

IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Yea, band! *Harrison High School has the best marching band in Michigan-land after the recent competition.* /3A

Get Focused: *Farmington Focus, usually found at the bottom of page one, is located inside this edition.* /3A

Big night (out): *Remember the Night Out effort against crime a few months ago? Well, Farmington Hills won an award for its participation.* /4A

Goodbye, Ben: *Ben Marks, who was not re-elected to the Farmington Hills City Council, enjoyed a fond farewell at the last meeting.* /6A

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Themes and dreams: *The malls have gone all out this year to bring holiday magic to their unique displays.* /8A

TASTE

Stuffing contest: *Meet our three winners, and try out their prize-winning stuffing recipes.* /1B

Recipe Makeover: *Cut the fat in macaroni and cheese; healthy ideas for gobbling up turkey leftovers.* /1B

STREET SCENE



Holiday sounds: *Thanksgiving weekend brings a deluge of bands to the Detroit area with national bands like Best Kissers in the World, Ocean Blue and Bell Biv Devoe playing downtown.* /5B

SPORTS

Dome bound? *Fraser was the last hurdle blocking Harrison's path to the Class A state championship game at the Silverdome. The two teams met Saturday at Eastern Michigan.* /1C

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Petition drives at school finance



A Farmington Hills resident has started a statewide petition drive she hopes will clear up the chaos in Michigan school finances.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

One can take Vicki Barnett's efforts on behalf of Citizens Alliance for Responsible Education three ways:
■ She's concerned about the educational welfare of children in Michigan.
■ As a local Democratic party chair,

she has an ax to grind with Republican Gov. John Engler.
■ Or, Barnett's providing a way out for frazzled legislators as the Dec. 31 deadline approaches to come up with a new way to fund schools.

Perhaps all three have a role in the formation of the Farmington Hills-based organization, which seeks to

delay Public Act 145 or Senate Bill 1 until the public can vote on the controversial act in a November 1994 election. In the meantime, school finance would revert back to the previous system of property taxes.

"I'm a parent. The only option I have . . . is to resurrect the old system," said Barnett, who has two school-aged children in the Farmington Public Schools. Barnett formed CARE with state Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, who is one of only four senators to vote no on Senate Bill 1 that eliminated \$6.3 billion for public schools.

The group needs 129,000 signatures. So far, 65,000 have been collected with 5,000 coming in daily.

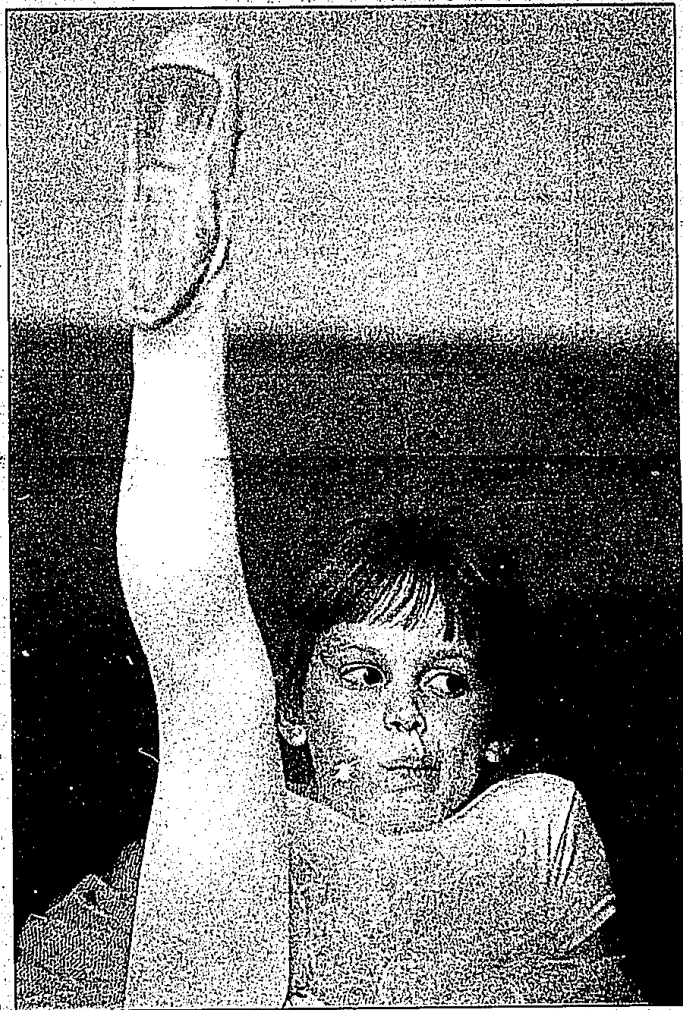
The petition drive is a wake-up call to legislators, who passed the measure despite voters turning down previous cut-and-cap and sales tax proposals, Barnett said.

She thinks lawmakers from both parties got caught up in tax-cut delirium with an approaching election year.

"Who can blame them?" Barnett said.

See PETITION, 2A

Community Center turning 25



Getting a leg up: Emily Graham of Farmington Hills stretches her legs during her ballet class taught by Marion Knisely at the Community Center of Farmington and Farmington Hills. The center is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. For a story on the Community Center and more photos, please see the Suburban Life section of the Thursday, Nov. 25, Farmington Observer.

Serious crimes decline

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Although crime is down in Farmington, Public Safety director Gary Goss still urges caution during the holiday season.

Serious crime is down 13 percent compared to the same nine-month period in 1992, according to a third

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quarter operations report released by the Farmington Public Safety Department.

Misdemeanors are also down 7.3 percent in a city that historically has boasted a low crime rate.

The most noticeable drop is in thefts. Through September 1992, there were 290 incidents. For the same period this year, there have been 252.

A large part of that is a 60 percent drop in shoplifting incidents. However, the slight rise in thefts from vehicles and of motor parts has officials urging caution, especially during the upcoming holiday period.

"There's a lot of crimes of opportunity," said Goss. "We're seeing people who are leaving their personal belongings in main view inside the car. We're seeing windows smashed out."

Purses and cellular phones, in particular, have been the main items taken. Thieves target vehicles parked in shopping centers or driveways. Goss recommends people lock personal belongings in the trunk or hide them under the seat.

"The other thing that they can do is if you're in a parking lot and you see people walking around and like they don't belong that are not going to a particular destination, for God's sake give us a call," Goss said. "We have people walking around in apartment complexes or shopping centers just looking for crimes of opportunity."

Goss added such perpetrators can smash a window and grab valuables in a matter of seconds.

Decreases in cases of criminal sexual conduct, robbery, aggravated assault and auto theft accounted for the drop in serious crimes. There were no murders.

There's an increase in burglary (45 cases reported through September compared to 44 in September 1992) and arson (three cases this year compared to one last year).

The increase in breaking and entering includes a spree of 11 cases in the Chatham Hills subdivision where a person was entering homes and stealing purses. Police have a suspect and are seeking a warrant.

Helping hands

Volunteer initiative gives local agencies a boost

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

A volunteer initiative in Farmington Hills, promoted by Mayor Nancy Bates and former Gov. George Romney, has given several agencies a boost.

Bates has made the needs of children and families a priority during her term as mayor. In addition to chairing a committee that has led to addition of a permanent commission on children and families, a Family Night, celebrated at the Mercy Center Nov. 12 and a Family Day in the Park, celebrated as part of the city's 20th anniversary in July, have turned out to be successful.

Romney's presentation Nov. 5, at which several service organizations were represented, has also given a boost to volunteer recruitment efforts in Farmington and Farmington Hills.

"I think that it helped," said Phyllis Howard, executive director of the Neighborhood House. "We not only recruited four volunteers that night, we got a lot of publicity and a response from people who wanted to adopt a family for Christmas and donate clothing."

Neighborhood House is a clearinghouse that puts those in need in contact with those who can help them.

Todd Lipa, a volunteer and Special Olympics coach for Team Farmington, said Bates deserved most of the credit for stepped up support for his group.

"I think the change is Mayor Bates," he said. "This is the kind of thing she is about."

Two volunteers had joined Team Farmington the night Romney spoke and one of his athletes was offered a job, Lipa said.

Some of the more than 20 other organizations had a similar experience.

See HELP, 6A