face life in prison if convicted of open murder in the death of Fracchia, his former girlfriend. Nader, who has admitted giving Bonelli a ride from the murder scene, could be sentenced to up to five years if convicted as an accessory after the fact.

ASSISTANT PROSECUTOR Fred Miller argued against another delay in Bonelli's case, but defense attorneys succeeded in getting the trial delayed until April 30. It had been set for March 5.

That means the trial will come more than 13 months after Fracchia's body was discovered by Oakland County Drain Commission workers.

Defense attorneys said their psychiatric expert needed more time to examine Bonelli. The expert was called in after a previous, state-conducted psychiatric evaluation determined that Bonelli was not insane at the time of Fracchia's death and was competent for trial.

Defense attorneys, who have said they hope to prove Bonelli was insane, asked to bring in their own expert after the state report was completed. The request was granted by Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Alice Gilbert.

Meanwhile, 48th District Court Judge Gus Cifelli granted a request last week for the delay in Nader's preliminary hearing. Defense attorneys said they needed more time to prepare.

Not soliciting money, say Hills firemen

By Susan Buck
staff writer

No, the Farmington Hills Fire Department is not soliciting money.

Deputy Fire Chief Pete Baldwin said that within the past month he has received a half dozen calls from residents and businesses asking about the credibility of a phone solicitation group called the Michigan Firefighters Association, which reportedly said it both represents and supports the Farmington Hills Fire Department.

It is not to be confused with the Southfield-based Michigan State Firefighters Association, Baldwin said.

Both he and Mike Garr, Hills Fire Department union steward, cautions everyone to be careful and ask several questions if called by a solicitor. Those solici-

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