

Farmingington Observer

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TODAY

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Getting along: When cultural diversity is embraced, it makes a world of difference. /8A

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Racing for kids: An Oakland County doctor combines his two passions, auto racing and healing youngsters. /5A

OPINION

Crossed paths: Members of two Farmington-area school groups should try working together. The results might be startling. /18A

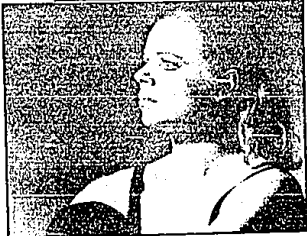
Peace with honor: The residents turned out in force to complain about the plan to put a clock tower in downtown Farmington. The city council listened and acted. / 19A

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Regional hoops: Catholic Central tried to stay alive in the boys basketball tournament Wednesday when it played Dearborn. /1B

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Music: Farmington Hills-based Michigan Ballet Theatre joins the Livonia Symphony Orchestra to present "Peter and the Wolf" at two performances March 26-27. /6B

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Highland closes: After losing money each year since 1989, Highland Superstores will welcome customers one last time — for a liquidation sale. /12B

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Clock plan goes back to DDA



By Sue Buck
Staff Writer

Farmington's controversial clock tower took a licking — but kept on ticking — at Monday's city council meeting.

They turned out 50 strong Monday to let their city council know that they oppose that clock tower proposed for the Masonic Temple corner in downtown Farmington. The council listened — and then decided to meet with the Downtown Development Authority for another look at the plan.

Acting on a motion by councilwoman Joanne McShane, the council temporarily defused the issue, putting the clock back into the hands of the Downtown Development Authority for another look.

Most of the 50 residents in attendance were ticked off about the proposed tower, and told the council so.

"I think that those in attendance realized that the city council will come up with a mutually acceptable solution to the problem," City Manager Frank Laubhoff said Tuesday.

The controversial 28-foot clock tower proposed for the corner of Farmington and Grand River near the Masonic Temple has generated a wall of protest.

Concerns centered on the practical-

ity of a downtown clock and how it will affect the visibility of the historic Masonic Temple. A couple of people proposed a sundial instead of a clock.

"I would like to see an alternate design that would be more in keeping with this historical site," said John Baesler of Pickett. "As a reference, give consideration to the clock in Northville."

He suggested other locations like the City Hall or the fountain in the

See **CLOCK**, 2A

Center of attention



MARVIN TRIPLETT

School official rolls with punches

By Larry O'Connor
Staff Writer

Don Cowan doesn't have "Everlast" stitched on his chest. He could, though.

The Farmington Public Schools official has become something of a punching bag.

His job as director of building and student services was created in a pinch three years ago. The idea was

to merge the two under one heading. Cowan oversees maintenance, transportation and architecture on the building end of it. Not an easy job in itself, as the average age of the school buildings approaches 30-something.

On the student side, he's involved in all activity outside of curriculum, including the unsavory task of met-

ing out extended student suspension.

"I like diversity," he said.

"I like variety," he added. But, he admitted, "Sometimes it gets overwhelming."

In the center ring

What the job description didn't spell out is how often Cowan would find himself in the center ring of

several school-related controversies.

Here's a sampling of brouhahas in which Cowan had to go the distance: ■ Wooddale parking lot issue: An expansion of a proposed parking lot involved rerouting traffic through a neighborhood. Guess who was on the front line in dealing with the angry residents who will have buses

See **PUNCHES**, 4A

Goss takes over public safety

By Sue Buck
Staff Writer

It's the culmination of a long police career.

The Farmington City Council gave its stamp of approval to Gary Goss Monday. Goss was named the permanent director of the city's Public Safety Department. He had been serving as acting director since December.

In keeping with Goss' personality, which combines a sense of humor with empathy, the council and city administration felt comfortable in taking a light tone.

'As an advocate of promoting from within, I want to commend the city manager for leaving his post in order to appoint this fine gentleman. He's a fine choice.'

Dick Tupper
councilman

"As an advocate of promoting from within, I want to commend the city manager for leaving his post in order to appoint this fine gentleman," said Councilman Dick Tupper. "He's a fine choice."

"Yes," continued City Manager Frank Laubhoff, who previously held Goss' position. "We have an up-and-out policy."

Laubhoff's appointment to city

See **G083**, 2A



Gary Goss

Good vibes — by phone!

The Storm of the Century halted most who needed to travel to or from the East Coast — including jazz great Lionel Hampton.

Hampton was to highlight the program of a tuition fund-raiser at Mercy High School in Farmington Hills Sunday. More than 700 turned out, but not Hampton, who was stuck in blizzard-ravaged New York.

But the assembled multitude was not denied the sound of the great one's voice. Hampton telephoned long-distance, and his words were broadcast over the school's public address system.

"He told everyone how sorry he was," said Mercy spokeswoman Roberta Campion. Even without Hampton, there was plenty of jazz

FARMINGTON FOCUS

played at Mercy Sunday. Jack Brokenasha took over the vibes. Bess Bonnier, a jazz pianist, performed, as did Jimmy Wilkins and his 17-piece orchestra and vocalist Joan Crawford.

On hand were state Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, and U.S. Rep. Barbara-Rose Collins, D-Detroit. Gov. John Engler and Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson sent representatives.

Baskets for needy kids

Attention, all those who would like to put a

smile on a child's face this spring

Spring Trees, bearing the names of needy Farmington-area children, are at both city halls, both libraries and in the lobbies of the three Metro Banks. Participants may pick a name off a tree and make or purchase a spring basket for the child.

The event is sponsored by Farmington Area Community Women, whose members will collect and distribute the baskets on April 2. For more information on the group and its activities, call Diane at 851-3072.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336, dropped off at the newspaper office, or faxed to 477-9722.