

She creates fashion extravaganzas, 1B



State mat results, 1D

Stores could lose liquor licenses, 2A

Farmington Observer

Volume 101 Number 43

Thursday, March 1, 1990

Farmington, Michigan

88 Pages

Fifty Cents

farmington FOCUS

To write the Observer: 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48024. To call: news line, 477-5450; sports line, 591-2312; home delivery, 591-0500; classified ads, 591-0900; display ads, 591-2300; fax line, 477-9722.

DURING a Farmington Hills City Council discussion last week, Mayor Jean Fox called on Aldo Vagnozzi before Ben Marks, she said, "probably because he's on my left car, which is better than my right."

"I've always been on your left," shot back Vagnozzi, an active Democrat. Fox is an active Republican.

IN the works. In May, the Council of Homeowners Associations of Farmington Hills will host a forum on alcohol sales to minors. Michigan Liquor Control Commission officials are expected to be there.

The forum, supported by the city council and police department, will precede the high school graduation season and the next undercover sweep of businesses with liquor licenses.

No date for the forum has been set.

BACK on board. Gov. Blanchard has reappointed Kathleen Needham of Farmington Hills to the state Commission on Services to the Aging. She chairs the Gerontology Department at Madonna College, Livonia.

QUOTE of the week

“You're not up there as omnipotent powers. You represent us because we, as voters, elected you to represent us — to hear our words.”

— Hills resident Marty Krohner, talking to the city council. See today's opinion page, 11A.

what's inside



Building Scene
An informative guide to new home, condominium and commercial developments in your community, plus advisory and interesting articles designed to keep you on top of the building scene. Now appearing in every Monday and Thursday edition.

Observer & Eccentric
NEWSPAPERS
For Display Advertising call 644-1100 591-2300

- Around Farmington . . . 4B
- Building scene . . . Soc. H
- Business . . . Soc. C
- Cable connection . . . 10C
- Classifieds . . . Soc. G, E-H
- Index . . . 3G
- Auto . . . Soc. C
- Real estate . . . Soc. E-H
- Employment . . . Soc. G, G
- Community corner . . . 4A
- Creative living . . . Soc. E
- Crossword puzzle . . . 9E
- Entertainment . . . 8C
- Obituaries . . . 9D
- Opinion . . . 14A
- Police/fire calls . . . 4A
- Sports . . . Soc. D
- Suburban life . . . Soc. B

Hills tax assessments up 9 percent

City of Farmington, 6A

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills homeowners will receive their property tax assessment increase notices in the next few days. But they aren't expected to be as shocking as in the days of the once-spiraling housing market.

Residential property tax assessments will increase on average 9

percent this year, compared to the average 10 percent increase in 1989. Most homeowners, however, can expect to open notices showing increases between 8 to 10 percent, with only a few as high as 20 percent, assessor Dean Babb said.

Commercial and industrial property owners again fared better with average 3 percent increases. Notices will be mailed to only property owners whose assessments have increased.

The Farmington Hills Board of

Review will begin taking appointments for property tax assessment appeals Monday, March 5. All appointments should be scheduled by 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 14.

The board will hear appeals 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday and Tuesday, March 12-13 and 1-9 p.m. Wednesday, March 14. Appeals can be made in letter by March 14 or by making an appointment by calling the assessor's office, 473-9504.

"THE MARKET has slowed. It

doesn't mean it dropped below 50 percent. But that spiraling market isn't going up like it used to," Babb said.

The slowing market means that prices aren't increasing as fast, and sales aren't as plentiful as they once were. For example, in 1988, the average selling price of a home in a particular neighborhood was \$160,000. In 1989, the house sold for \$162,000.

"From 1988 to 1989, the increases weren't as great. The spiraling isn't

going up like it used to. We tempered the assessments to reflect the flat market. But we are still playing catch-up. We've been lagging behind the increases in the market (over the past few years) and it takes a couple of years to catch up," Babb said.

For assessment purposes, Babb used a 24-month sales study. That includes housing sales in Farmington Hills during the last three quarters of 1987, all of 1988 and the first quarter of 1989.

Please turn to Page 8



DOUG SUSALLA/staff photographer

Fred Troke of Farmington Hills shows off the souvenir money he won along with a real check for \$3,500 in last week's Michigan Lottery Fame & Fortune game.

Hills man finds Fame & Fortune

A retired factory worker from Farmington Hills won \$3,500 as the third-place winner in the Michigan Lottery's Fame & Fortune game last week.

"I was pleased," said Fred Troke, 57, a Detroit Baptist Manor resident for eight years and a client for many local parades.

He tied with six others for \$50,000. Second prize was a \$15,000

1990 Dodge Caravan. He plans to pay bills and fix his car with his winnings.

The game was taped Friday at Channel 4 in downtown Detroit. The show was broadcast Saturday night.

ON FRIDAY morning, Troke's sister and brother-in-law, Joyce

and Abe Frankford, drove him to the Omni Hotel, where contestants were briefed on what was to follow.

Then they were driven to Channel 4 in a white limousine to get acquainted with the staff. Next, they were driven by limo to the posh Whitney Restaurant for lunch.

Then it was back to Channel 4 for makeup and to take their seats

in front of a studio audience. Taping began at 2 p.m.

Troke spun the game wheel to win \$3,500. Later, the contestants were driven back to the Omni.

Troke bought the instant ticket qualifying him for the show Feb. 12 at Arbor Drugs at 13 Mile and Orchard Lake Road.

Five years ago, he won \$291 in the daily lottery.

Rolnick won't seek 4th term

By Casey Hens
staff writer

At least one longtime school trustee will not seek re-election to the Farmington Board of Education this June.

Twelve-year veteran trustee Janice Rolnick said this week she will not run again for a seat on the seven-member panel.

The four-year terms of Rolnick, 47, and Jack Inch, 55, both expire in June. Inch could not be reached to comment about his intentions.

"I always said as soon as she graduates, that's it," said Rolnick, a three-term trustee whose daughter is J. Rolnick, a senior in the district and will graduate this year from North Farmington.

"I feel, philosophically, that people on the board of education should have children in the schools. I really believe when you have kids in the system, you know what's going on."

She said she will continue to work for her special areas of concern, noting her ongoing concern for the area of gifted education. "I'm not giving up — I'll just work through other channels," she added.

PETITIONS ARE now available for those seeking to vie for one of the two opening seats during the annual school election on Monday, June 11.

Please turn to Page 8

Freeway noise angers Hills homeowners

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

The big, yellow button on Bob Schulkins' lapel tells it all: "I-696 — Noise and Broken Promises."

The Howard Road resident lives 700 feet from the newly widened eight-lane freeway. Like many of his neighbors on the natural beauty road, Schulkins is angry that the Michigan Department of Transportation doesn't plan to put barriers of any kind to buffer his residential area from the constant freeway noise.

"When I see what Southfield and other adjacent cities have done, they

'We have got to convince state officials that what residents are experiencing is reality.'

— William Costick
Hills city manager

let them put the expressways in this way (the way cities want). Farmington Hills lets them put them in any way," Schulkins said.

Richard Conlin agreed. "These other communities got noise abatement and we didn't," the Howard

Road resident said. Surprisingly, when the snow from the freeway was plowed onto the shoulders and buffered the residences, "it was like night and day."

Despite residents' complaints, MDOT abandoned its 2-year-old plan

to install an earth berm to buffer Howard Road because of higher than expected costs. "We are still not recommending anything at this point. There could still be some further negotiations," said Lisa Funk, MDOT transportation planner.

BUT FARMINGTON Hills officials and residents have no intention of backing down. City officials plan to go to bat with a formal response to MDOT in March for Howard Road residents, as well as residents in Camelot Court subdivision, south of I-696, between Middlebelt and Inkster roads.

"We have got to convince state officials that what residents are experi-

encing is reality," city manager William Costick said, referring to the "tremendous difference in noise levels" and the "vibration" from the freeway.

When Farmington Hills officials agreed to pay the more than \$600,000 share of the I-696 widening costs, MDOT promised noise abatement measures, Costick said. Residents in Farm Meadow subdivision next to Camelot Court, "generally support" MDOT's plans for a masonry wall to buffer the noise. MDOT is proceeding with final plans, Costick said.

Please turn to Page 8

New Travel Scene takes flight today

Somebody once said that if you come home as happy as you leave, you have had a good vacation. To find out how to enjoy a vacation, as many of us have found, is proper planning. With that in mind the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers is launching Travel Scene, which you will find on the back of Section B in today's paper.

You told us through our research data that travel was a subject you were more interested in reading about than any other — that's right, any other.

And useful information, but much of it will be written by people who understand your travel concerns — your neighbors.

That's correct. Each week at least one feature will be from the perspective of a person from the Observer & Eccentric circulation area.

The writer will tell you not only what they found at the locations you are planning to visit, but they will also give you useful hints on where to go and what to avoid when you get there.

TODAY'S FEATURE is written by Birmingham resident John Castle, who ventured down to the small Central American country of Belize. We know you will find his story fascinating.

To make this section complete, we want to hear from you.

We want to know what you think of Travel Scene, what areas you would like to read about and where you've been that you think your neighbors would be interested in visiting.

We also plan on writing about all kinds of travels from all different perspectives: the business traveler, senior citizens, families with children and young adults.

A variety of travel from a suburban point of view is the story of Travel Scene. So sit back and enjoy.

STEVE BARNABY,
Managing editor

A contest for the eagle-eyed

Amateur sleuths, take note.

The entry form for the Identify Downtown Contest, co-sponsored by the Farmington Downtown Development Authority and the Observer, is in today's paper.

The contest challenges entrants to identify photographs of specific parts of downtown Farmington buildings. The entry deadline is March 19.

Twelve photographs, an entry form, contest rules and a list of prizes appear on Page 8A.