

Terry Farmer harvests
tuneful new album, 4B



Swimming
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Local cable TV guide
inside today's paper



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FARMINGTON



FOCUS

Public 'eating up' phone numbers

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Remember the days when it took only one telephone number to reach you? Those days are over. Now someone has to call your keeper, your car phone, your work or home phone — not to mention the second phone line at home.

"It's the choices people have made. They want access," said Mary Jo Fifarek, Michigan Bell public relations director. "Multiply everyone by a factor of 2-3 and that's how many phone numbers you have. We are eating up numbers at an incredible rate."

growing lack of them — is behind a proposal to split the 313 area code by 1994. That means Farmington and Farmington Hills would receive a new area code if the recommendation is approved.

"At this moment it's not a concrete, finalized plan," Fifarek said. In early summer a citizens committee, which has been studying the proposal, will make a recommendation to Michigan Bell. That recommendation will be passed on for approval by Bell Communications Research in New Jersey, which "is the keeper of the numbers," Fifarek said.

for Michigan since codes were introduced in 1947 — would be based on regions. The current 313 area code would be divided into regions north and south of Eight Mile Road. Communities such as Detroit would maintain the 313 code. Farmington, Farmington Hills, and Troy, for example, would get the new code, which Michigan Bell has not released.

Michigan Bell has about 3.5 million customers in Michigan. About 1.4 million of them would receive the new area code. Splitting the area code would add about 5 million possible numbers to the 13 counties around Detroit without affecting service or rates, said Michigan Bell spokesman Dean Hovey.

No one expects a new area code — if it should occur — to take effect without a whimper. Michigan Bell expects to notify the public well in advance should a new area code be added.

"Initially, change is difficult for everyone," Fifarek said. "Change is never easy."

Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick doesn't see the potential area code change as a big deal. "It's just a matter of time and everyone will get used to it."

Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman compares an area code change to the changes

IF APPROVED, a new area code — the first

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HOW LUCKY are those who have Patti Trombley for a neighbor. The Farmington Hills woman saw a neighbor in need recently and acted quickly to help.

The neighbor's infant needed medical treatment in Maryland, but money was tight for the family. Trombley, working with little notice, organized a fund-raising "mostaccioli dinner" at Larkshire Elementary School Tuesday. Close to \$900 was raised, according to sources.

"You don't hear about something like this too often," said Michelle Paul, who's with the Larkshire PTA. "She deserves a good apple award. She was out running around, putting flyers in schools, churches, VFW halls. It's a remarkable little story."

SPEAKING OF good neighbors, there's a few of them in downtown Farmington, too.

The recent announcement that business is bad at the Civic Theatre and that the landmark movie house on Grand River might have to close spurred neighbor John Cowley into action.

Cowley, who owns The Village Inn bar and restaurant in the same block, came up with the idea of giving a free Civic ticket to the first 40 people who purchase a Friday night dinner for \$5 or more, excluding drinks, through March 27. The offer's not good Friday, March 13, because of the St. Patrick's Day crowds.

Now, five more downtown businesses want to help the Civic.

They are: Books Around, right next door, two tickets with a \$25 purchase; Michelle Marc's Flowers, two tickets with a \$25 walk-in purchase; King's Garage, two tickets with a \$18.95 oil change and lube; Clothes Encounters, two tickets with a \$30 purchase; and Marco's Dining and cocktails, two tickets with a \$25 dinner.

The community support has Civic owner Greg Hohler thinking he may make it after all with the newly lowered \$1.25 admission price.

"The support is touching," said Hohler, who purchased the theater from his father in 1973. "A little girl, maybe 10 years old, came in one day and gave me a letter. It said, 'You can't close the Civic. My father and I go there every Monday night.' It went on to say how her father first saw a mover there in 1981. There was a dollar bill enclosed. I looked for her to give her a pass, but she was gone."

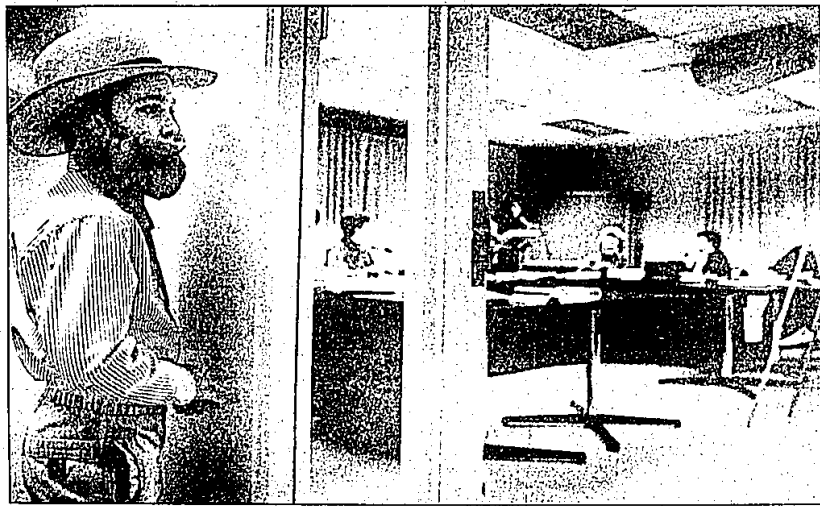
APPPLICATIONS for the Miss Farmington/Farmington Hills Scholarship Pageant are being accepted. The pageant, part of the Founders' Festival, will be held July 8.

Women ages 17-24 from the Farmington area are eligible. Call Joan Lamarr at 799-9171 for more information.

Volunteers are needed to work on this year's pageant. Many positions are open. If interested, send a resume to Lamarr, P.O. Box 158, Walled Lake 48390.

MEMORY LANE — From the March 13, 1952 Farmington Observer:

Sirloin steaks were being sold for 83 cents a pound at Walby Zehnder Meats, 35419 Grand River.



Enter, stage right

Hillside Elementary third grader John Lankos waits outside the doorway to the school board meeting room before performing a "living biography" of painter Claude Monet during

the board's first cablecast meeting. Each school in the district gets a chance to do a board presentation during the year. For more about the first cablecast meeting, turn to Page 3A

SHARON LEMICUX/staff photographer

Ex-treasurer gets delayed sentence



Barbara Estler
former treasurer

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

For the next year, the former treasurer for Nardin Park United Methodist Church will repay \$200 a month as part of a delayed sentence she received after she pleaded guilty to embezzlement charges March 3.

The interim sentence, however, is much less of a punishment than the leader and members of the Farmington Hills church expected.

"The people feel they have been wronged. A trust has been violated and a wonderful ministry has been threatened," said the Rev. William Ritter, senior pastor at Nardin Park.

"We take this very seriously," Barbara Estler, a 58-year-old Royal Oak resident and former church treasurer, pleaded guilty to four counts of embezzlement by an agent over \$100 before Oakland County

Will pay church
\$200 a month

Circuit Judge Robert Templin March 3.

Estler admitted she wrote checks totaling about \$150,000 on church accounts beginning in August 1990 until October, 1991. She was asked to resign by church officials effective Nov. 1, 1991.

Howard Arnkoff of Troy, Estler's attorney, was unavailable for comment.

JUDGE TEMPLIN delayed Estler's sentence until Feb. 7, 1993. In the next year, she must repay \$200 monthly to the church, as well as \$30 monthly attorney fees and \$30 monthly court costs for each of the

four counts, according to a court spokeswoman.

"We are happy there has been an acknowledgment of responsibility for the crime. To this date, Barbara Estler has never expressed any acknowledgment or apology for the crime itself," Ritter said. Estler was a 20-year church member. Her mother, the late Dorothy Allen had been the church secretary.

While church officials were not involved in Templin's interim sentence, Ritter said they expect to be heard at the time of sentencing in 1993. If convicted, Estler could face a maximum 10 years in prison and \$5,000 fine.

At the \$200 monthly rate, it would take Estler, 60 years to repay the church the approximately \$150,000 it lost, Ritter said.

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Center finally fills up

By Casey Hane
staff writer

Plans to open a popular restaurant in downtown Farmington have been squeezed, but the center in which it was to open is filling up after five years of vacancies.

Mr. B's Border Cafe, which local officials hoped would spark additional interest in downtown Farmington, was to open at the Village Commons Shopping Center this spring after a \$600,000 interior renovation investment.

But further lease negotiations with the owners of the center came to an impasse in recent weeks and investor Mike Nash pulled out, according to city officials.

Nash could not be reached for comment this week but had told the Observer in January that he was having "setbacks" which he would not talk about. Nash and other investors own similar restaurants throughout the Metro Detroit area, including Royal Oak, Southfield and Rochester.

DESPITE LOSING Mr. B's, other large merchants are taking shape in the long vacant Village Commons and another restaurant, the Marco's, is expanding to handle banquet facilities and more entertainment. The Village Commons is located on the north side of Grand River at the site of former lumber yard near the Farmington Place senior apartments.

Downtown Development Authority director Wendy Strip-Sittsamer announced the changes at a regular DDA board meeting in early March, saying that "obviously, it's a big disappointment to us. Mr. B's asked to revisit the terms and they (the landlord) weren't able to."

Melissa Jenkins of Ross Financial, current owner of the building, said the company was pleased the center was filling up with established businesses and that the company was "disappointed" that Mr. B's broke the lease. "We're not sure what their reasons were," she added.

Planned improvements for the Village Commons in the coming weeks include:

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Westinghouse pullout gives new life to incinerator foes

By Judith Doner Berns
staff writer

It's back to the drawing board with the Oakland County trash plan — to the delight of the vocal incinerator opposition.

And to the delight of businesses that see new hope in getting the bid to build an incinerator for Oakland County in Auburn Hills.

Last week's news that Westinghouse Electric Corp. canceled its contract to build the county's waste-to-energy incinerator leaves the solid waste plan without one of its major components.

An informational symposium featuring experts on "innovative alternatives to waste management" scheduled for 7:15 p.m. Thursday at the Holiday Inn in Bloom-

field Township takes on new meaning for its sponsors — Help Oakland Protect the Environment.

More than 400 mayors, city managers and board, commission and council members from all Oakland County communities are invited.

At the same time, Anne Hobart, community relations director for the solid waste program, confirmed "calls have come in from other (incinerator-building) companies who are interested in serving Oakland County."

But "nobody knows where we're going at this point," Hobart said. "The Westinghouse announcement took us completely by surprise. We have to regroup."

COUNTY OFFICIALS weren't the only ones taken by surprise.

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