

IN THE PAPER
TODAY

Hey, DAD: Designated drivers will be served free soft drinks at certain Farmington-area establishments who cooperate with the DAD program. /3A

And the winner is: If things go as expected, the Farmington Public Schools will have a new superintendent after Tuesday's special meeting. /9A

OPINION

Friendly faces: For the mentally ill, there's a much-needed club where members can feel at home and receive services, too. Columnist Judith Doner Berne takes a look at its people and surroundings. /8A

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Deck the halls: Retail display designers offer tips to help your holiday home look as good as their stores. /6A

Season's sweet smell: Home fragrance sales are a million-dollar industry, almost as popular this holiday season as a bottle of fine French perfume. /6A

TASTE

Super Supper: Paulette Koffron used to starve herself to lose weight. Not any more. /1B

STREET SCENE

The best: The Verve Pipe has a sound that has put it on a fast track to success, a sound that has earned it The Observer & Eccentric's Band of the Year honor. /5B

SPORTS

World champ: Farmington's Steven Findlay won the world championship in roller skating at a competition in France. /1C

Court scene: Farmington's four varsity volleyball teams are previewed in the sports section today. /1C

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Police put sting into liquor law



Attention people who sell alcoholic beverages in Farmington Hills: Here come the cops with another of their sting operations. It's been part of the scene for seven years.

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

"It's the season when restaurants and bars do a swell business what with holiday banquets and shoppers too busy to cook dinner.

But it's also a time of caution, or should be, because with more customers, underage drinkers can be harder to spot and waiters and wait-

resses are busier.

For that reason, the Farmington Hills Police Department will conduct a sting operation sometime over the holidays to make sure restaurants and bars are not serving patrons who are underage.

"We've been doing this for the past seven years," said Farmington Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer. "We conduct

stings twice a year, during graduation time, mostly at stores where you can buy liquor, and at restaurants and bars over the holidays."

Farmington also conducts the stings and just completed one two weeks ago.

All 79 Hills establishments with Class C or tavern liquor licenses are warned by certified mail that they may be visited. Usually a police cadet under the age of 20 is used in the operation, Dwyer said.

No facial hair or makeup can be used by the cadet, and the "decoy" cannot badger the wait staff into serv-

ing him or her, he added.

The stings came in part because of traffic injuries and deaths associated with teens drinking and driving, Dwyer said.

Sgt. Ray Cranston, Hills traffic supervisor, said he recalls an alcohol-related accident in the 1970s that ended in the death of five teens.

"When you're looking at four definite bodies and you end up with a fifth one, you don't forget it," he said. But the death of two West Bloomfield sisters, Venessa and Lara Car-

See STING, 3A

Jewish Festival of Lights



Miracle continues: Yosef Kagan, 10, lights up the menorah on the first night of Hanukkah with Yirmya Berkowitz, 15, outside the Lubavitch Center in Farmington Hills.

Hanukkah sheds light on religious tolerance

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

The afternoon sun was low in the sky when about 20 students from the Lubavitch Center in Farmington Hills began the celebration of one of the oldest traditions in religion — Hanukkah.

The Jewish Festival of Lights, celebrated by Jews worldwide, began Wednesday for the youngsters at the center on Middlebelt as they "lit"

the first of eight candles, representing the eight days of Hanukkah by placing a lantern on the outdoor menorah, or candelabrum.

The holiday marks the three-year resistance of a small band of Jews led by Judah the Maccabee against Syria and Greece, which occupied Israel at the time (168-165 B.C.), forced Jews to abandon their faith in favor of that of their occupiers and defiled Jewish temples in

Jerusalem.

After the Jews returned to their temple, they found only enough pure olive oil to burn in the temple for one day. But it burned for eight days. Thus the eight days and eight candles became the holiday's symbols.

"We always have the kids get involved in Hanukkah," said David Kegan, director of planning at the center.

The children sang and formed a chain as they walked around the menorah, one of many traditions associated with the holiday. The school, which has about 70 students in grades 2-10, is an appropriate setting for Hanukkah, which is from a Hebrew root word meaning education, Kegan said.

See LIGHT, 2A

Committee looks at red line for ice arena plan

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

The committee studying the feasibility of building a multi-purpose arena with ice surfaces in Farmington Hills is getting down to some specific numbers.

The full committee met Dec. 6 to discuss a draft report that will go to the city council when it is complete, possibly in January. The draft includes preliminary numbers on the cost of an ice arena, including ancillary uses such as a concession area.

The finance committee also met Friday with Mark Tucker of Garrison Construction in Farmington Hills to fine tune the numbers and answer questions about construction costs.

But costs weren't the only question. Several committee members saw the question of whether a facility should be public or private.

Although the numbers would seem to rule out a private developer because of a relatively low return (possibly less than \$100,000 a year) on a substantial investment (\$5 million to

\$8 million), interest rates, the size of the project and uses of a facility could change enough to change those numbers and make it attractive to a company, Councilman Terry Sever said.

But Dennis Fitzgerald, committee member as well as the chairman of the city's parks and recreation commission, said that if the project was a viable one, the city would be foolish to "give it away" to private investors.

The committee should pursue it as a city project that could not only benefit the area as a recreational en-

terprise, but also give Farmington Hills taxpayers a return in the form of profits, Fitzgerald said.

"Why would we ask someone to come in and give away something the city could make money with?" he said. "That makes no sense."

But committee member Roy Lindhardt said that the city should not be in competition with private business.

See ARENA, 4A

Any donations?

T is the season . . . to think of the needs of those who are less fortunate.

Again this year, Farmington Hills employees, led by accountant Bill Benton, are collecting food and clothing to donate to the area's needy.

"Many charitable organizations are reporting severe increases in donations this year," Benton said. "Help is needed now more than ever."

Items such as nonperishable food, baby food and clothes, soap, toothpaste, personal care items, towels and washcloths and clothing for adults and children are suggested.

The donated material will be given to the Salvation Army for distribution, Benton said. People with items to donate are asked to bring them during business hours to the Farmington

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Hills City Hall, 11 Mile and Orchard Lake roads, or Fire Department Headquarters, Drake Road between 12 and 13 Mile roads.

After 4:30 p.m. weekdays and on weekends, the items can be dropped off at Farmington Hills Police Headquarters on 11 Mile Road, just west of City Hall.

Dance group debuts

The premiere performance of the newly formed Farmington Dance Theatre will take place at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 19, in the auditorium of Harrison High School on 12 Mile Road between Middlebelt and Orchard Lake

roads.

The "Winter Concert" will feature dance numbers from "The Nutcracker Suite" and other holiday favorites.

Farmington Dance Theatre is a creation of the Barbara Hatch School of Dance in Farmington. Auditions were in October for aspiring dancers ages 10 and up from any studio. Some 30 were chosen in junior and senior divisions. All will perform in the upcoming show.

General admission tickets at \$6 are available at the door. For more information about the group, call the Barbara Hatch School of Dance at 476-7074.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336; dropped off at the newspaper office; or faxed to 477-9722.