

Plenty of things to keep youth busy, 1B



Swimming stars, 5D

Drake Road relics shown, 5E

# Farmington Observer

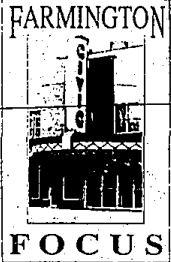
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Fifty Cents



## Officials monitor hepatitis outbreak

By Casey Hens  
Staff writer

Two confirmed cases of Hepatitis A at a Farmington Hills elementary school have parents concerned and school and health officials monitoring the student population daily.

School officials said Tuesday they are also awaiting word about five other students at William Grace Elementary who may have contracted the virus, which causes inflammation of the liver.

Parents should take extra precautions, but should not panic about the situation at the elementary school on the city's southeast side, health officials said.

"It's definitely a reason for concern. People are concerned about their health and should be," said Joel Ilustein, epidemiologist for the Oakland County Health Department. "But it's not a reason to panic. It's not tremendously uncommon."

All cases should be taken seriously," added epidemiologist James Altamirano of the Michigan Department of Public Health. "Every case should be investigated and should receive adequate attention."

Health officials recommend parents stay in

close contact with doctors and monitor flu-like symptoms carefully and send students should be taught to wash their hands thoroughly after using the bathroom and not to share food, pencils or other items.

The disease is transmitted when contaminated body waste is touched, not washed off of the hands, then passed along via foodstuffs or other items placed in the mouth.

"If they don't do a good hand-washing after using the bathroom — and that's quite possible with kids — they can be passing it," Altamirano added.

THE OAKLAND County Health Department has confirmed two cases of the infectious viral disease in William Grace students in recent weeks. Another case was reported last November, and school officials say they are awaiting the results of several more incidents where parents have reported hepatitis-like symptoms. Individual doctors report some results to the health department which, in turn, advises the school.

Principal Dick Close sent notification home with students in November and again on

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SOMEbody STOLE the nine numbered tags that were hanging on the Easter Tree in the downtown Farmington Library.

The tags were placed there so library patrons could select a tag, buy an Easter gift for a \$5 or 4-year-old and then place the gift under the tree. Then the Farmington Area Community Women would distribute the gifts to about 100 youngsters in a Head Start program.

Librarians say they're sure the tags were all there before a class of Farmington grade-schoolers went through the library. They were missing after the class was dismissed.

Members of the service organization spent days cross-referencing every name to find the missing nine youngsters.

"We'll buy gifts for these children ourselves," said Connie Jeromov, club spokeswoman. "We have trees in eight different locations, so it won't be easy tracking them. But we'll do it, and we'll do it in time for Easter."

PEOPLE AROUND city hall like to think of Farmington Hills as a forward-looking community. But check out the Historical Commission's display in that building and you'll think you've been transported back to 1935.

The display, titled "Remembering 1935 in 1991," features a picture calendar from 56 years ago. Actually, the calendar is accurate in that dates from '35 and this year are the same.

Additional photographs and information on events that were going on in all aspects of society at that time are also included.

The Historical Commission's displays are usually interesting and informative, but the display case is a bit off the beaten path. It's in the hallway off the city manager's conference room.

IF YOU ATTEND the Detroit Pistons' professional basketball game Friday, March 22, at the Palace of Auburn Hills, pay special attention to the singers during the National Anthem.

Those 65 young voices will be coming from members of Cub Scout Pack 318 of the Wooddale Elementary School in Farmington Hills.

It's the third-straight year the local Cubs have been asked to perform. "They sing their hearts out and the audience loves it," said Joyce Schlaff, mother of one of the singers.

Tony Munaco is packmaster.

MEMORY LANE — From the March 22, 1991, Farmington Enterprise:

Members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce Chorus were busy preparing for the annual Minstrel Show.

The Future Nurses Club of Farmington High School was keeping busy making cancer pads for Farmington-area victims of the disease.

Donors gave 122 pints of blood to a mobile blood bank during a Red Cross blood drive.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48338, or dropped off at the newspaper office.



### Liberty lesson

Students at Forest Elementary in Farmington Hills recently designed a Statue of Liberty model during an enrichment class in props and stage design, taught by art teacher

or Diane Russell. Pictured here are (left to right) Ben Belkin, Josh Weinberg, Matthew Barbas and Jarrod Tack. The class includes both third graders and fourth graders.

## Reservist gets welcome from family, colleagues

By Joanne Maliszewski  
Staff writer

The ladies all five of them — in Jim Whitcomb's life are happy. After the Persian Gulf war took the reservist away for 6½ months to work in Naval intelligence in Norfolk, Va., he's back.

"It's good to be home," Whitcomb said Friday, the day after he drove from Virginia to his wife, Jim, and four daughters, Hilary, 12, Katie, 9, Amanda, 8, and Elizabeth, 18 months.

The last time he saw his family was at Christmas, when he was given leave. But other than that, his family hasn't even him since he was called up to serve in September.

Whitcomb, a Farmington Hills police officer since 1974, recalls when he heard about the war. "I saw it in the papers and didn't think much of it. Who would have known we would have a war?" he said.

WHITCOMB IS restricted from explaining his job in Naval intelligence during the war against Iraq. But he said he, like other reservists, "were filtered into the mainstream."



Jim Whitcomb and his daughter Elizabeth during a party to welcome the Farmington Hills officer back from duty with the Naval Reserve.

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## Big changes proposed for high schools

By Casey Hens  
Staff writer

A major restructuring of high school education in the Farmington School District was proposed Tuesday in a long-awaited report from a committee which has studied the issues for the past two years.

Proposals include variable class scheduling, different ways of teaching and assessing student performance and, overall, a more rigorous learning environment.

Superintendent Michael Flanagan called the proposal "the single best document I have ever seen put together on secondary education," but said he wanted to give the proposals time to develop at the building level and expand from there.

The report recommends the proposals not be mandated but be selected by and piloted at each of the district's three high schools depending on individual needs.

"What we would really like to see is the high school staffs taking ownership of the issues," said assistant superintendent Judith White.

THE SCHOOL board voted 6-1 to accept the study and ask high school staffs move ahead on concepts they

believe will work in their individual schools. Principals were also directed to return to the board with a timeline specified to share each school's ideas.

Schools could take on all of the proposals or pilot individual ideas. Trustee Jack Lynch cast the dissenting vote without comment. Saying later he was skeptical about such massive change and wanted time to consider the concepts.

But other board members were excited about the proposals. "My first impression is this is great. Let's do it right now," said trustee Kathleen Webb. "But they still need time to internalize and buy into this."

"I think we're all going to have to be patient."

The proposal was the culmination of a two-year study by a secondary education committee comprised of Farmington educators and parents which reviewed various programs through-out the region, visited other sites, and met with theorists and other education experts. A second proposal on middle school restructuring is scheduled to be presented to the school board in May.

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## Shuttle planned; some skeptical

By Joanne Maliszewski  
Staff writer

Lesler London just doesn't believe a transportation program planned by the Kroger Co. will do much for senior citizens who lost their neighborhood grocery store in the Grand River Halsted shopping center in December.

"People our age can't be held too much to a schedule. I think a lot of people are unhappy with Kroger. I don't think they want to patronize them any more," said London, a three-year resident of the Jamestown Apartments on Grand River, just east of the old, now empty, Kroger store.

That store and another at 13 Mile

and Oldham Lakes Road, were closed in December when the Kroger Co. opened its new 40,000-square-foot superstore at the Halsted Village Shopping Center at 17, 50, 12 Mile.

Upset residents who once shopped at their smaller neighborhood Kroger store pulled letters in January gathering 1,000 signatures to petition to force Kroger's refusal to allow other grocery stores to buy or lease the empty building.

That's how the lot for the Grand River Halsted store, which has been leased to K-Mart 1 and the store at 13 Mile and the half store owned by Kroger and officials there said they would not provide another

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*Remember...*

It's time to check your calendar for the month of March. Please have the money ready and be sure to get your receipt. It's worth a \$2.00 discount on the next classified advertisement you place in your business journal.