

Farmington Observer



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SMART START



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IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Night Out: Residents in some Farmington-area neighborhoods had a "going away party" for crime. /3A

To arms! Farmington school buses have grown arms — stop signs, really — and they flip out to make for safer transportation. /11A

COUNTY NEWS

Where they tread: The county executive and board of commissioners are still staking out their territories. /5A

OPINION

Biting: John Telford found that monster mosquitoes weren't the only things attacking him when he talked before United We Stand America at a recent park engagement. /9A

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Music or Muzak?: Sometimes it's live; most times it's recorded. Does it add to your shopping experience? /4B

TASTE

Tapas: Meet Bill Thee of Bloomfield Hills and find out why he believes tapas are the perfect walk-around food for parties. /1B

Pickle pointers: Chef Larry Janes shares tips for making homemade pickles. /1B

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3 kids removed from foster home



BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Three foster children living with a Farmington family have been removed from the home pending a state investigation. Two of the children were found wandering on busy Grand River Wednesday.

Two foster children who were found wandering on Grand River Wednesday morning have been removed from a Farmington foster home pending an investigation by the Department of Social Services.

A third child, an infant, was also taken from the home of Harold and

Betty Poindexter during the investigation, which is being conducted by DSS's Child Protection Services in cooperation with the foster care agency.

The two kids, ages 4½ and 20 months, were in the street when spotted shortly before 8 a.m. by Farmington city manager Frank Laubhoff, who blocked traffic with his car and

ushered them to safety.

A spokeswoman for Orchard's Children's Services, the foster care agency handling the case, refused comment.

'Pretty serious'

But a DSS spokesman said the seriousness of the incident probably led to the children's removal.

"Two kids walking down the middle of Grand River — that's pretty serious," said DSS spokesman Chuck Feller.

Feller wouldn't speculate as to the length of the investigation or the chances of the children being returned to the foster parents. The fam-

ily could lose their state foster care license.

The couple met with a person from Oakland County Children's Protective Services Wednesday shortly after the incident.

Harold Poindexter told police the children were watching television in the living room. He said he had the kids in view from a desk nearby.

When his wife returned from a 20-minute walk, they found the two tykes were missing.

The oldest child apparently opened the door and the 20 month old fol-

See FOSTER, 2A

Bidders jam police auction



SHARON LEMIKUX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Man with a 3: William Blacha of Farmington Hills (holding the 3) makes a bid on a bicycle at the Farmington Hills police auction. He backed off when the price reached \$15.

Police: Going once, going twice, sold!

By SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Sgt. John Kohls admits that he's still working on his auctioneer techniques. He's had a decade of practice.

Kohls auctions items that somehow find their way into the Farmington Hills police property room. The items may be unclaimed or

forfeited under drug seizure guidelines.

Every year these things are gotten rid of at a well-attended auction, with Kohls calling the bids and gaveling the sales. This year's auction was held July 30 at the police garage.

"Once, just for the heck of it, I went to a horse auction," Kohls

said. He found that there were no comparisons.

No autos are sold at the police auction. They're sold by sealed bids, Kohls said.

But just about everything else — from radios, speakers and VCRs to art, jewelry, bowling balls, baseball bats, a couple of mopeds and a propane truck . . . are up for

bidding. "Basically, it was anything that we appraised at \$1 or more," Kohls said. "I got more than I expected for the jewelry (\$180)."

The recent auction netted \$4,700, Kohls said. Funds obtained from drug-forfeitures must go to fight

See AUCTIONEER, 10A

Library millage, bond on ballot Tuesday

Precinct maps, 2A

By SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Farmington-area electors go to the polls Tuesday to decide the fate of a bond issue for a new main library and a millage to provide funds to operate it.

If the two questions pass, a new 80,000-square-foot library will be constructed on city-owned property on Orchard Lake Road south of I-696.

A 1.1-mill property-tax increase

would be used to operate the facility. If the millage is approved, it would actually represent a 0.33-mill increase because Farmington and Farmington Hills already earmark 0.77 mill to support the library.

If the millage passes, the two cities have agreed to roll back their tax rates by the 0.77 mill used to operate the libraries. A mill is \$1 of tax for each \$1,000 of assessed property value.

The amount of money to pay the debt retirement on the bond, the

length of time it will take to pay, and the millage amount depend on interest rates, which Farmington Community Library director Beverly Papai said are currently favorable.

The sale of the current Farmington Hills main library on 12 Mile Road would also reduce the debt by \$2 million to \$3 million, she said. The debt millage — separate from the operating millage — could be in the 0.4- to 0.6-mill range, she said in an earlier interview.

The additional 0.33 mill for opera-

tions would cost a taxpayer with a house having a market value of \$100,000 an additional \$16.50 a year, owners of a \$150,000 home would pay \$24.75 more a year, and residents with a \$200,000 home would pay an additional \$33 a year.

Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. in both cities.

Patsy Cantrell, Farmington's clerk/treasurer, foresees a light turnout — if absentee ballots are any indication.

See LIBRARY, 2A

A great story

Diane Harris, owner of Story Tellers, a Farmington business that sells new and used books on cassette tape, has quite a story to tell.

And you can read all about it in the August Detroit Monthly magazine, the issue with Soupy Sales on the cover.

Story Tellers was featured in the magazine's eighth annual "Best of Metro Detroit" business, located on Farmington Road north of Eight Mile, was honored for the "Best Idea in Audio Literature."

"Diane Harris tries hard to provide book-hungry commuters and other book-on-tape fans with recorded versions of their favorite reading material at less than the cost of a paperback," the magazine said.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

'Swan Lake' glides in

Eric Johnston's Detroit Ballet will present two performances of "Swan Lake" at 8 p.m. Friday and Sunday, Aug. 13 and 15, at the outdoor amphitheatre of the Farmington Community Center, 24705 Farmington Road.

Johnston, the director of The Betty Johnston Dance Studio in downtown Farmington, has cast 40 professional and developmental dancers for "Swan Lake." All are students or instructors at his Farmington and Birmingham dance studios. Tickets at \$5 in advance and \$7 on the days of the performance may be purchased at the Commu-

nity Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The box office will be open two hours before the performances and the grounds will open an hour before. Parking is available in the lot near the Visitor's Center in Heritage Park just north of the Community Center. The amphitheatre has grounds-only seating.

Memory Lane

From the Aug. 13, 1953, edition of the Farmington Observer, foresees a light turnout — if absentee ballots are any indication. Farmington Township voters were to go to the polls Oct. 5, 1953, for a special election to decide a proposed hunting ban in the township.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21839 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336; dropped off at the newspaper office; or faxed to 477-3722.