

Farmington Observer

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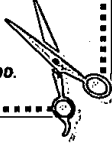
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IN THE PAPER

TODAY

All rised: *The ping from the wad of gum hitting a waste can, along with the rap of the gavel, let the North Farmington students know court was in session. /3A*

Fire department report: *The Farmington Hills Fire Department had fewer fires last year but was a lot busier. /13A*

OPINION

State tactic: *It might work in Lansing, but don't try it in city hall or the school headquarters. /16A*

Ding-a-ling: *Guest columnist Tom DeWard of Farmington Hills has a few public bones to pick with the telephone company. /17A*

SPORTS

State champion: *North Farmington senior Jon Kershaw was a double winner Saturday in the Class A swim meet. /1B*

Hoops tourney: *Farmington made its first appearance in a boys regional basketball tournament since 1977 Wednesday. /1B*

ENTERTAINMENT

Theater: *Excellent cast in "Fiddler on the Roof" at the Jewish Community Center. /5B*

SUBURBAN LIFE

Her slice of ice: *Columnist Susan McKendrick, who loves to skate, has a convincing argument for an ice arena in Farmington Hills. /1C*

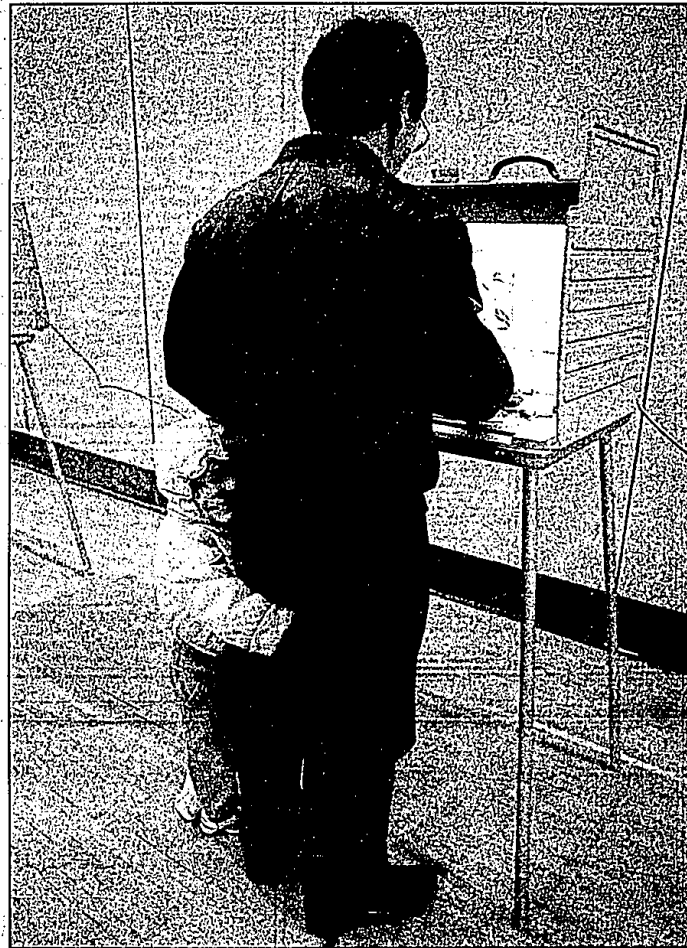
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Farmington-area voters OK 'A'



Casting his ballot: David Piasecki votes on Proposal A Tuesday at Power Middle School (Precinct 1) in Farmington Hills in the company of his daughter Karen.

■ 'A' is here to stay. Farmington-area voting results mirrored those statewide, in which voters passed the measure that slashes property taxes and adds 2 cents on the dollar in sales tax.

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

The passage of Proposal A was not a big surprise, but the large margin locally, and statewide was.

The large turnout, which some thought would hurt the proposal's chances, did not affect the outcome.

In Farmington, the proposal passed by a margin of 2-to-1, with 3,702 votes cast, or 47 percent of registered voters. In Farmington Hills, the issue passed by a margin of just better than 2-to-1, with 23,956 votes cast, or just over 47 percent of registered voters.

And in both cases absentee balloting was heavy. In Farmington, 763 absentee ballots were cast, with 510 in favor of A.

In Farmington Hills, the 7,119 absentee ballots were the most since the last presidential election and far more than the 5,601 cast in the November city council election, said city clerk Kathy Dorman. Of those, 4,511 (63 percent) were cast for the proposal, which passed statewide by an even wider margin — 70 to 30 percent.

The total vote in Farmington was 2,455 in favor (66 percent) to 1,247 against Proposal A. In Farmington Hills, the vote was 16,179 for A (68 percent) and 7,607 against.

Whatever euphoria A's victory generated, there seemed to be an equal measure of befuddlement among both naysayers and supporters.

"It's bizarre," said Cathy Webb, president of the Farmington Board of Education who voted for the proposal. "It's like throwing a dart at a dart board."

Webb said the higher income tax of the fallback plan along with the elimination of some tax breaks for cities would have especially hurt Detroit. Like many voters, Webb said she had been inclined to vote the other way at times and felt overwhelmed by the issue.

Voting was heavy early and steady all day in both cities.

See ELECTION, 2A

St. Patrick's Day gets local people's Irish up

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

On St. Patrick's Day, the media spotlight is often focused on what divides the Irish.

One is Catholic, the other Protestant. One would like to see a united Ireland, the other is not so sure.

Through centuries of strife, the

Irish have learned to have something in common: skepticism.

Many don't hold out much hope for peace in Northern Ireland, despite recent initiatives to the contrary by the British government and the Irish Republican Army's political wing, Sinn Fein.

"I don't see any end to it," said

John Magee, a Farmington resident who grew up in Armagh, Northern Ireland, "because people on the side of the IRA and their sympathizers, they have always had hatred for the British. It's been handed down from father to son."

Said Farmington publican Joe Cowley of Cowley's Village Inn: "I'd

love to see 32 (counties) but I don't know . . . I thought we were getting there, with what was going on with them sitting down. Now you have them (IRA) throwing bombs into Heathrow (Airport)."

Neither professes to be an expert.

See IRISH, 11A

City officials work to mend fence ordinance

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Farmington is going for the fences this year. No, the city hasn't signed Cecil Fielder.

Instead, city officials have stepped up with a new fence ordinance, one which will better define what type of barriers people can put up.

City council could decide whether

to pass the new ordinance at its March 21 meeting.

What constitutes a landscape treatment or decorative fence as opposed to a partition are addressed in the proposed ordinance, which was put together by city administrators, ordinance officer John Koncsol and city attorney John Donahue.

"When residents apply for a permit

. . . they'll find out what they can do and they can't do," said assistant city manager Robert Schultz. "This makes that easier."

City officials hope it cuts down on the number of requests for fence variances brought before council. There have been five requests in the past two years, Schultz said.

More so, the ordinance helps clarify

what's already in the city code regarding fences. Most of the new fence ordinance has been gleaned from existing zoning and commercial maintenance regulations.

Residents would have specific height, location and appearance guidelines on landscape and decora-

See FENCES, 11A

Get splashed for FFIA

Farmington Families in Action invites the motoring community to join its Spring Splash fund-raiser.

During March, FFIA will sell tickets for an exterior wash at Colonial Car Wash, on Nine Mile west of Farmington Road. Tickets can be used for one year on any vehicle.

Owners Holly and Mark Owen will donate \$2.50 from each \$5 ticket to FFIA to help support the group's abuse-education programs.

For the past 10 years, FFIA has taught children and parents about healthy bodies, healthy minds and productive lifestyles through BABES (Beginning Addiction Basic Education Studies), Fifth Grade Night and TWYKAA (Talking With Your Kids About Alcohol) programs.

Tickets are available at Power Middle School on

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Gill Road, Farmington High School on Shiawassee, and at Flanders, Gill and Larkshire elementary schools.

For more information about Spring Splash or FFIA programs, call 476-5682 or 851-5665.

On redesigning schools

Farmington High School is one of 10 Michigan schools awarded a grant to re-examine curriculum toward making it more rigorous and relevant for students.

An "awareness session" on redesigning American schools will be held at 8 p.m. Tuesday, March

22, at the Farmington Schools Administration Building, 32550 Shiawassee, Farmington.

Dr. Richard D. Jones, senior consultant for International Center for Leadership in Education, will speak on the subject. The meeting will be cablecast live on MetroVision Channel 10.

Memory Lane

From the March 18, 1954, edition of the Farmington Enterprise:

Fire departments from five communities, including Farmington, were called to fight a fire at the Novi Inn on Grand River. There were no injuries, but the building was completely gutted.

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