

# Farmington Observer

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**COUNTY NEWS**

**Justice at risk:** A confidential hot line offers help for area judges and attorneys with alcohol and drug problems./5A

**OPINION**

**Hills agenda:** Things seem to be getting done in Farmington Hills. However, there are always goals to shoot for./16A

**SPORTS**

**Volleyball champs:** Harrison High won its second consecutive championship Monday in the annual Observer city volleyball tournament./1B

**ENTERTAINMENT**



**Theater:** "Master Harold . . . and the boys" now playing at the Meadow Brook Theatre on the campus of Oakland University in Rochester Hills, "plays with audience perceptions and jolts us into new understandings of our own troubled racial views." Find out why./7C

**BUSINESS**

**All in the family:** The number of 1/2 Off Card Shop stores has mushroomed to 29 since 1986, but don't look for the present ownership to begin selling franchises./8B

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**Calling all women:** Interested females gathered recently at The Community House in Birmingham to discuss formation of area Senior Women's Club./1C

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## Bid flap opens year for council



By BILL COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington Hills City Council started the year with hugs, kisses, flowers and, for the most part, harmony. But some members felt a vote on a seemingly minor purchase, that wouldn't even come out of tax money, could haunt the council down the road.

Should a local company always get the business from the city — even when the low bidder is an "outside" company? Whether to use drug forfeiture money to support a police divided the Farmington Hills City Council at a recent meeting.

After the upbeat presentation of the city's employee awards at Monday's meeting, a discussion of awarding bids seemed somber in comparison. The city had asked for sealed bids on the purchase of 1,125 silk-screened awnings for the police department's "THINK" program, which involves drug and alcohol awareness in-

formation for fifth grade students. Allgraphics Corp. of Southfield had submitted the low bid of \$7,416. But the idea of giving business to outside companies when a Farmington Hills company had also bid didn't sit well with Councilman Terry Sever, who proposed that The Athletic Supporter, with a bid of \$8,118.76, be given the contract.

"We are not using tax dollars on this," Sever said. "This is (drug) forfeiture money. I also think a fair share of this money would come back to the city. It would be spent here." But seeking bids and then award-

ing to a local business instead of the lowest bidder would set a bad precedent, said Councilman Aldo Vagnozzi.

"I think this would set a precedent that we'd have difficulty with in the future," Vagnozzi said. He pointed out that the city had spent about \$309,000 on vehicles, with only \$18,000 of that going to a Farmington Hills business.

**Integrity important**

Changing the bid process would not  
See COUNCIL, 4A



In-class poetry: Teacher Dawn Hempton's students Erica Owen (above left) and Aya Kanamori react to poet Terry Wooten (below) as he performed recently at Eagle Elementary School in the Farmington District. Wooten performed for six groups of Eagle students.

## Poet charms young audience

By TOM BAER  
STAFF WRITER

Poet Terry Wooten wooed — and won — more than 400 young hearts recently at Eagle Elementary School in the Farmington District.

Wooten, who hails from northern Michigan, made six presentations at Eagle to help introduce a creative writing project at the school. He calls himself a "poet-bard" because he combines poetry with the timeless tradition of oral recitation.

"He was very personable," said Sue Johnson, Eagle principal. "During the presentations, he walked among the kids and sat with them. He was a very energized speaker."

Wooten has memorized more than 700 poems, he told the youngsters, who seemed impressed. "A child

During the presentations, he walked among the kids and sat with them. He was a very energized speaker."

Sue Johnson  
Eagle principal

would say, 'I really like Dr. Seuss or Shel Silverstein, and Terry would just read off some poems by them,' Johnson said.

Student response to Wooten was good at all six sessions, the principal said.

"There was a lot of laughter," she added. "Some of his poems were very funny. He looked like a guy

with a good sense of humor. He smiled a lot."

Wooten also recalled some difficult times during his own school days. He suffered from dyslexia, an impairment of the ability to read, and had a speech impediment.

He wasn't considered a very good student back in the fifth grade, he told the Eagle students, but he worked hard to overcome those problems.

Wooten said he enjoys the poetry of Robert Frost and likes introducing children to the works of Chaucer.

He was born and raised in northern Michigan and currently lives in Kewadin, north of Traverse City. His own poetry, he said, is deeply grounded in the culture of rural northern Michigan.



By LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Plans for a new Downtown Clock Plaza in Farmington are running on time.

City architect Chris Wzacy presented the drawings of the tower before the Downtown Development Authority Jan. 5, which approved the final design of the tower that will stand on the northwest corner of Farmington and Grand River.

The clock plaza is expected to be

completed by the Founders Festival in July.

The clock tower will be solid brick and reach 36.4 feet and have a base of 4-by-6 feet. The clock face will be 42 inches — larger than the original 34-inch face proposed.

"I think the time is inconsequential," Wzacy said. "Everyone has a watch or clock radio in their car. The clock is symbolic to maintaining history and tradition in the city."

There's still debate on what type of sign will accompany the tower. Some

DDA members are leaning toward an electronic one, which involves more money.

Also, the Board of Masons must approve of the project since the Downtown Clock Plaza would be on their property. A meeting is planned for later this month, according to DDA director Judy Downey. The Downtown Clock Plaza will be a testament to the success of the 125th Founders celebration.

The plaza is being made possible thanks to \$7,000 left over from last

year's event. Organizers earmarked the money for a gift to the community.

Councilwoman Shirley Richardson then raised an additional \$14,000 through anonymous donations and proposed the idea of a clock. Former City Manager Robert Deadman submitted the plan to the DDA in early November.

Richardson said she is pleased with the clock tower design.

See CLOCK, 2A

**Off for Washington**

There'll be another Farmington-area face in the crowd at President-elect Bill Clinton's inauguration in Washington, D.C. next week.

Samuel L. Cole, a 56-year-old Farmington Hills resident and the executive director of the state DeMolay organization, will ride on the DeMolay float during the Wednesday, Jan. 20, inaugural parade.

"Being in Washington and being involved in any president's inauguration is really exciting," said Cole, who worked for General Motors 43 years before retiring about a year ago.

Sponsored by the the Masonic Fraternity, DeMolay is a social organization for young men, ages 13-21. President-elect Clinton was involved in DeMolay during his teenage years in Arkansas, Cole said.

"We've been described as the world's largest

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high school fraternity," said Cole. "Most DeMolay members are high school age."

**Counting votes**

"My Vote Counts," a local-access cable TV series focusing on voting, can be seen Wednesdays at 8 p.m., Thursdays at 2 p.m. and most Fridays at 7 p.m. on cable Channel 12.

During January, the show features an interview with James Alexander, chairman of the Oakland County Republican Committee. Host is John Akouri.

In February, Sam Rolick speaks on "Legislative Activities of the American Association of Retired

Persons." Richard DeVries is the host.

The programs are sponsored by The Farmington Hills Committee To Increase Voter Participation. Viewers with opinions or reactions are encouraged to call Julieann Hovanecian at 474-3770.

**Memory Lane**

From the Jan. 12, 1953, edition of the Farmington Enterprise: A total of \$163 was collected in the 1953 Farmington-area March of Dimes campaign, said James Tennant, Southwest Oakland County Chapter chairman.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21838 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336, or dropped off at the newspaper office.