

IN THE PAPER

## TODAY

**Problem corners:** Fixing up a couple of Farmington Hills' traffic problems could lead to other problems. /3A

**New principal:** Wood Creek Elementary School in the Farmington District soon will have a new principal, Karen Obsniuk. /6A

### COUNTY NEWS

**Take your seat:** Here's how county commissioners stack up in attendance of regular and committee meetings so far during 1993. /5A

### OPINION

**Another read-letter day:** More letters from Farmington-area readers can be found on the opinion page. /10A

**Keeping an eye out:** Recent events have shown how differently men and women view controversial issues. That's the viewpoint of columnist Sandra Armbruster. /10A

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**The Santa beat:** The jolly old man is everywhere this time of year. We caught up with him posing with pets at the Livonia Mall and attending a high tea at the Somerset Collection in Troy. /4B

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## Tight budget gags 3rd judgeship



Don't hold your breath. Reports of a third judgeship for 47th District Court have been greatly exaggerated, state and local officials say.

BY BILL COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

While state legislators may agree on the need for more district judges and legislation likely to increase the workload in local court houses is nearing passage, a third judge for this community's district court is not likely any time soon.

"We haven't been able to find the

money," said Rep. Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, a member of the House Appropriations Committee which oversees judicial budget items. "I don't see a real push for it."

That's disappointing news for many, including 47th District Judges Fred Morris and Marla Parker, who will have to continue to work with a heavy caseload. What makes matters

worse is that a bill close to becoming law will raise the limits of a civil suit being tried in district courts from \$10,000 to \$25,000, thereby adding to already bulging case dockets.

Five new district judgeships had been recommended two years ago, including one for the 47th District, before budget cuts eliminated them. The State Court Administrative Office recommended six new district judgeships in its Nov. 23 report, again including one for the Farmington/Farmington Hills court, said Delores Van Horn, regional administrator in Detroit for SCAO.

"That would have meant a new judge for the 47th District on Jan. 1, 1995," she said. "But that's only a recommendation. The Legislature has to decide that."

John Grewell, 47th District Court administrator, said even if a new judgeship were approved, Farmington and Farmington Hills would have to budget money for staff and space.

"We have no space for a judge's office," he said. "A few years ago Dearborn used a trailer for a third courtroom. So I don't know what we'd do."

See JUDGE, 6A

### A stroke of wellness



SHARON LE MINIK/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Dancing again: Stanley Lipinski, a stroke survivor, dances to the strains of "O Come All Ye Faithful" during a meeting of the Stroke Club.

## Survivors strike back at illness

BY BILL COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

In hindsight, Judy Hawk says she should have seen a stroke coming — she had a husband suffering from cancer, work concerns and headaches from high blood pressure.

Now, seven weeks after her stroke, the 51-year-old mother of two is coming back strong and is optimistic about returning to a full life.

For stroke survivors, seeing the bigger picture can be an important part of recovery, and seeing others who have made it back from a stroke can be living proof that they can bounce back.

"Seeing former patients come back can show them (stroke survivors) that there is light at the end of the tunnel," said Gina Massengill, a medical social worker at Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills. "Seeing people who have come back after a stroke lets them know they're not alone

and that they can recover."

Since 1988, stroke survivors have been meeting monthly at the hospital's rehabilitation wing with those patients who have had a recent stroke. Experts on stroke and how to cope with its effects are a regular part of the meetings.

But seeing and talking with stroke victims who are back on their feet is a big part of the program.

"I didn't know what I was going to do," said Stan Lipinski, who had a stroke in 1990 at the age of 80. "But I worked with the therapists here. I believe I wouldn't be here walking if it hadn't been for them."

#### Determined to come back

Lipinski, who lives in Detroit, was determined to come back, even at an advanced age, from stroke.

"I told someone (shortly after the stroke) that I was going to my grandson's wedding in Albuquerque (N.M.) and that I was going to dance with the bride," he

said. "And I did."

Stroke survivors usually spend two to six weeks in the rehab unit, which also takes in amputees, orthopedic patients and patients with other neurological disorders who need the intensive rehabilitation, said unit manager Dahlia Klein.

"We try to make everyone able to be as independent as possible," Klein said.

And although most stroke survivors are older, there have been patients in their 30s admitted after a stroke, Klein said.

For Hawk, who still uses a wheelchair but has regained almost total function, the age stereotype helped fuel her into not being more careful.

"I associated stroke with older people," said the Livonia resident. "But a lot of my problem was needless worry. Friends from work have visited me and talked about what"

See STROKE, 3A

## Maxfield gets top grades

BY TOM BARR  
STAFF WRITER

If Bob Maxfield is feeling on top of the world these days . . . well, it's easy to understand why.

The 52-year-old Birmingham resident seems to be a member in good standing of a mutual admiration society involving himself and two suburban school districts — Farmington and Berkley.

### SCHOOLS

They seem to love him where he is (Berkley) as well as where he's going (Farmington as superintendent).

From Berkley: "He (Maxfield) is loved and respected by the community," said a special edition of the district's employee newsletter. "Our city and business leaders respect and trust his judgment."

From Farmington: "He just feels right to me," said Bobbie Feldman, a trustee on the Farmington Board of Education.

The Farmington Board last week enthusiastically picked C. (for Charles) Robert Maxfield to lead the 11,000-student district, about twice the size of his old one. He has been superintendent of the Berkley Schools since 1988.

"It's not so much that I want to leave Berkley," said Maxfield, "but I see Farmington as a terrific professional opportunity. It's a logical next step for me. It's a chance to do it again in a larger district — and without relocating."

The Farmington District has "a wonderful reputation, is well-managed and has enormous potential," Maxfield said.

"In a lot of ways the Farmington area is like the Berkley-Huntington Woods area . . . more spread out maybe, but lots of diversity and the same respect and support for education," he said.

Maxfield, who's logged almost 30 years in education, said he has no specific game plan for when he takes over in Farmington in March.

"One ought to spend a lot of time getting to know the people, though," he said. "That's crucial. You have to develop your own sense of what the strengths and needs are."

Maxfield toured the Farmington District, and Farmington school officials spent some time in Berkley. Maxfield said he was impressed with what he saw and heard in Farmington.

"To have so many staff members say something like, 'This is really a wonderful place. I hope you know that,' to be as open and honest and enthusiastic as they were, I found that quite telling and captivating," he said.

See SCHOOLS, 4A

### Recycling your Christmas

Eventually, the season ends. Christmas trees are untrimmied and taken down, and the holiday greeting cards come off the wall or wherever.

Now, Farmington-area residents can do the "environmentally correct" thing with the remains of Christmas. They can compost the trees and recycle the cards.

Christmas trees placed at the curb from Jan. 3-7 will go to a composting facility, not a landfill. Trees in bags will be rejected.

The greeting cards will be collected Dec. 27 through Jan. 21 at five locations: Farmington Hills City Hall, both branches of the Farmington Community Library, the Halsted Road recycling center, and the Farmington City Hall.

All greeting cards will be accepted. Residents

## FARMINGTON FOCUS

should deposit their cards — fronts only — at any of the locations. They will be delivered to St. Jude's Ranch for Children, a non-sectarian center for abused, abandoned and neglected children in Boulder City, Nev.

The children will cut out the decorations and glue them to new backings to be sold later as new small holiday gifts.

Last year, more than 950 pounds of cards were collected. With the help of volunteers from the Farmington Hills Senior Adult program, the cards were packed and mailed.

### New chamber digs

The Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce has moved, and director Jody Soronen says, "Please come and see our beautiful new facility."

The new chamber office is in the Farmington Training Center, 33000 Thomas Street, corner of School Street. Chamber member Nurten Ural of Ural Interiors did the layout for the new office. An official open house is planned for early next year, Soronen said.

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.

Discover where Santa is on Christmas Eve by listening to one of Santa's elves being interviewed by your hometown newspaper. Information updated every half-hour. Just call 953-2031 between 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. on Christmas Eve.