

Bushmasters turn out a tuneful CD, 9A

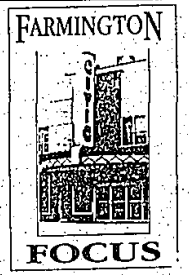


Girls track results, 1C

Young spelling ace goes for U.S. title, 3A

# Farminington Observer

Volume 103 Number 56 Monday, April 13, 1992 Farmington, Michigan 40 Pages Fifty Cents



**IT'S OFFICIAL:** April 22 is Earth Day, and Arbor Week starts April 19. The mayors of Farmington and Farmington Hills have said so. Farmington Mayor William Hartscock and his Hills counterpart, Jonathan Grant, proclaimed the day and the week in their respective cities recently. The proclamation reads, in part: "... the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills join communities around the country in urging all citizens to celebrate these days to make our world a better place by planting trees as one expression to gladden the heart and to promote the well-being of this and future generations."

**ATTENTION,** subscribers to MetroVision cable television... some interesting programs are being shown on cable Channel 10, the Educational Access station.

That's what Dean Cobb, telecommunications coordinator for the Farmington Public Schools, would like to remind viewers.

Station highlights, said Cobb, are the live broadcast of the Farmington Board of Education meetings on the first and third Tuesday evenings, and "From the Desk of Mike Flanagan," an interview featuring the Farmington superintendent of schools.

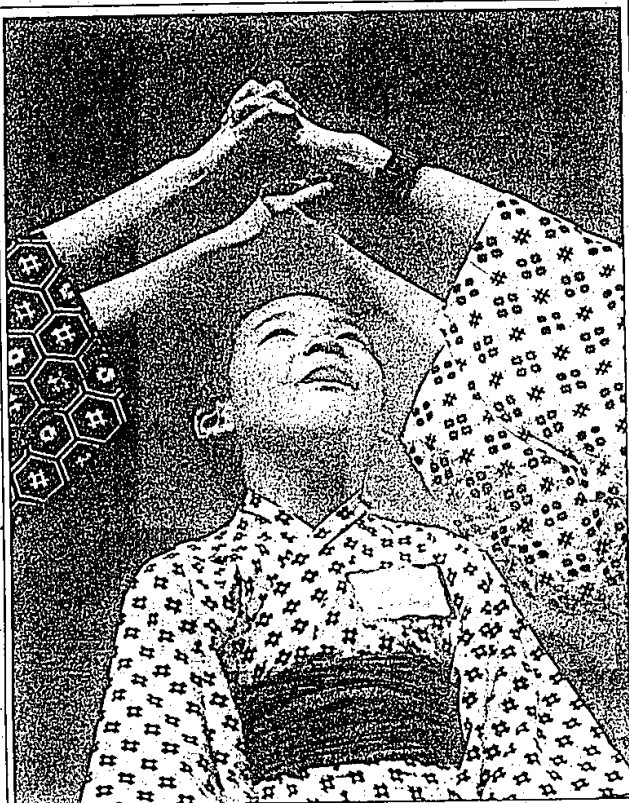
In addition to Cobb, the Channel 10 staff includes about 20 students from the three public high schools in Farmington. Other fare: talent shows, football and basketball games — most taped, but some live — and "whatever else happens in the schools," Cobb said.

The school board's recent decision to allow its meetings to be broadcast live has given Channel 10 a boost, said Cobb, who teaches mass media at North Farmington High School. "People are beginning to realize we're here," he added, "even though we've been around a long, long time."

In general, Channel 10 is on the air from 5-8 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and 6-8 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday. Hours can be extended for special events, Cobb said.

**FARMINGTON-AIEA** residents with ties to the Clarenceville School District take note: An open house will be held at Botsford Elementary School, 19515 Lathers, Livonia, 2-4 p.m. Sunday, May 3, to dedicate a new science center. The facility honors Mildred Burchell-Rice, a former teacher. The Clarenceville District draws students from southeast Farmington Hills, as well as northern Livonia. Call 473-8911 for more information.

**MEMORY LANE** — From the April 17, 1952, Farmington Enterprise: ● Donald Duck orange juice was 23 cents for a 46-ounce can at the Fill-Mar Market, Grand River and Eight Mile. ● The Rev. Gordon Northrop was named minister of the First Baptist Church of Farmington. **Items for Farmington Focus** may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336, or dropped off at the newspaper office.



SHARON LAMIEUX/Staff photographer

## Capturing culture

Beechview second grader Ryo Sakata performs a childhood dance with other Japanese students of the annual event held this year at Harrison High School. The Farmington Public Schools and the Multicultural

Community Council bring ethnic and bilingual children and their families together for a sharing of cultures. For a story and more photos, please turn to Page 10A.

## No-resuscitation bill would give guideline to emergency crews

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer.

To resuscitate or not? That's a question you probably wouldn't think about unless you or a family member were terminally ill. But that question travels through the minds of many, particularly emergency personnel, daily. "We've been working in a gray area for quite a while. It's difficult," Farmington Hills deputy fire chief Peter Baldwin said. But legislation now in a state House committee could change that gray area. According to House Bill 5453, you — 18 years and older — would have the right to execute a "do not resuscitate" declaration. An amendment to the bill calls for such patients to wear a wrist bracelet announcing their declaration so emergency

responders have their orders. "The law right now is that emergency people must resuscitate or they have liability," said state Rep. Jan Dolan of Farmington Hills, one of the bill's co-sponsors. "This bill is really for the terminally ill." Emergency personnel encounter problems, for example, when family members of a terminally ill patient do not want resuscitation, but technicians may be required to try.

OR ON THE other hand, sometimes family members can't decide what they want or what they believe the patient may want. "The legislation is good as long as people understand that that one symbol — the bracelet — will override relatives' requests at the scene," said

Please turn to Page 2

## Delinquent taxes: A sign of 'bad times'

By Casey Hans staff writer

An increase in delinquent taxes this year in Farmington's business district is a sign of tough economic times everywhere, according to the city's chief executive.

"It would indicate landlords in the DDA (Downtown Development Authority) district are not paying their property taxes — at least not on time," said City Manager Robert Deadman, who also sits on the DDA board.

"Historically, taxes have not been let go in the downtown. There's a problem in the business sector — the economy is reflected here."

As of the end of February when taxes were due, a total of \$144,836 in real property taxes were delinquent within the DDA boundaries, which encompass the city's central business district, according to city records. Another \$21,562 in personal property taxes also showed in arrears.

According to the city's 1991 tax roll, the figures represent some 87 property parcels or companies. The figures include taxes from the DDA's tax increment financing, or TIF, district and an additional two-mill tax that is levied in the district.

THAT MEANS the city had only collected 77 percent of personal property taxes and 64 percent of real property taxes due — about two thirds of the taxes owed, Deadman said.

"It's a further illustration that the bad economic times haven't escaped downtown Farmington," said DDA executive director Wendy Strip-Sittamer.

The delinquent tax situation doesn't cause a budget or cash flow problem for the city because Oakland County will reimburse the city for any taxes not paid after Feb. 28.

If not paid, properties are sold at a tax sale or turned over to the state. Eventually, taxpayers foot the bill if the property tax is not paid somehow, said Julie Cassanova of the Oakland County treasurer's office.

The tax delinquencies as of February in Farmington's downtown range anywhere from several dollars to several hundred dollars for personal property taxes in many small businesses downtown. The real property taxes represent bigger dollars and range from several thousand up to \$94,421 for the largest 1991 delinquency which is represented by the Village Commons shopping center. According to county records, that center shows tax delinquencies back to 1988 because of a high vacancy rate, but is finally filling up with tenants which should help get things moving year, said owner Jay Ross.

"I think things are looking up in downtown," Ross said. He said though the past two years have been tough, he sees the economy "slowly picking up." He has 90 percent of the retail space in the center rented, and

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— City Manager Robert Deadman

nearly half of the office space leased as well.

ROSS CURRENTLY has the shopping center up for sale.

Other large delinquencies on the city rolls included large downtown property owners like Downtown Farmington Center Associates which owes \$32,474 for 1990 and 1991 taxes. Representatives of the company could not be reached for comment.

Cantrell said times must be especially tough, because delinquent bills have thousands of dollars in penalties added to them, and administrative fees which continue to accrue over the months they are past due.

## Downtown assessments, taxes up

While times may be tough everywhere, some downtown Farmington property owners are enjoying an increase in their real and personal property values.

That, of course, increases taxes as well.

Values have increased on an average of 90 percent since 1986 when the Downtown Development Authority was formed, according to a recent report from DDA executive director Wendy Strip-Sittamer and preliminary tax information from the city assessor's office.

"You're seeing the DDA accomplish what we set out to accomplish," she said, "and that's increased values in the downtown." Under the DDA's tax increment financing mechanism, the increases in values have been captured and used to fund the city's downtown streetscape program which is adding pedestrian lighting, new sidewalks and greenery throughout downtown.

In the base year, assessment values in the DDA totaled \$8.9 million. Those values rose steadily over the past few years to \$11.1 million in 1987, \$13 million in 1988, \$14.5 million in 1989, \$15.9 million in 1990, \$16.5 million in 1991 and \$17 million in 1992.

From the base year to today, that represents just over an \$8 million increase in value.

## what's inside

- Around Farmington . . . 4A
- Classifieds . . . Secs. C-D
- Index . . . . . 4C
- Auto . . . . . Soc. D
- Real Estate . . . . . Soc. C
- Employment . . . . . Soc. C, D
- Crossword . . . . . 5C
- Entertainment . . . . . 6A
- Obituaries . . . . . 2A
- On the agenda . . . . . 4A
- Sports . . . . . Soc. C
- Street Scene . . . . . 8B
- Travel . . . . . 9A
- CLASSIFIEDS . . . 591-0900
- CIRCULATION . . . 591-0500
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**HOME & SERVICE GUIDE**

## Tragic death spurred birth of company's medical team

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

In the fall of 1988, workers at the Ingersoll Hand Company in Farmington Hills got a shock that changed their lives.

That was when a 31-year-old employee had a heart attack and died at work. "His death was really a shock," said employee Jim Heraty. "But the man's untimely death and the shock waves it sent through the more than 300 employees activated a need among employees to learn how to help each other in times of medical need.

"We decided it would be beneficial if we had a medical team on hand," said Heraty, a member of the company's more than two-year-old emergency response team.

now has nine members. Volunteers were sought for the team and a call was made to the Farmington Hills Fire Department for help.

"They called and wanted to know what to do to make it a safer place," said Farmington Hills firefighter Wayne Kurzeja. "We gave them a lot of ideas."

THE NEXT STEP was to hire Stewart Oxygen Service, which provided training for cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid. Team members aren't just on the manufacturing side of the company at 25400 Haledel, which makes assembly lines. One of the newest members, Joe Maynard, is an engineer. "Now we have someone in the office areas," Maynard said.

The training, of course, has come in handy for employees if hurt or sick on the job. But Kurzeja says the

Please turn to Page 2