

Chorus gets its hot notes ready, 1C



Softball scoop, 1B

Home and Garden II section inside today



# Farmington Observer

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**W**ELL, AFTER all, April was the Month of the Young Child . . . so what better time for the city of Farmington to honor a local day care center that lots of local people think is pretty special.

The city council last month considered a request for recognition by proclamation of the contribution made by A Child's Garden to the city. The Grand River Avenue business, owned by Elaine Chaitin and Vicki Palmer, is popular with many of its customers.

"We thought we'd do something nice for the people who take care of our children for so much of the day," said parent Holly Davis, who uses A Child's Garden. Parents told the council that the A Child's Garden " . . . provides the children with a sense of community. The facility is in downtown Farmington, which gives the children an opportunity to visit the stores, city hall, police and fire department and perhaps most important, the city library."

**H**HEY, HEY, it's Poppy Day . . . or it will be Thursday-Saturday, May 16-18, in the Farmington area, as members of the Groves-Walker American Legion Post No. 346 conduct their annual fund-raiser.

About 60 uniformed Legion members will be asking for donations in shopping centers and at major intersections in Farmington and Farmington Hills. "We usually raise about \$5,000," said Gerald Lynch, sergeant at arms of the local post. "The money goes directly to help veterans or to support programs that help them."

The poppy, by the way, is the flower for American dead. The tradition began in the years following World War I.

Returning veterans remembered the wild poppies that lined the devastated battlefields of France and Flanders. Soldiers of all nations came to view that flower as a living symbol of their dead comrades' sacrifice.

**M**ICHIGAN Week is coming up . . . and what would Michigan Week be without Mayor Exchange Day?

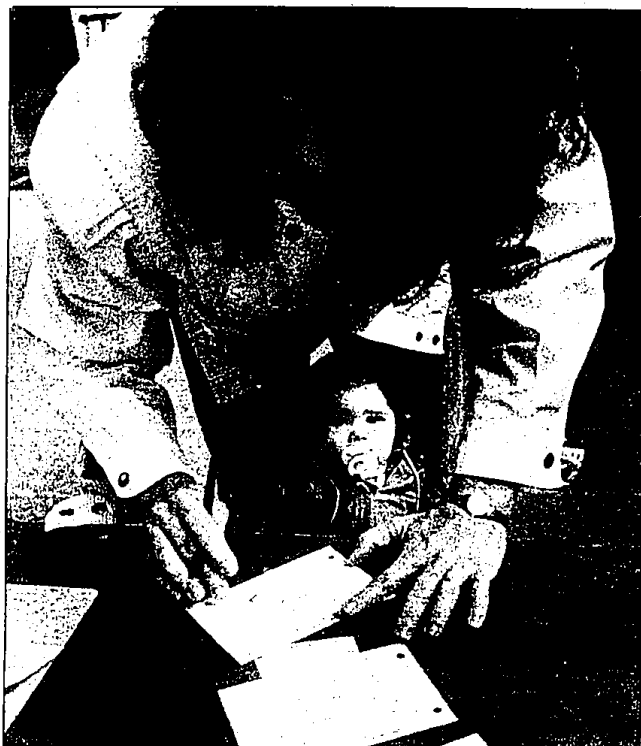
This year, Farmington Mayor Shirley Richardson will take part in the ceremonial exchange with Clawson's Mary Airriess on Thursday, May 16. A noon luncheon will be held at the Botsford Inn.

In Farmington Hills, arrangements are less definite. However, Mayor Exchange Day is Monday, May 20, with Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi switching with Tracy's Richard Doyle. A dinner may be held that night, said Steve Brook, assistant city manager.

**M**EMORY LANE — From the May 17, 1991 Farmington Enterprise:

Kenn Loomis led the field with 271 votes in the special election to pick Farmington's city council under the terms of the new city charter. Also elected were Tracy Conroy, Roy Miller, James Cavannaugh and James Nourjian. All but Nourjian had served on the previous council. Some 481 votes were cast.

Items for Farmington Forum may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21808 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336, or dropped off at the newspaper office.



SHARON LEMIEUX/staff photographer

Ten-month-old Katrina DeSantis waits patiently as her mother, Deborah DeSantis, prepares to vote at Precinct 17, Alameda Early Development School, in Tuesday's half-mill parks and recreation tax election.

ment School, in Tuesday's half-mill parks and recreation tax election.

## Voters say yes to parks

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

While the Farmington Hills clerk's staff counted votes Tuesday night for the successful half-mill levy for parks and recreation, about 80 residents met in Heritage Park to reactivate the Naturalists Club.

"That's a tremendous statement," said resident Roy Lindhardt. "These are the quiet people, the people who are for the preservation of land."

Lindhardt — who early in the campaign opposed the millage — called the victory "the best of both worlds. We can satisfy all the needs of people involved."

The half-mill levy was approved by 4,130 voters, compared to 2,802 who voted against the proposal. Of the 4,393 voters who cast absentee ballots, 2,434 approved the levy, 1,856 opposed it.

Among those who cared to vote, passage could be considered a mandate. But of the city's 46,426 registered voters, only 7,034 or 15.15 percent cast ballots. Vote totals are unofficial.

"The election victory was a total community effort, again demonstrating what a wonderful city we have," said Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi. "The coming together of the various groups to ensure success of the proposal was heartwarming."

"By their vote, the residents of our community have secured the quality of life in our city into the turn of the century."

LINDHARDT and naturalist Joe Derek — who were often criticized for challenging city officials on the levy and proposed projects — say they remain committed to keeping an eye on parks and recreation, how the money generated from the tax is spent and how and where projects are completed.

**'The election victory was a total community effort . . . The coming together of the various groups to ensure success of the proposal was heartwarming. By their vote, the residents of our community have secured the quality of life in our city into the turn of the century.'**

— Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi

"I'm going to watch like a hawk, float like a butterfly and sting like a bee," Derek said. "Now since the millage passed, I'm going to be vocal. You can be damned sure I will be watching and yelling for the next eight years."

"Passage of the millage means it will be collected July 1. Over eight years, the levy will generate \$9.6 million to support a \$10.9 million parks and recreation plan. Grants are expected to pay the difference."

"I hope this is a kind of rebirth of supporting what's important: schools, kids, parks," said Dennis Fitzgerald, chairman of the parks and recreation commission, which will spearhead the eight-year parks and recreation plan.

Pleased with the election's results, Fitzgerald said the victory "reflects getting out the message and getting out the data. Now we have to deliver. That's the fun part. I think people will see early results."

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## Hills budget crunch means no new cops

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Farmington Hills councilman Ben Marks compared it to playing roulette.

"Nobody says they're going to freeze crime," he said. "I'd rather see a gradual increase in the area of police and fire. I think sometimes you tighten the belt and you kill the patient."

That was Marks' reaction to news Monday night that no new police officers will be added

to the existing 97 officers because of city administrators' efforts to lighten the proposed 1991-92 city budget, particularly in the wake of a state-planned tax assessment freeze in 1992.

"We understand the budget crunch," Farmington Hills police Chief William Dwyer said. "We prepared this year's budget based on the crime stats."

In 1990, serious crime decreased 16.8 percent compared to 1989. In the first three months of 1991, crime was again down com-

pared to the same period in 1990. "No one is sitting here saying it (crime spree) can't happen here in Farmington Hills. No one has a crystal ball," city manager William Costick said.

MAYOR ALDO Vagnozzi disagreed with Marks. "We're at a point where we are just not able to (add more officers). We can revisit the budget later in the year if there's a problem."

A new officer at a starting salary would cost the department about \$32,000 including fringe

benefits. An officer at the top of the pay scale, plus benefits would cost the department \$50,000 Dwyer said.

Of the police department's \$9 million budget, Dwyer says he had no control over some of the costs. Higher wages and increased benefits, including social security, accounts for \$584,000 of the increases in the department's budget.

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## Candidate wants trustees to link schools, community

**Editor's note:** Coverage of the 1991 Farmington school board race continues with a profile of challenger Laura Myers. Election coverage will continue throughout May. The election is June 10.

By Casey Hens  
staff writer

As a parent with children in elementary, middle school and high schools in the Farmington school district, Laura Myers believes it's her turn to serve as a trustee on the board of education.

"I think they need me," said the 39-year-old resident of the Old Village historic neighborhood in Farmington, and one of three candidates running for the school board. "I think they need a person who's accessible. The current board too often excludes. After all, the board is supposed to be a link with the communi-

## '91 SCHOOL BOARD RACE

"And now, more than ever, we need to be able to call on the community."

The community has certainly called on Myers during her nine years of residency here, where she has settled with her husband and three sons.

SHE IS ACTIVE in scouting, PTA and booster groups, in anti-drug groups such as Farmington Families in Action, has been a delegate to the state PTA convention for the past eight years, and is a life member of the Farmington Historical Society

something reflected in the family's historic homestead on Shawwassee Street.

She has also served recently on the school district's Facilities Task Force and High School Boundary Committee, and was an active member of the Friends of Farmington Schools, which supported the recent millage effort which she called "the only game in town" to help the district's financial situation.

Myers faces incumbent Susan Bennett, a bank executive and Farmington Hills resident, and challenger Richard DeVries, a Ford Motor Co. engineer, on June 10 as the three vie for one four-year term on the non-partisan " . . . and of education. Myers also . . . the 1990 school board election, winning a strong campaign and coming in a close third to the two winners.

A self-proclaimed independent thinker, Myers said she will challenge the current board to involve



Laura Myers

parents at every level.

"I've always felt here, you're unable to feel as though you're taking a job away from someone when you volunteer," she said. "But we're going to be cutting back and parents are here and ready to fill the gap. It's a way to produce a real quality program."

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## Myers stresses involvement, openness

Laura Myers is one of three candidates vying for one seat on the Farmington school board this June.

Parental involvement is the key issue in her campaign, and is something she threads through all issues facing the district. She believes:

The current School/Community Forum group,

instituted by the district, "kind of gives lip service" to the idea of parental involvement. "It needs to come up from the bottom and down from the top," she said. If elected, she would work to ensure better communications between the board and community, and between individual schools and their parents.

The financial situation facing the district and

programs being cut can be directly impacted by parent and community involvement. She advocates involvement directly in the classroom. "It's important to have that real world connection."

School board meetings are open to everyone. "Anyone" has the right to get up and speak their peace," she said. "They're there to talk."

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