



# Farmington Observer

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## IN THE PAPER TODAY

**Honored buildings:** Some structures in Farmington were honored recently at a luncheon./8A

**No noise:** The Farmington Hills City Council amended an ordinance to allow police to enforce noise limits on dirt bikes and off-road vehicles./2A

## STREET SCENE



**Coming home:** What do you do if your highly anticipated New York showcase draws an audience of seven? If you're the Vudu Hippies, you head home and get back to the basics that clicked in the first place./4A

## COUNTY NEWS

**Changing of the guard:** The incoming Oakland County executive names more members of his new administration./7A

## OPINION

**"Malcolm X":** The newspaper's Hugh Gallagher viewed the controversial movie "Malcolm X" and came away with the opinion that it's worth seeing, but it ignored the man's early years./10A

## TASTE

**Panic time:** Don't sweat Thanksgiving. Help is only a hot line call away. We've got a list of hot lines you can call, even on Thanksgiving, tips for thawing, and cooking the big bird./1B

**Winner Dinner:** Don't cry fowl the day after Thanksgiving. This week's Winner Dinner features an appetizing dish made with turkey and stuffing leftovers. A cranberry gelatin salad completes the meal./1B

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# Holidays spur biz . . . and crime



Christmas is a-comin' — and so are the crooks who capitalize on the season. More than 20 area merchants attended a police seminar on how to avoid Christmas crime.

By BILL COULTANT  
STAFF WRITER

This week may mark the traditional beginning of the Christmas shopping season, but if merchants are happy to see the crowded aisles and bulging cash registers, they aren't looking forward to the bounced checks, bad plastic and funny money.

For that reason, about 25 area merchants and business people turned out for a seminar put on by the Farmington Hills Police Crime Prevention Section Thursday at the Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance building.

With the increased volume in retail traffic, merchants will have to be es-

pecially prepared for robbers and grifters, officers said.

The increase in traffic makes it easier for shoplifters to go undetected, and the wealth of merchandise makes the crime attractive.

"They will be out shopping too," said officer Chris Cogar.

Officer Jeff Anderson, of the crime prevention section, said shoplifters often take merchandise that's out of sight.

"Make sure you can see where you're being hit," Anderson said.

"Just them knowing there's security will help."

Although retailers are often the victims of check and credit card fraud, the criminal Grinches also steal Christmas from other stockings.

"If there is a scam going on, it's going to affect more than one business," said Loretta Morelli, manager of the Mobile gas station and snack shop at the corner of 12 Milo and Middlebelt.

Morelli, who also lives in Farmington Hills, said the increase in traffic from Christmas shoppers adds to the traffic at her cash register where cash

See HOLIDAYS, 2A



Hay . . . what's going on?

BILL BRISLER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Waiting for the snow: Don Gould, who works for the Farmington Department of Public Works, unloads bales of hay that will be placed at the bottom of the sled hill at the Farmington School District headquarters. The hay is a safety measure. Safety fencing will be added. The hill is popular with youngsters, but one school trustee has termed it "an attractive nuisance."

# Santa to get rousing welcome

By SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

Kids, this shopping holiday is for you.

Santa's arrival by helicopter at 10:45 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 5, in downtown Farmington heralds in both new and old activities. He'll be landing at the east end of the downtown center. Events include a children's treat-

ment hunt with "kids only" shopping. Christmas, Hanukkah and other events reflecting the community's cultural diversity are also on the agenda.

"We wanted to make this a cultural event," said promoter Howard Gelman. "It's nice to learn what other cultures do."

Maureen Schiffman & Coco, a

Farmington-area puppeteer, will present a Hanukkah celebration in story and song at 11:30 a.m. under the tent.

"Dickens Carollers" lead traditional carols as they stroll about town from 11:45 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.

"They'll be stopping people on street corners, grabbing people and

See SANTA, 9A

# 2 Hills men among 3 charged in home robbery

By PAT MURPHY  
STAFF WRITER

Three men have been ordered to stand trial on armed robbery charges in connection with the forced entry into a West Bloomfield residence where three people were manhandled and robbed before being left bound and gagged.

John D. Bradley and Darko Peric, both 23 and of Farmington Hills, and Kenneth W. Greene, 29, of Detroit, were ordered into Oakland County

Circuit court following their preliminary examination Tuesday before 48th District Judge Gus Cifelli.

All the defendants are charged with three counts of armed robbery in connection with the Nov. 5 intrusion into a residence in the 1900 block of Hiller north of Greer.

In that incident, William Ferguson, 19, and a friend were confronted by three men who came to the door about 11:05 p.m., according to police. A third person was roughed up,

robbed, bound and gagged when he happened to stop by during the robbery. None of the victims required hospital attention.

One of the intruders brandished what appeared to be an automatic weapon, Ferguson told police. He also said they took jewelry, a stereo system and some cash with a total value of about \$4,000.

The victims were able to get loose about 30 minutes after their assailants fled, according to police. They

See ELECTION, 2A

# Election is called saver

By SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

It'll save on election costs and increase voter convenience.

Those are two reasons Farmington school officials are giving for their decision to hold a special millage renewal election Feb. 2, a Tuesday, that will consolidate 1993-95 operating renewals in a single ballot proposal.

The millages all expire in 2001. If the renewal fails, some \$31 million in operating costs will be lost, ac-

## SCHOOLS

According to Bruce R. Barrett, the district's assistant superintendent of finance.

"This is a straightforward renewal and I'm confident it will pass," Barrett added.

The 12.08 millage renewal consolidation package preserves the Headlee millage rollbacks, Barrett said. The school board decided not to go for the maximum 14 mills allowable.

"That proposal is not asking to renew all of the millage that was voted in in the last election, but only a portion of that millage that is currently being levied," Superintendent Michael Flanagan said at a recent school board meeting.

"Typically in our history and virtually in every other school district's history," he said, "when they have a renewal, they renew the entire package, including the amount that has been lost under the Headlee amendment."

By consolidating the renewal, the district will save about \$20,000 in election costs, Barrett said.

School districts in Royal Oak, West Bloomfield, Troy, Southfield, and Waterford also have consolidated renewal millages in a block, Barrett said.

Farmington Public Schools has a history of staggering its millage renewal elections.

If the school district continued this way, it would be going to the voters

## Park tour planned

The Friends of Heritage invite residents to ring in the holidays by taking part in the third annual Holiday Tour Thursday-Sunday, Dec. 3-5, at the Heritage Park Visitor Center.

The theme of this year's tour is "The History of the Decorated Tree."

Many examples of how trees were decorated with available resources in the distant past will be on display. The trees, sponsored by local businesses and clubs, will range from the simple decor of the 14th and 15th centuries to the elaborate Victorian tree to be done by the Friends of Heritage.

## FARMINGTON FOCUS

The tour has been greatly expanded this year to include a Hanukkah display, antique toys, a model train display and visits from Santa on that weekend.

Friends of Heritage and other organizations will have a holiday boutique. These groups include the Farmington Musicals, which will be selling poinsettias and decorated dwarf trees; the Hill and Dale Garden Club, featuring handcrafted items and raffling a handmade quilt; the North Farmington Garden Club, herbs and dried

arrangements; and the Farmington Garden Club, homemade cookies and holiday breads.

The Friends of Heritage will have several items for sale, including hostess gifts. Donations, made from natural materials, will be provided by the Farmington Naturalist Club.

Four times are Thursday-Friday, Dec. 3-4, noon to 5 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday, Dec. 5-6, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$3 for adults, \$2 for seniors and teens, and \$1 for children ages 6-12.

Proceeds will be used to help maintain the park's Visitor Center and the surrounding grounds and gardens. Heritage Park is located on Farmington Road between 10 and 11 Mile roads in Farmington Hills.