

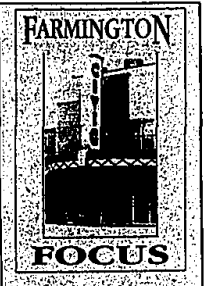
Musical successes
were few in 1991, 3B

Top area
cagers, 1B

Quilt for teacher is
something special, 3A

Farmingington Observer

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FOCUS

SIGH... the holidays are almost over. Time to take the wreaths off the doors, put away the Christmas ornaments and either pack up or throw out the tree.

But don't lose out the greeting cards you received this season. Those holiday cards can be recycled for the good of the environment and some needy children.

Farmingington-area residents are asked to drop off the frosts of their cards at various spots around the community through Jan. 24. The frosts will be mailed to the St. Jude's Ranch for Children in Boulder City, Nev.

The facility is a non-sectarian organization that helps abused, neglected and abandoned children. The youngsters cut out the decorations and glue them onto a new backing which is later sold as a new card. The money they receive pays for special trips and small holiday gifts.

Farmingington Hills, a branch of Public Services will collect the cards this year. The five drop-off points are: the Farmington Hills City Hall, 11 Mile and Orchard Lake roads; the Farmington City Hall, Liberty Street and Grand River; both branches of the Farmington Community Library, 12 Mile Road in Farmington Hills and Liberty in Farmington; and the recycling center on Halsted Road.

SPEAKING of the holiday just passed, Farmington Hills officials remind residents that Christmas trees will be picked up for three weeks after the holidays.

Residents who would like their trees composted should place them unbagged at the curb Jan. 2-8. During that week, a special truck will take them to a compost site. Trees in bags will not be accepted.

VOLUNTEERS are needed for the American Cancer Society's Discovery Shop to open next month in downtown Farmington.

The Discovery Shop is a resale store carrying new and used merchandise donated by manufacturers, local retailers and individuals. Volunteers should be able to work at least half a day a week in the store.

Volunteer orientation and training begins the week of Jan. 6. For more information, call the American Cancer Society at 557-5533. The store will be open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Saturday beginning Jan. 21.

MEMORY LANE — From the Jan. 3, 1952, Farmington Enterprise.

Funeral services for Fred S. Lamb, former superintendent of schools in Farmington and former Circuit Court judge, were held Dec. 30, 1991, at 87.

A heavy snowfall and cold weather halted construction of new schools in the Farmington Township District, according to Superintendent O.E. Dunckel.

Carl Whelan was elected the new president of the Farmington Kiwanis to replace retiring president Nate Mihay.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21888 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336, or dropped off at the newspaper office.

Church treasurer charged

By Susan Buck
staff writer

The trusted eight-year treasurer at Nardin Park United Methodist Church is awaiting trial in Oakland County Circuit Court on four counts of embezzlement involving 78 checks totalling \$145,000, according to Farmington Hills police.

Barbara Hart Esler, 58, of Royal Oak waived her right to a preliminary exam Friday before 47th District Court Judge Margaret Schaeffer. She was released on \$10,000 bond, said Farmington Hills Sgt. Charles Nebus.

Esler, a divorced mother of two and a grandmother, is a 20-year church member. Her mother, the late Dorothy Allen, had been the church secretary.

Esler was arrested Nov. 27 by Royal Oak police and arraigned a day later in 47th District Court in Farmington before Magistrate Marina Parker.

No trial date has been set.

"A church trustee reported it to our department," Nebus said. "The checks ranged from hundreds to thousands of dollars." The checks were made out in Esler's name and carried her signature, Nebus said.

IF CONVICTED, Esler could face a sentence of up to 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$5,000.

"There were questionable things," said the Rev. William Ritter, senior pastor of Nardin Park. "Most occurred in 1991 and in the last months of 1990."

Ritter said that as the year wore on, there were "ups" that something was awry. "Large bills we thought had been paid were not, and we pushed for explanations," Ritter said.

These bills included monthly payments to the parent deaconess, the United Methodist Church. Other payments went to an architect, Ritter said.

The church recently completed a \$2 million expansion that includes a chapel, classrooms and a fellowship room, Ritter said.

"We did not get timely reports (from Esler) and we had a parting of the ways Nov. 1," Ritter said. "Then, we began an intensive audit which revealed the discrepancies. There was a private investigation and we made a formal charge (police report)."

Esler was a church bellringer and the secretary of the Nardiners, a

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Barbara Esler

New mayors' message: Get involved



DANIEL LIPPITTI/staff photographer

Eighteen-year Farmington City Council veteran William Hartsock begins a two-year term as that city's mayor. Hartsock is a partner with the investment firm of Roney & Co.

Hills chief: It's not a closed club

By Susan Buck
staff writer

Nine years ago, Jonathan Grant ventured out for the first time as a volunteer in the Farmington community.

Answering a call for Farmington Founders Festival volunteers, Grant became festival treasurer.

On Jan. 1, Grant, 40, takes the helm as mayor of Farmington Hills.

"At that time, (1983) I never even thought about that I would be Mayor," said Grant, a 1970 graduate of North Farmington and owner of Reliance Forms and Supplies, Inc.

"Anyone who really wants to become involved in the community can become involved at any level," Grant said. "It's not a closed club. If you want to get involved, you can get involved and you can go to any level that you want."

He expects his community work experience to lend a "broad base" of knowledge. "My hobby is my community," Grant once said in 1988.

He knows the people who work on all the organizations throughout the community. "I have a rapport with all of them," Grant said. "I don't think any of them have a problem with contacting me about what they are concerned with or with what they'd like to see."



DANIEL LIPPITTI/staff photographer

Jonathan Grant, owner of a Farmington Hills business forms company, is the newly elected mayor of Farmington Hills.

Farmington leader says aid cutbacks pinch city

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Good economic policy and effective communication will be key for the city of Farmington, as Big Brother chips away at city finances and intrudes more on local policies, the city's newly elected mayor said.

"We're out there like any worker — a balanced budget with some money in the savings account. And we don't know what's going to happen," said Mayor William Hartsock, an 18-year council veteran who just began his third two-year term in the city's honorary seat.

Farmington's mayor is elected by fellow council members every two

years. Hartsock also served as mayor in 1979-81 and 1983-85.

The city has stayed ahead of some state and federal mandates — like the ongoing sewer refurbishing project which allowed the city to borrow at low interest rates — but Hartsock said other mandates are waiting in the wings. He said the city has been seeing "gradual cutbacks" of state and federal money in the last decade, but that any more cutbacks and mandated programs could cause problems in the future.

Hartsock said today's down economy is directly impacting businesses here, where many retail stores rely

Please turn to Page 2

trying to develop a joint use between the OCC property and the college library. "There's a lot of obstacles to overcome," Grant said. "We will make it succeed and if it does, we have a tremendous opportunity to maximize tax dollars by joining these two together."

There are challenges on the horizon, too, Grant said. The recycling issue comes up again this year. The council will need to decide whether to continue the fee or go to a tax, he said.

"We also have the district court issue," Grant said. "We simply have no room at the court. We do need a third judge. There's a need to go back out to the voters and informing them better."

The biggest challenge is the city budget," Grant said.

tentil taxes, Grant said. "Of course, there will be some new construction which will bring in about \$250,000 in new taxes. Our building permit revenues are down."

A big factor which people may not even think of is the decline in the city's interest income, Grant said. "Interest rates have been down since the first of the year, about 40 percent. That means about a \$500,000 decline for the city."

Then there's the unknown about the property tax proposals on the November ballot, Grant said.

"But, it's not all doom and gloom. The city just got a good audit report from Plante and Moran, Grant said. "The city is in a very good financial position," he said. "We're in good shape to start the 1992-93 budget."

There's a state grant for the second phase of the 12 Mile boulevard and it looks like there will be some federal money for the third phase.

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- CLASSIFIEDS . . . 591-0900
CIRCULATION . . . 591-0500
NEWS LINE . . . 477-5450
SPORTS LINE . . . 953-2139

Have a Happy and Safe New Year

Great-grandma recalls what Christmas was like in 1904

As a school assignment, Hillside Elementary second grader Elise Fields was asked to have her grandparents write down some holiday memories from their childhoods. What follow are Elise's great-grandmother Loreta's recollections of Christmas 1904.



Elise Fields Hillside 2nd grader

Loreta Adam, 91 Elise's great-grandmother

ELISE, THAT was the year I was about your age now. We didn't have a lot of the things you take for granted.

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