

IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Student takeover: Farmington High students filled the chairs (if not the shoes) of council members and other city officials in the annual Student Government Day. /3A

On the hoof: The Farmington-area Crop Walk Against Hunger attracted about 600 and raised \$25,000. /13A

COUNTY NEWS

Brooks and Ed Show: If their TV pilot is a go, viewers are in for quips as well as information on the issues before Wayne and Oakland counties. /7A

Up in the air: Our stalwart reporter, Sandra Armbruster, previews the upcoming AirMichigan Show from on high. /16A

OPINION

Talking trash: The Downtown Development Authority Board is taking care of more normal business now that the clock issue has been put to rest. /16A

SPORTS



Girls soccer: The intra-city contest between Farmington and Harrison ended in a stalemate Monday. /1B

SPECIAL SECTIONS

Academic All-Stars: Medicine is in — law is out, based on the chosen professions of many of the best and brightest from our area high schools.

INDEX

- Building Scene . . . 1F
- Business . . . 1-4C
- Classifieds . . . E-G
- Auto G
- Employment . . . F-G
- Real estate . . . E-F
- Creative Living . . 1D
- Crossword 7E
- Entertainment . . 4-7C
- Obituaries 8B
- Opinion 16-17A
- Police, fire calls . . 8A
- Personal scene . . 7G

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Are you looking for that special place to take your mom on Mother's Day? The Observer & Eccentric can help you sort through the options. For just a \$3.50 charge on either your Visa or Mastercard, we'll fax or mail you a list of restaurants in Wayne and Oakland counties that are offering special Mother's Day menus complete with phone numbers, hours and prices. To order, call 1-800-987-5904 using a Touch-Tone phone and request item 0456. Have your charge card number handy when you call.

City budgets brace for tax vote



BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

If Proposal A passes, city budgets prepared will have to be repaired. That's not easy in Farmington and Farmington Hills, which are figuring budgets to be in place by June. The outcome of the June 2 ballot

proposal doesn't leave much time to recalculate.

An arsenal of pink erasers and a river of white-out are requirements.

Proposal A would cut property taxes while raising the sales tax.

City offices in Farmington Hills

could lose \$360,000; Farmington, \$254,000.

"We're going ahead. I have to prepare a budget," said Farmington city manager Frank Laubhoff. "What we also have to consider is, 'What if . . . ?'"

School funding and property tax relief are the cornerstones of the plan. Those in city government are left to deal with the pebbles.

"We're really kind of chagrined," said David Osborn, associate director of policy and communications for the Michigan Municipal League. "It's (the attitude) almost as if it has no

impact on the cities."

Damage varies.

Livonia could lose \$1.4 million; Southfield, \$840,000. But a city like Jackson would lose only \$50,000.

There's no common thread, Osborn said. A host of variables and unanswered questions makes each situation different and the budget process helter-skelter.

A 3-percent cap on this year's property assessment increases would cause the most obvious loss in revenue. Commercial property doesn't rise in value as much as residential.

See BUDGETS, 3A

Bridging recreation gap



SHARON LEMMON/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Park development: Dan Potter, Farmington Hills director of special services, stands on a new bridge over a creek at Founders Sports Park on Eight Mile. The land, bought last year, is being developed for baseball, softball, soccer, tennis, horseshoes and other active recreational activities as part of the city's master plan.

Hills plays around with rec needs

BY HILL COUPTANT
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills is trying to play ball, watch birds and complete a land rush without stretching its parks and recreation budget too thin.

Dan Potter, director of special services for the city, said the acquisition of park property for additional baseball and soccer fields and the protection of natural areas of park land, such as Heritage Park and Woodland Hills, have meant com-

promises, but will save the city and park users from regrets later.

The city's purchase last year of the 85-acre "sod farm," now named Founders Sports Park, will go a long way toward meeting the recreation demands of the city, he said.

"By 1996, we'll have 25 soccer fields and 45 ball fields (throughout the city)," Potter said. "That's approaching fulfilling today's needs."

Eventually, the new park will

See RECREATION, 4A

Candidate Feldman follows her instincts

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER



Bobbie Feldman faces being one of nine candidates for the Farmington School Board. She doesn't fret, fidget or freeze.

Feldman follows her instincts. "I don't know if it will be a rugged struggle," said Feldman, 37, who is launching her first political campaign.

"I'm glad to see a lot of interest out

there, and I really think the people each have something different to offer.

"I feel my offering . . ." Feldman smiles. She'll leave the sentence up to voters to complete in the June 14 school election.

She touts her involvement in Farmington schools, most notably her three years as PTA president at Wood Creek Elementary.

Then there's a list of committees she's served on, which includes the Elementary Boundary Study and the district Facilities Task Force. She was co-chairman of the 1991 and 1993 citizen-based school tax campaign.

She's on the Frameworks Commit-

tee, Safety Committee and Community Education Advisory Council. She's also an avid board watcher.

All of which, Feldman stresses, has given her a good look at all facets of education.

School issues spin like a roulette wheel. Wherever the ball lands — finance, fighting or facilities — Feldman has an opinion.

Finances for wealthy districts such as Farmington are tenuous at best. Feldman suggests schools look at using what's already there. Year-round education, zero hour and more community involvement are



See FELDMAN, 10A

Bobbie Feldman

Halfway there

It looks as though Vanessa Wells, the 8-year-old Farmington Hills girl who suffers from a rare nerve disorder, will make a trip to Germany for treatment later this month.

An April 17 fund-raiser netted \$3,000 toward a trip to Hanover, Germany, to spend about three months in treatment by a German specialist for Friedrich's ataxia, the condition from which Vanessa suffers.

Mary Wells, Vanessa's mother, who will accompany her daughter, said "Mothers for a Cause" has about half of the \$5,000 she estimates she'll

FARMINGTON FOCUS

need to pay for the trip and the treatments, which involve medicine that has not been approved in this country.

Mary Wells said students and staff at William Grace Elementary, where Vanessa attends second grade, are putting on events and helping raise money.

Vanessa's story was told in the April 15 edition of the Farmington Observer.

Anyone interested in helping can send money

to: Mothers for a Cause, 21505 Jefferson, Farmington Hills 48336.

Parks meeting planned

A meeting of the Major Sports/Family Complex Ad Hoc Committee will be held at 8:30 p.m. Thursday, May 6, in the Orientation Room of the Visitor's Center in Heritage Park on Farmington Road between 10 and 11 Mile roads. The meeting is open to the public.

A report on the status of the sod farm property, purchased by the city last year for so-called "active" sports, will be given.