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IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Early start: The lights go on early at North Farmington High School, where some important changes in education are taking place./3A

Ice arena: Spring may be here, but the thoughts of some Farmington Hills officials are still on ice sports./3A

COUNTY NEWS

Saying goodbye: At his funeral Saturday, it was clear Zoltan Ferency had an impact in Oakland./5A

OPINION

Cable's promise: Apparently there are some problems between the local cable TV setup and school officials. Those involved should work to solve them./16A

Inventive kids: Some Wooddale Elementary School youngsters are logging ideas for the future./17A

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Mercy softball: The Marlins are scheduled to start the season Friday with a game against rival Livonia Ladywood./1B

Volleyball stars: Farmington Hills Harrison senior Julie Heist is one of 12 girls on the All-Observer volleyball team./5B

BUSINESS

Kudos: A Farmington Hills engineering firm has been tapped by the National Science Foundation as recipient of a \$50,000 grant to develop new technology for use in passenger airbags./12B

SUBURBAN LIFE

Always wears hats: Jane Buell is known as "the hat lady" because she never goes anywhere without a chapeau./1C

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Bustiers get students grounded



Four North Farmington High School students say they had a difficult time expressing themselves at a recent school variety show, and they were punished after their routine with the unexpected twist. Just be honest with us, school officials answer.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Express yourself, sings the Material Girl. Four North Farmington High students did.

Except they don't feel like lucky stars and the school's administration said they went over the borderline.

Four students created a stir when they wore bustiers during a choreographed routine to Madonna's hit "Express Yourself" at the school's March 19 variety show.

Junior Erin Krell, senior Stafanee White, junior Jessica McCall and senior Meghan Fallon lost their off-

campus lunch privileges for two weeks and are eating in the Raider Cafe.

"We don't get involved with consorship with kids," said principal Deborah Clarke. "We do expect them to be honest with us and remember they are in school."

"This is not the Palace. We're not a rock concert."

One girl told a teacher they would wear T-shirts and tank tops for the performance. The bustiers were a surprise.

"They (the administration) flipped out," Krell said.

Added Fallon, "Nothing really showed."

Fallon said she told a teacher they'd be wearing T-shirts and tank tops because she wasn't sure if they would have enough money to buy bustiers, a bra-like fashion accessory made popular by Madonna.

"They purchased the clothes ahead of time," Clarke said. "They knew exactly what they were doing."

"The bigger issue is being honest about what you're going to do."

See BUSTIERS, 2A



MARVIN THEPPLER

'Baron' opens the book on Farmington

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Skip Rosenthal doesn't miss a beat.

In fact, the Farmington bookstore owner doesn't miss a phone call, a note, an appointment, a new author

or anything else connected to his empire of hardbound and paperback books. It's simply not allowed.

In the course of an hour, Rosenthal is in furious motion. He rushes to the bookshelf, grabs an autographed hardbound copy of Kurt Vonnegut's

"Galepagos," plops back down, shoots up again to answer the phone, mutters "Yabba dabba do," sits down, taps his foot on the floor, and twiddles his thumbs.

It's only 9:45 a.m. Books Around is not even open yet.

"I am," said Rosenthal in a pause of self-reflection, "compulsive."

Compulsive, yes, but some might say shrewd.

On Saturday, April 3, Rosenthal

See BOOKS, 2A

Residents question cost of drain project

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

A project to alleviate flooding in the Kendallwood subdivision has some residents up in arms about the cost — an estimated \$12 million.

But Farmington Hills officials say it is probably the best way to deal with a problem that became a hot political issue after flooding in June of last year.

Pam Grassmick, who lives in the sub, said she and many of her neigh-

bors are concerned about the high price tag for the proposed improvements, which include a storm drain that will go beneath Kendallwood Street.

"This plan will really benefit about 30-40 homes in Kendallwood," Grassmick said. "The city could buy those homes for less than the cost of the project."

But City Manager Bill Costick said the city, county and consulting engineers have recommended the project

as a way of not only solving flooding problems in Kendallwood, but also in areas south of the sub, which is bordered by 12 Mile, Orchard Lake, 13 Mile and Middlebelt roads.

"Our master storm drain plan of 1982 called for this project," Costick said. "I didn't like it because I thought it was too expensive. But our engineers, the county engineers, and our consultants all came back and said this was the best plan."

The Farmington Hills City Council

unanimously approved the drain project in December 1992.

About \$1 million of the estimated \$12 million in improvements have already been made, Costick said. A retention basin near 13 Mile and Farmington is already built, repairs to footing drains on Kendallwood houses that had drained into the sanitary sewer have been completed, and work on the Minnow Pond storm drain

See DRAIN, 2A

A muddy outlook

It's spring in Farmington Hills . . . and some gravel roads' surfaces have turned to mud. Just how bad are some of the roads in the southern part of the city these days?

Well, according to some residents, a huge road grader became mired in the muck for a time last weekend at Whitlock and Salvador, east of Farmington Road and north of Eight Mile.

"I've been here since the 1940s, and this is the worst it's been in about 20 years," said resident Malvin Wright.

Another resident, Jim Smith, said, "It's practically like quicksand. You put bricks and gravel down and it sucks them right in."

Gravel roads turn muddy in spring as they thaw out, especially in low-lying areas with high water

FARMINGTON FOCUS

tables, said Dan Rooney, superintendent of public works for Farmington Hills.

"We were out all weekend trying to get them (the roads) back in shape," said Rooney. "We've gone into that general area with about 60 or 70 tons of stone and gravel."

Resident Smith acknowledged the city's efforts, but added: "The mud overtakes what the city can do."

For a photo of the muddy intersection of Whitlock and Salvador, see page 15A.

Do it for the TEAM!

The inaugural Earth Week Festival — a benefit

for TEAM Farmington, the local Special Olympics organization — will be held 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, April 24, at Heritage Park on Farmington Road between 10 Mile and 11 Mile roads in Farmington Hills.

TEAM-built bluebird houses will be for sale. The event will also feature birdhouse and bird feeder building contests, wildlife seminars, tree plantings, guided nature hikes through the park, and crafts for children.

For more information on this activity, call Backyard Birds at 476-9444.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21636 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336, dropped off at the newspaper office or faxed to 477-9722.