

# Farmlington Observer

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**Fire rages: A historic house in Farmington Hills was severely damaged by fire Tuesday afternoon./5A**

**Flanders program: Special teachers are helping special students at a Farmington elementary school./4A**

## COUNTY NEWS

**Tax, tax, tax: Five school finance and property tax reform plans have been promoted in Michigan, including Gov. John Engler's "Son of C."/7A**

## OPINION

**Lawn spraying: This is suburbia and suburbanites like their lawns green and weed-free. But people should know of the dangers involved in chemical sprays./16A**

## SPORTS

**District champion: North Farmington wrestler Dave Orw finished first at his weight in a district wrestling tournament Saturday./1B**

**Volleyball results: The Western Lakes concluded its round-robin league schedule Monday and heads toward tournament play Saturday./1B**

## ENTERTAINMENT



**Kids concert: Folklorist and children's recording artist Ella Jenkins will perform at the "Saturday Fun for Kids" series on Feb. 27 at Meadow Brook Theatre./6B**

## BUSINESS

**Winners & losers: It's apprehension on the part of some, anticipation on the part of other business owners and managers as they gauge their economic future in light of President Clinton's proposals./12B**

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# School board field takes shape



By LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Who is running for the Farmington Board of Education this year now that one incumbent says he's not seeking re-election? The Observer checked with some of the "usual suspects," as well as some new possibilities.

Two say yes. A couple say maybe. A lot aren't sure yet. But there's a plenty of time for pondering minds.

Dates for the prompt?

No, they're possible candidates for the Farmington School Board election in June. The field is expected to

be wide open since Trustee John Cotton announced he won't seek re-election.

That leaves one open seat. Trustee Helen Ditzhazy is also up for re-election.

Candidates have until April 12 to file officially.

Already, eyes are on the starting

line. Terry Fobbs and Bobbie Feldman, both of Farmington Hills, said they're running.

"My big concern is violence in the schools," said Fobbs, 40, who was a career Army officer and has six children.

"I strongly feel Farmington Hills is one of the best school systems in the state. . . and to see problems with violence that really strikes a chord with me."

Fobbs joins Feldman, who expressed her interest in running to trustees at the Feb. 9 board meeting.

"It's something I've been thinking

about for a number of years," said Feldman, 37, who has two children.

"It's an interest that's continued to grow. . . This fall, my youngest child was going to be in the first grade. It's a good time in my life to go ahead and run because of the ages of my children."

Then there's the "maybe" crowd.

Perennial candidate Richard DeVries, who has run unsuccessfully three times, is undecided. But he added about a fourth bid, "It's a good possibility."

See BOARD, 2A



Quick change: Carl Forte says he likes the hands-on nature of his work at the Valvoline Instant Oil Change in Farmington.

## Oil change life is just the pits

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Carl Forte struck oil again.

But unlike TV's Beverly Hillsbilli Jed Clampett, this goop is not Texas tea and Forte will not become a millionaire.

When oil flows downward from an automobile engine, the only reward is \$4.76 an hour. And, frankly, the job can leave one in the pits.

"Working in the pit is a nasty job," said Darrell Smolen, a manager at Caswood Oil Change in Farmington Hills. "You're going to get dirty. There's no way you're not going to get oil on you."

For eight to 10 hours a day, Forte will gaze into the underbelly of automotive machinery at Valvoline Instant Oil Change in Farmington.

He'll unscrew a bolt to the oil pan; a stream of black will cascade into a red metal receiver.

See PITS, 2A

# Attorney calls abuse charges untrue at exam

By BILL COITANT  
STAFF WRITER

According to his attorney, Gerald Joseph Bauer Jr. is the victim of an ugly lie.

It concerns charges of sexual abuse against Bauer brought by an 11-year-old boy distraught over the recent loss of his grandparents and his parents' ongoing marital difficulties, defense attorney David Gorcyca said.

But Pamela Maas, assistant prosecutor and unit coordinator for child sexual assault for Oakland County, said the Farmington Hills boy came forward because "he didn't want to feel bad anymore."

Judge Fred Harris, in a preliminary exam Monday, found the boy's testimony sufficient to bind Bauer, 31, over for trial in circuit court on one

count of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and two counts of second-degree CSC.

Bauer, a Westland resident and teacher at St. Paul's Elementary School in Northville, will be arraigned before Judge Denise Langford-Morris on March 8. He has taken a paid leave from the school and remains free on bond.

Gorcyca painted a picture of a man who knew the alleged victim's family as a friend for several years and became a convenient scapegoat for the child's frustrations.

"It's a question of (the boy's) credibility," Gorcyca said after his client's exam in 47th District Court in Farmington. "If there was something occurring before, why did he (the boy) wait until now to come forward?"

Gorcyca produced a handmade card from Bauer's 6th-grade students supporting him in his court battle.

"He's been around students of (the boy's) age for a long time," Gorcyca said.

Maas said although Bauer had not been implicated in any similar incidents, the boy said during Monday's testimony that there were other occasions of sexual abuse by Bauer.

"The court found the child's testimony credible," Maas said. "There was some testimony to indicate that there had been other assaults before the one in January."

Bauer was arraigned on Feb. 12 for the alleged assault. At the time of the alleged incident Jan. 15, Bauer had been visiting relatives in Farmington Hills.



Gerald Joseph Bauer Jr.

# Residents gird for Clinton tax hike

By CASEY HANS  
STAFF WRITER

Everybody's preparing to take a hit, but nobody knows exactly how much the recent tax increase proposals from the White House will eventually affect their families.

The U.S. Congress is expected to move ahead in implementing President Bill Clinton's plan, which calls for tax increases for couples whose taxable income is more than \$140,000 per year and singles more than \$115,000, plus other impacts on taxpayers who make as low as \$30,000.

Clinton made the proposals during his economic State of the Union address to Congress Feb. 17. He offers a four-year proposal to cut the deficit by about \$500 billion and included plans for both new taxes and spending cuts.

"My clients are telling me they don't want to pay more taxes unless it goes for deficit reduction," said Tom Hogan, a Livonia financial planner who has clients in the \$50,000 to \$100,000 range, and some who make less than that. He believes the tax increases will hit those making under \$50,000 the hardest.

"The federal government is like your own family budget — the only way to get out of debt is to stop spending. I think what we should do is not raise taxes but cut the budget

THE PRESIDENT'S PLAN

Hitting home

across the board with no sacred cows."

Most Oakland County residents echoed Hogan's concerns, but some were willing to give the President a chance.

Lathrup Village resident Karen Miller follows state financial issues closely and is concerned that many of the budget problems facing Michigan will now be felt across the country.

"When you make cuts it's tough," she said. "It's going to affect somebody."

She said any tax increase would "definitely affect" her family, but "I guess I'm willing to give it a try. I have not been pleased with the way things have been going for at least the last four years."

Miller said she liked Clinton's approach in talking directly with the people after seeing the president's town hall meeting in February in Southfield, something she called a



Family concerned: Claudia and Tim Kuiper talk about Clinton's economic address in their Farmington Hills living room, while sons Dan, 15, and Steven, 2½, look on. They give their views on Page 5A.

"hands-on approach."

Others gave Clinton's proposal a firm thumbs down. George Schwartz, a Bloomfield Hills investment counselor, called Clinton's plan "a disaster" and "dishonest."

"It will result in the biggest tax increase — the biggest boondoggie in our country's history," he said. "I have no confidence it will close the

See CLINTON, 5A