

Filling the void  
until it's baseball, 1D

Girls track  
outlook, 1C

Country club meals  
that take the prize, 1B

# Farmington Observer

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## farmington FOCUS

To write the Observer: 21888 Farmington Road, Farmington 48024. To call: news line, 477-5450; sports line, 591-2312; weekend line, 591-2305; home delivery, 591-0500; classified ads, 591-0900; display ads, 591-2300; fax line, 477-9722.

**P**AYING homage. In endorsing Earth Day 1990, which is Sunday, April 22, the Farmington Hills City Council urges "citizens and their governments to review their commitment to meet the global environmental challenge."

The council has proclaimed "that the day be set aside for public activities promoting preservation of the environment" and "to declare our shared resolve" in protecting natural resources.

**T**AKE heed: Oakland County Management Services Division will test the county's tornado warning sirens at 10 a.m. Wednesday during Tornado Safety Week in Michigan.

The department urges residents to not call their local police or fire department about the sirens during the test.

## Memory lane

50 years ago:

- Arthur Coe and Loretta Cox were re-elected supervisor and treasurer of Farmington Township with vote counts of 373 and 381, respectively.
- Local dog owners are warned to keep pets confined, or leashed and muzzled while walking. In the wake of a state quarantine following a rabies outbreak.
- Orville E. Dunkel is expected to return next fall as superintendent of schools in Farmington.

— Farmington Enterprise, April 4, 1940

## This week

**C**REATIVITY Springs Alive, that showcase of student inventiveness, returns 7-9 p.m. Friday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at Harrison High, 29995 W. 12 Mile, Farmington Hills.

## what's inside

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Look for the  
Suburban  
Cable Weekly  
in today's issue



## Jet tail cone lands on Skye Drive



Roy Angers, a Skye Drive resident who lives two doors away from where the airplane part landed, looks at the remains of the jet-engine tail cone that fell from a passing 747.

### Airline safety questioned, 3A

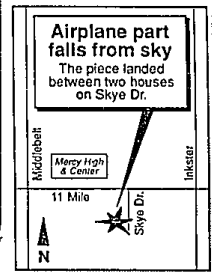
By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

The Hindo family never would have guessed the unusually loud bang they heard late Thursday was part of a British Airways 747 jet engine that had landed between their house and a neighbor's.

But when Kal Hindo went outside early Friday morning just to double-check, he found the engine tail cone lying near evergreens between his house and that of his Skye Drive neighbors, Richard and Carole Merrill.

"It sounded like an explosion. We thought it was something inside the house that had fallen," said Kal's son, Ralph.

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## Man pleads guilty in coin-roll scam

By Bob Sklar  
staff writer

An alert store employee who had seen a composite drawing of a coin-roll con man in the Observer led Farmington Hills police to a prime suspect Wednesday.

Steven L. Jackson, 26, later pleaded guilty to four counts of attempting to obtain money under false pretenses in incidents involving businesses at the Orchard-12 Shopping Center, northwest of Orchard Lake Road and 12 Mile.

The Detroit resident remains a

### Ring of con artists dupes area businesses, 4A

At least a dozen incidents have been reported recently in Farmington Hills, Southfield, Redford Township, Livonia and Dearborn Heights.

The ruse was aimed at five businesses in Farmington Hills during March — three in one day and four at the same corner.



Steven L. Jackson pleads guilty

It took four businesses for more than \$250. Another attempt failed when a store employee who checked some of the coin rolls found pennies.

At 5:20 p.m. Wednesday, Farmington Hills police arrested Jackson after he tried to exchange rolls of "dimes" at eight businesses at the Orchard-12 Shopping Center.

None of the businesses made the exchange. "Most of the employees had read the article in the Observer about the scam and weren't taking coin rolls," said detective Darnel Krause of the Farmington Hills police.

In most every case Wednesday, Jackson said he worked at the Bavarian Village Ski Shop at the shopping center. He said Bavarian Village had run short of cash and wanted to exchange rolls of "dimes" for currency, according to police.

A Rags to Riches employee refused to make the exchange after recognizing the man's likeness from the composite drawing that ran on the front page of the Observer March 26.

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## Bus driver fondly recalls students

By Debbie Wallis Landau  
special writer

On a typical day, Nita Pittz learns about schoolgirl crushes, hears the latest episodes of Teen-age Mutant Ninja Turtles, and discovers which class got the best treats.

From behind her big wheel, she hears the serious philosophizing of young minds.

"I'll never forget the little boy who told his pal how his dad had trouble fixing the family car," Pittz said. "When the second boy asked how they finally got the car working, the storyteller replied, 'God fixed it!'"

"You mean God's a mechanic, too?" marveled the second boy. Well, that was one of those times where I could hardly keep a straight face!"

Such episodes are fond memories of Pittz's 21 years as a bus driver for Farmington Public Schools. Besides being a daily listening post and occasional referee, she's also the recipient of Christmas gifts, like the miniature school bus adorning her living room wall.

But the gift she prizes more than any other is the respect of her young charges, whose safety is her top pri-



"I've got to get those kids safely to school, but I also feel it's imperative to teach them to properly cross a street," says Farmington school bus driver Nita Pittz.

### people

ority. "I've never viewed my bus driving as just a job," she said. "I've always regarded my role in many ways like that of a teacher."

**PASSENGERS** on Pittz's bus know it's not a playground. They are told, in the "tough love" manner for which their driver is known, to "speak with inside voices" and to "keep all arms and legs in front of them."

Asked what would make her job easier, Pittz is quick to say: "If drivers obeyed the law." The penalty for passing a school bus with lights

flashing is a \$60 fine and two points on your driving record.

In early 1987, Farmington Hills traffic safety Officer Donald Fradette launched the School Bus Safety Program with the assistance of Pittz and her colleagues.

"Nita has been tremendously dedicated in informing us about traffic problems," Fradette said. "She pushed hard for better monitoring and disciplinary action against violators."

The program requires bus drivers to record all data pertinent to a violation — license plate number, driver description, location, witnesses. The police have a 96-percent conviction rate of those ticketed, Fradette said.

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## Hills council debates zoning code officer

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Old Town/Meadowbrook Heights residents don't want a code enforcement officer hired specifically for southeast Farmington Hills. And they, especially, don't want the position financed with federal block grant money.

"All we were saying is that a person who has eyes and is south of 10 Mile (can) look and see what needs to be seen," said Floyd DuFresne, president of Old Town/Meadowbrook Heights Homeowners Association.

"The blight and whatever drives us crazy, it's the obvious. The garage full of trash, the refrigerators and dual exhaust car sitting out there."

The homeowners association offi-

cers said they wanted the city council to know that residents in southeast Farmington Hills are plagued with blight, such as junk cars in driveways.

But the prime idea at the regular city council meeting a couple hours later was to hire a code enforcement officer specifically to address blight complaints in that part of the city. Code enforcement is an eligible project, according to block grant guidelines, city manager William Costick said.

"If we throw in a code enforcement person, the question is how much will it cost and where will the money come from," said community

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## Cable guide debuts

Suburban Cable Weekly debuts today in the Observer.

The 48-page guide will be part of the paper each Monday. Listings will be from Monday through Sunday.

Suburban Cable Weekly includes programming for all VHS and UHF channels as well as all cable channels available in Metro-Vision of Oakland County.

The channels listed are Metro-Vision channels. Viewers should have their search for a field in the front of the book to find which channel to tune in.

The book also contains TV trivia, games and more.

Look for it inside today's Observer.

— Bob Ecker, writer