

IN THE PAPER

**TODAY**

**First love:** "The Bridges of Madison County," the romantic story about a world-traveled photographer and an Iowa farm wife, is the all-time favorite of readers this summer, according to area book sellers. /3A

**COUNTY NEWS**

**June judicial races?:** A state appeals court judge in Birmingham last week proposed spring judicial elections to focus more attention on candidates for judge. To give us your views, call 901-4723 to vote yes and 901-4724 to vote no. Rotary dials can be used. /5A

**MALLS & MAINSTREETS**

**Dinosaur Invasion:** Everywhere you look, local retailers are getting in on the Jurassic junk rage. /6A

**STREET SCENE**

**Real problem:** Andre Comeau would rather fans forget about MTV's "Real World" and focus on his "real world" that involves his childhood friends, his Reignance bandmates and their release, "Problem Factory." /8A

**TASTE**

**Amazing rice:** Surprise your friends and family with something different, a colorful, good-for-you rice salad. /1B

**SPORTS**

**Triple Crown:** Farmington Our Lady of Sorrows is the first CYO school to win boys championships in three major sports. /1C

**All-Area track:** The top boys track-and-field athletes in Oberverland are recognized for their achievements. /3C

**SPECIAL SECTIONS**

**Monthly Album:** It's June — a traditional month for weddings. And Michelle Castiglione and Scott Tarmann are our cover bride and groom.

**INDEX**

Classifieds . . . . .	B-D	Obits . . . . .	2A
Auto . . . . .	B,D	On the agenda . . . . .	2A
Employment . . . . .	C,D	Opinion . . . . .	11A
Index . . . . .	3B	Personal Scene . . . . .	10A
Real Estate . . . . .	B,C	Police, fire calls . . . . .	2A
Crossword . . . . .	6B	Sports . . . . .	1C
Entertainment 9A- . . . . .	8A	Street Scene . . . . .	8A
10A . . . . .		Taste . . . . .	1B
Malls . . . . .	6A		

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## City: Drain will improve property



By BILL COVATY  
 STAFF WRITER

Some residents remained skeptical, but Farmington Hills City Manager Bill Costick assured them that their property will be improved by a massive storm drain project.

Officials from Farmington Hills and Oakland County explained the

project, which will be built in two phases in two building seasons, to about 100 residents whose neighborhood will experience one of the largest public works projects in the city's history.

"This is not a city where we have a track record where we don't follow through," Costick said. "We have

tried to be above board about this."

The \$12 million Minnow Pond Drain Project will have its biggest impact on about 66 houses along Kendallwood Drive. That part of the project, which will be the second phase, will involve building an 8½-foot diameter storm sewer beneath Kendallwood Drive between April and October of 1995.

Plans for the first phase will be released for bid this month with construction to begin in September. Phase two construction, which includes Kendallwood Drive, will begin in April of 1994.

Officials assured residents, at the special meeting on June 16, that the managed project would be completed in stages, minimizing the time contractors, workers, truck traffic and materials would be in front of a given house.

The city is also paying a "signing bonus" of \$1,500 for those residents who negotiate and sign easement agreements with the city by July 31. The payment for the temporary easements will be based upon square footage.

See DRAIN, 4A

### Guru of gadgetry



## Appliance doc operates for consumers

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
 STAFF WRITER

A business card from Joe Gagnon is useless. Good for a phone number, perhaps, but his multifaceted trade cannot be crammed onto a 2 by 3½ inch piece of paper.

The Farmington resident is many things to many people. He's the custodian of consumer concerns, a medicine man for malfunctioning machinery.

He owns Carmack Appliances in Garden City and hosts a cable TV and radio show, "The Appliance and Consumer Doctor." Along with that, he bills himself as a lecturer, an investigator, a columnist, a consultant and an expert witness.

His yet-to-be titled book is ready for print. The publication may shock the socks off the appli-

cance industry, but Gagnon's grounded in a little grandeur.

"I would like to be the Ralph Nader of the appliance industry," said Gagnon, 51. "If the manufacturers choose to sue me over this book, it may do just that. . . ."

Gagnon's not intimidated. He's taken off the gloves with the members of the appliance business and service industry on occasion.

He's gone to Lansing and testified before the State House of Representatives. His efforts have helped pass legislation to force service companies to do business where phone numbers are listed in the Yellow Pages.

**Expert witness**

He's also provided expert testimony for people in court cases where they feel they haven't been

treated fairly by service repairmen.

At the Detroit Consumer Affairs Department, he's adored.

Gagnon's been a volunteer at the office, helping write pamphlets for the department on such topics as refrigerator and dryer repair and care.

"He's a good guy," said Mary Bailey, a complaint investigator with the department. "He's gone to court with us several times. He's saved us many times."

To many, though, Gagnon is the appliance doctor.

In addition to his own show on WCAR-AM — for which he buys airtime — Gagnon is a frequent guest on talk shows heard on WJR and WKYT. He guides callers through the nuts and bolts of home repairs on refrigerators, dryers and toasters.

His resonant narrative is folk-

sy, sounding more like he's talking to someone next to him at the counter of a doughnut shop over a cup of coffee and a maple glaze than on the radio. There's usually a few "ehs" sprinkled in, betraying his birthplace of Timmins, Ontario.

"You have to explain to them to pull the plug," Gagnon said. "The only way they're going to get hurt is with electricity. . . ."

**No hidden agenda**

Employees at Carmack Appliance & Repair are told to dispense the same type of helpful information. All of which begs the question:

What's in it for him?  
 "I think his motivation is just to do good," said State Rep. Lyn Banke, who's worked with Gagnon.

See DOC, 4A

## School chief's contract extended 3 years

By SUE BUCK  
 STAFF WRITER

In 30 seconds, the Farmington school board approved on June 15 an extension of superintendent Michael Flanagan's three-year contract through the 1995-96 school year.

"Further, it is understood that at some later date, future negotiations relative to economics may be initiated," president Jack Inch said.

That means that Flanagan will be eligible for a raise to augment his base salary of \$119,285.

The motion to extend was made by

board member Jack Cotton and seconded by board member Helen Ditzshery. Both are outgoing.

Board member Cathy Webb said that the board together with Flanagan evaluated his performance in a closed session Feb. 17. It's important to keep Flanagan's three-year contract current, she said.

"We don't talk salary (during the evaluation session)," Webb said. "We'll consider a salary increase later this year. We're extremely pleased with his performance."

Flanagan has been employed with Farmington Public Schools since

**■ 'We'll consider a salary increase later this year.'**

Cathy Webb  
 board member

1985. Previously he was assistant superintendent at Huron Valley Schools from 1977-85.

He replaced former superintendent Graham Lewis, who resigned in June 1989 amid lack of community support and apparent declining employee morale.

According to newspaper reports, Flanagan got a new, three-year contract, a pay raise and one additional year of retirement compensation when he was named school superintendent in 1990.

The added year of retirement was to compensate Flanagan for "efficiently handling" both the deputy superintendent and superintendent jobs for one year.

Flanagan had earned \$93,720 per year base salary as deputy superintendent. His pay rose to \$99,512 when he was appointed superintendent.