

Farmlington Observer

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IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Big decision: State Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, ponders his political future. /3A

Tough issue: The Farmington Hills City Council is wrestling with an issue that is becoming a vise on the city's budget — state revenue sharing. /3A

OPINION

Earth Day: It may not be celebrated nationwide, but there are some interesting events going on locally. /20A

About hypnosis: "Hypnosis is not magic. Your mind is the magic," says Leslie Miller, a Farmington Hills guest columnist. /21A

SPORTS

Look ahead: The Mercy softball and North Farmington baseball teams are ready to begin the season. /1B

Soccer victory: Mercy began Catholic League play Tuesday with a win over rival Birmingham Marian. /1B

ENTERTAINMENT



Theatre review: John Lepard and Susan M. Arnold star in JET's "Sight Unseen." /7B

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Love to share: A Farmington Hills woman tells of the success of a rambunctious dog who works with abused kids. /1C

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DDA upholds sign — for now



That controversial green sign on the Masonic Temple corner was the subject of some spirited discussion Tuesday morning at the Downtown Development Authority meeting.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

The sign tells people they're in front of the historic Masonic Temple. The marker carries a different message for the Farmington Downtown Development Authority: Listen to the people.

The DDA had no choice at Tuesday's meeting.

One resident blasted the kelly green plank that includes a frog, butterfly, and grasshopper when not covered by a white layover sign. The sign is on the northwest corner of Farmington and Grand River.

"When we have that 'Eat at Joe's' sign, we're saying Hickville USA," said Farmington resident Gary Phillips during the meeting.

Board members agreed to reconsider the \$3,200 marker sometime after the summer. That way, people will be able to see how it fits with the flowers and other landscaping at the corner.

"I think we're at a point and time, we have to see it through," said DDA board member Robert Heinrich, "and go back and see, not just the sign, but everything that has been done there." Also, the board agreed to correct

what DDA chairman Robert Fitzpatrick termed as miscommunication about the purpose of the DDA.

A monthly DDA newsletter will be sent out and there will be quarterly forums for residents and business people to air opinions.

The sign remained a focal point, though, especially during the public comment segment of the meeting.

The sign is part of the overall renovation of the corner, which includes a three-tiered planter and benches. The

See SIGN, 4A

Earth Day coming up



Making ready: Cheryl Colton of Team Farmington helps 6-year-old charges Hallee Goldenburg and Jeffrey Canvasser prepare for Earth Day activities this weekend at Heritage Park in Farmington Hills. For a story and more photos, please see Page 1C.

3 make run for 2 seats

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Pull out those scorecards: There's an addition to this year's Farmington Board of Education election lineup.

Kenneth Stein, 25, joins incumbents Cathleen Webb and R. Jack Inch in the race for two seats, making the June 13 election a contest. He filed his petition before Monday's 4 p.m. deadline.

Scratch Doug Swiatkowski, who

SCHOOL BOARD

submitted a nomination petition, but has since announced he's not going to run.

Swiatkowski officially withdrew his name from the ballot Tuesday.

With Swiatkowski backing out, some wondered if Webb and Inch would run unopposed.

"I hope there are people out there who want to run," Webb said last week. "I've worked real hard to try and maintain a fair reputation as a board member. It seems like you are getting cheated if you don't run against anyone to prove you've done a good job."

Stein's candidacy makes sure Webb and Inch won't be cheated. He ran for the school board last year and finished seventh out of nine candidates.

Stein, a Farmington Hills resident, could make things interesting, though.

During last year's candidate forums, Stein ruffled timekeepers as his often enthusiastic replies ran over the limit.

Stein called for more use of technology and innovative teaching methods. He also said he would get tough with unions representing teachers and other employees.

Stein said he'll tout similar objectives in this election, though sounding less militant regarding teachers.

"Before I make a comment on that, I'd like to sit down with the teachers unions and find out what their concerns are," Stein said.

He added he wants younger teach-

See SCHOOLS, 4A

Senate panel nixes 3rd judge for 47th Court

BY TIM RICHARD
and BILL COXTANT
STAFF WRITERS

It was a unanimous verdict: The 47th District Court will not be getting a third judge.

The court had hoped to win approval for the third judgeship from the state Senate Judiciary Committee Wednesday, but did not. It was the

second time a third judgeship had been recommended and included in the budget, and the second time it had been turned down.

The five-member panel turned down the request, 3-0, with two members absent, after hearing testimony from court administrators in several counties, including the 47th, which takes in Farmington and Farmington

Hills. Committee chairman William Van Regenmortel, R-Jenison, said as a practical matter, the committee's approval of another judge for the 47th would not have meant much.

"The governor has said publicly that he would veto a third judgeship," he said.

John Grewell, 47th District Court administrator, testified before the

committee Wednesday, making the point that other courts serving a smaller population have three judges already.

"Farmington Hills is the largest city in Oakland County," he said. "It's larger than Troy and Southfield and yet it has two judges while their

See JUDGE, 4A

Observer's looking for a few good people

The Farmington Observer is looking for residents to serve as members of our Reader Advisory Board. Three sessions will be held.

The first session is at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, May 5, tentatively in the Farmington office. Steve Barnaby, Observer publisher, and Sandy Boulton, production director for the newspaper, will present an overview of the publication.

Boulton will discuss research that provides a picture of Observer readers. Barnaby will address recent changes at the newspaper along with emphasis on local news and circulation.

See TEAM, 4A

JOIN OUR TEAM

If you would like to be part of our Farmington Reader Advisory Board please fill out the following information and mail it to the address below. The first session will take place at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, May 5. Please print or type your responses.

Name _____ Address _____
 City _____ ZIP _____ Phone (home) _____ (work) _____
 Occupation _____
 What is the best day and time to contact you?
 (day) _____ (time) _____ a.m. p.m.
 Briefly list interests or hobbies you have _____

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