

Farmington Observer

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IN THE PAPER

TODAY



Pet-finder: A new Farmington Hills business helps pets and their owners get back together if the animals wander off./3A

Saying good-by: Seventy-nine Walled Lake students will be transferred to different schools this fall until more classrooms can be built. But will those new classrooms be built?/12A

COUNTY NEWS

Balling out?: A local Republican senator threatens to withdraw support from Proposal A, as new twist in state aid bill robs local districts./5A

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Home with a view: "You'd pay big bucks for a place with a view like this in Chicago or New York," says a recent Troy house buyer whose home backs up to the proposed Somerset II shopping center./6A

STREET SCENE

On target: Psycho Cafe has but two career goals musically — to be the biggest local band and sign the best record deal. And with the help of producer Gary Spaniola, the group is zooming in on both./8A

OPINION

Open season: It was open season on tourists in northern Michigan recently when a power outage due to weather conditions brought folks together. Jeff Counts takes a look at what happened./11A

TASTE

Shake salt: May is National High Blood Pressure Month. Learn how to lower the amount of sodium in your diet without sacrificing flavor./1B

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Beep, beep, coyote on the run



Is a wily coyote on the prowl in Farmington? Well, a public safety officer claims he's seen one and residents confirm the sighting.

By LARRY O'CONNOR
 STAFF WRITER

Well how about that, a coyote has been spotted in Farmington. Can the roadrunner be nearby? Residents and a Farmington public safety officer attest, though, the four-

legged creature they saw was no cartoon.

The Farmington Public Safety Department received three reports of a coyote wandering in the Mayfield and Maple street area. The last sighting was April 29.

Officer Daniel Potter said he

thought the calls might have been the result of National Enquirer inspired dementia.

Then he saw it.

"It was coyote, no doubt in my mind," Potter said.

Mayfield resident Robert Dix verifies his coyote sighting.

"It was pretty big," said Dix, 68. "It was almost like the size of a (German Shepherd) dog."

"He's definitely a coyote."

Another Mayfield resident said she

SIGHTING

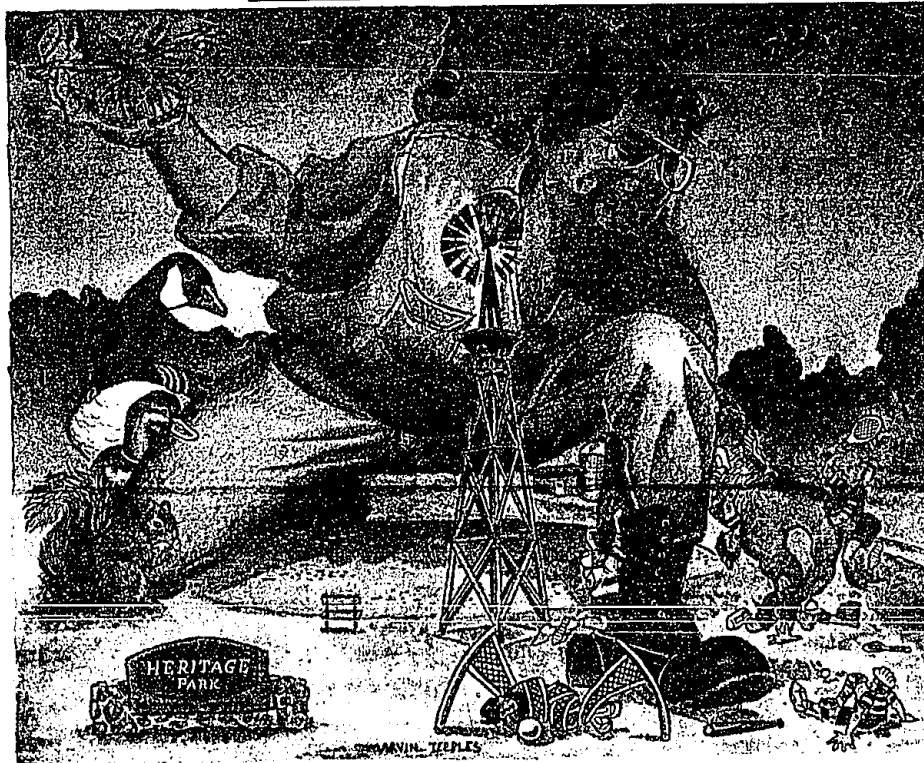
saw the animal in her back yard. A lawn maintenance man work confirmed he saw it as well.

The animal leaped over a nearby fence and scampered through a neighbor's yard.

She mistook the creature for a dog at first, but having seen coyotes in Northern Michigan and out west,

See COYOTE, 12A

Joe Derek examines the nature of things



He's a natural with the environment

By BILL COUTANT
 STAFF WRITER

In Joe Derek's natural order of things, cool blue water can be deadly and a weed can be a thing of beauty.

Bull thistle — A European thistle with rather large heads and prickly leaves that is naturalized as a weed in the U.S.

That's how Webster defines what most of us see as an eyesore on our otherwise well-manicured lawns. You know, they are those spidery-shaped, deep rooted, ugly weeds that you have to dig up with a special prong-ended tool.

Not so for Derek, a naturalist whose back yard is a natural habitat for animals, birds and butterflies.

"The bull thistle flower produc-

■ 'The bull thistle flower produces nectar. I make sure to mow around them.'

Joe Derek

es nectar," he said. "I make sure to mow around them."

Derek, a speaker in demand when the subject is nature and the environment, works in research at Sinai Hospital in Detroit, where he met his wife Judy.

But his love of the outdoors has been his avocation for years. He now hosts "Naturally Michigan Afield" Wednesdays at 10 a.m. on WCAR-AM (1090 on the dial).

Love of the outdoors

Derek, who has often been a

thorn in the side of developers in the city, began his love for the outdoors at an early age. A native Detroit, the affable 45-year-old sportsman found the call of the wild impossible to resist as a student at Orchard Lake St. Mary's High School.

"I would skip track practice to go fishing," he confesses. "I grew up in Detroit. When I discovered fishing, I sorta went bonkers."

Although he'll admit some people believe he is still bonkers when it comes to environmental causes,

Derek says most people don't understand what is at stake when it comes to the environment.

"I was speaking to a group talking about honey bees, how pesticides are affecting them and how we need them to pollinate or our agriculture would suffer," Derek said. "Someone said that if that happened, we could still go to the store to get food. Someone actually said that."

The very conversational naturalist didn't start out as a wild-eyed "tree hugger," but simply as someone who likes the outdoors. But because chemically treated lawns and water are endangering the natural beauty he sees, they have become an issue.

See NATURAL, 12A

Served U.S., wants to serve schools

By LARRY O'CONNOR
 STAFF WRITER

Terry Fobbs has lived in the area for two years. He's only recently been visible at school board meetings.

With that, some are ready to call Fobbs an outsider in Farmington school circles, a Johnny-come-lately with a quick smile and a handful of answers.

Fobbs is running for the Farmington School Board. The election is Monday, June 14.

"I call it needing a new set of eyes," said Fobbs, 40, who is one of nine candidates for the Farmington School Board. "How long does a person have

to be in a community before they decide they're a caring and concerned citizen? Is it 10 years? Is it 12 years? What's the cutoff point?"

"There's no tenure in terms of being a problem solver. There's no longevity in terms of being a caring and concerned parent and resident. There's no license for being willing to work hard."

Fobbs said his credentials reflect commitment.

He was a career Army officer, serving as a logistics adviser in Desert Storm. He was awarded the Bronze Star during the Gulf War. His other medals include a Meritorious Service,

Army Commendation with an Oak Leaf Cluster and an Army Achievement.

On this day, one only finds lapel pins on Fobbs' tailored business suit.

His last two years of civilian life include working as the director for the Office of Strategic Planning for the Michigan Employment Security Commission. Fobbs also has his own consulting business.

He's served his country, Fobbs said, and now he wants to serve his community. The Farmington school board is a great place to start.



See FOBBS, 12A

Terry Fobbs