

IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Truck tips over: A cement mixer that officials say was overloaded tipped over, spilling motor oil and other pollutants into a drainage ditch. /4A

Leasing scam: A police raid may have ended what officials are calling a car leasing scam in Farmington Hills. /9A

COUNTY NEWS

Helping hand: L. Brooks Patterson, county executive, has endorsed Republican Wallace Holland in Tuesday's non-partisan Pontiac mayoral primary. /5A

STREET SCENE



Winners of the 'Game': Recently signed by Capitol records, Detroit's Big Chief has more to celebrate than its latest and most acclaimed album, "Mack Avenue Skull Game." /6A

OPINION

Peaceful encounter: Columnist Judith Doner Berne watched history being made as she and a group of other local travelers to Israel found themselves in the country while the peace accord was being reached. For her view of the mood in the country, see the Opinion Page. /10A

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Dandy deal: Best Buys, a new store going after the quality discount electronics market, is making quite a mark in suburban Detroit. /11A

SPORTS

Hoop final: The Marlins played Plymouth Canton in the championship game of the Mercy Hoops Classic Saturday. /1C

Grid showdown: Harrison battled Westland John Glenn in an early-season meeting between area football powers Saturday. /1C

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City calls center deal a bargain



BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills' purchase of part of the Mercy Center for its senior programs is being called a win-win situation by the city, the religious order and the seniors who take part in its programs.

"We love it," said Hills resident

Frank Anderson, one of the more than 400 seniors who actively use the facility on 11 Mile, east of Middlebelt.

"It (buying) was a good thing to do," said Livonia senior Judy Goran. "Now we know it's ours."

Many people were surprised by the deal, agreed to provisionally on Sept.

3 by the Sisters of Mercy and the city. The city will buy the C wing of the Mercy complex, which includes the pool, kitchen, lobby, office and convent areas as well as major assembly rooms commonly referred to as Killarney, Dublin, Shannon and Wexford halls.

The 67,000-square-foot area will be more than the 40,000 now being used for senior programs at the center. The city will also obtain more than 27 acres of the site bordering 11 Mile for \$3,000,000.

The city had signed a two-year lease with an option for six more

years in February, but the council was looking seriously at building its own facility for seniors on city land.

"We just didn't think for a long time we would negotiate a deal (for the property)," said Mayor Nancy Bates. "We made our last good faith offer."

Sister Carla Knoblock, a member of Mercy's leadership team which helped negotiate the agreement, said the confusion about the order's intentions for the center were resolved, making the agreement a natural.

See CENTER, 2A

Day (after day) in court



SHARON LEMMON/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

On the bench: Judge Maria Parker: "I always get a sense of satisfaction that I'm helping people."

Judge Parker keeps docket moving

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Judge Maria Parker is an optimist.

"That's probably a good thing considering the schedule she keeps and the docket she handles day to day."

Like many judges, the two in 47th District Court in Farmington have

all they can do to handle the case load. But Parker, 55, who won her judgeship last fall, likes the job even better than she expected.

"I always get a sense of satisfaction that I'm helping people," she says.

Parker starts her days early, whether she goes directly to court, or

whether like this Wednesday, she attends an Optimist Club or other function.

"I think the more experiences you have, the more you learn, the more it helps you on the bench," she says.

Parker listens as Hills choreographer Gary Holland explains his profession to the Optimists. She looks

at her watch and realizes that the group's promise to be finished by 8:30 a.m. is in peril.

Out by 8:35, Parker makes the short drive to court and finds that her target is unattained. She's one of the few people at the courthouse on

See JUDGE, 3A

Mideast accord seen as end, beginning

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A rabbi sees it as the end of the human toll for a war-weary society. A Muslim cleric sees it as a new beginning for Palestinians and Israelis. Khal Hanna, coordinator of student activities at the Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College in Farmington Hills, hopes the Israel-Palestinian Liberation Organization peace accord means he'll be able to see his grandparents in Jerusalem.

The surprise agreement hammered out between the two sides reaches beyond the Middle East.

Hanna, whose mother is Palestinian and whose grandparents live in the Armenian section of Jerusalem, cites the pact as a major achievement in a devastating war for both sides. Personally, he sees benefits as well.

"I think now it makes it much more easy," Hanna said. "Once we get to see what the whole treaty is about, I think it will open borders and bring down barriers."

"It will be great to go back and see where your family grew and have that cultural tie."

Hanna shares sentiments expressed by others who view the treaty as a fragile one, but definitely a positive step.

Farmington Hills resident the Rev. Imam Muhammad Karoub is also quite hopeful. The Muslim cleric works in Detroit, helping Arabic immigrants make the transition to American life.

"I think it will last," Karoub said.

"I think it's going to overcome the opposition that was within the ranks of the Palestinians . . . with the recent Iraqi war which diminished the fortunes of the Palestinians because of their stance."

"That, tied in with the overwhelming power of our own country and our immense wealth, and it seems to be backing the Israeli side. So, at this juncture in history, it would be fool-

See MIDEAST, 9A

A real 'Lollapalooza'

Steamers Seafood Grill in Farmington Hills has adopted the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center and plans to raise money for the center with its inaugural Lobster Lollapalooza.

Steamers will sell fresh lobster dinners through Wednesday, Sept. 15, for \$13.95 with \$1 donated to the center for each dinner sold. It is hoped that enough money can be raised to help the center purchase a new nine-passenger van.

"We've had a very successful first few months and wanted to get a neighborhood project going," said Steamers manager Dave Ducey. "We offer an exceptional value to our guests and help the whole community in a worthwhile cause."

Jim Harper of radio station WNIC-FM will be reporting on the progress of Lobster Lollapalooza.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

during his morning "Breakfast Club" show. The St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center, located in Farmington Hills, provides residential, foster care and adoption services for children 4-15 years of age who have been removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. The van will be used to transport the children to after-school events and to day camp in Brighton in the summer.

"We're most grateful for this opportunity," said Betty Speyer, the center's director of agency relations. "Having enough vehicles is an ongoing problem for us and our current vans are all choosing to die at the same time."

Steamer's Seafood and Grill is on 12 Mile road, east of Orchard Lake Road. The project began Sept. 3.

Memory Lane

From the Sept. 17, 1983, edition of the Farmington Observer:

Orchard Lake Road was being resurfaced with bituminous concrete between 13 and 14 Mile in Farmington Township. Farmington Township voters were to go to the polls Oct. 5 for a special election to decide the fate of a hunting ban for the township.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21838 Farmington Road, Farmington 48338; dropped off at the newspaper office; or faxed to 477-9722.