

IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Jail and ball: A number of Farmington-area residents, business leaders and city officials spent Friday, April 15, in an unusual place — jail. /2A

Payback time: Last fall, Sgt. Gil Kohls of the Farmington Hills police went out of his way to help a resident in a tough situation. Now it's payback time. /6A

Remember Mike?: People from the Farmington school community certainly do, and they'll be happy to know that their former school chief is doing just fine in Wayne County. /13A

OPINION

Aw, only 3?: Not too many challengers want to take on two so popular and powerful school board incumbents. /22A

A man for the DDA: Guest columnist Robert E. Fitzpatrick, a member of the Farmington Downtown Development Authority, tells his vision of the organization. /23A

SPORTS

And still champion: The Harrison High girls track team won the Milan Relays for the fifth consecutive year Saturday. /1B

Tracking the thinclads: The first listing of the best Observerland boys and girls track stats appears today. /4B

SUBURBAN LIFE

Lights, camera, coffee: Farmington Players Barn actors constantly change jobs from on stage to parking cars and serving coffee. /1C

Down to Earth: Team Farmington, Special Olympics hosted a community event that drew people of all ages to the varied activities, including a rare pheasant release. /5C

ENTERTAINMENT

Opera preview: There's a lot of local talent in Michigan Opera Theatre's presentation of "Turandot." /7C

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Educators: Strike bill hit, miss



Legislation that would fine teachers and school boards for strikes and lockouts drew some predictable response from Farmington-area teachers and school officials.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

School board members see it as leveling the playing field. Teachers view it as leveling their ability to bargain, period.

Legislation passed by the House and the Senate that would penalize teachers and school boards for strikes

or lockouts is being scorned and embraced with equal passion in Farmington school circles.

The controversial bill passed in the House April 13, and was approved by the Senate Wednesday.

State Rep. Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, voted for the proposal that would fine teachers a day's pay and

their unions \$5,000 for each day they're on strike. School boards would also be fined \$5,000, and its members \$250 a day on illegal lockouts.

"I think it's an anti-school employee bill," said Zan Alley, president of the Farmington Education Association.

"I think it's Engler and the Republicans. It's people who are anti-working men and women of the state. It's certainly not designed to deal with labor peace. It's certainly not designed to deal with cost containment."

But Farmington Board of Educa-

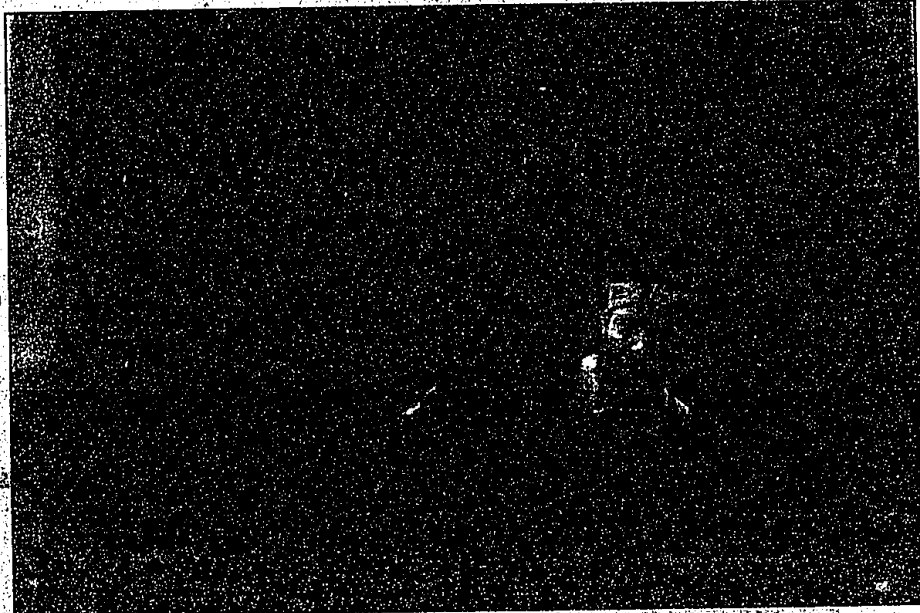
tion president Cathleen Webb believes the bill addresses both those issues.

"I'm relieved the state legislature has stepped up and taken the responsibility to pass legislation that allows us to protect the interests of the students and the taxpayers," Webb said.

"Board of education members are going to continue to bargain in good faith. . . . We still will protect our employees. We'll always consider them as part of the Farmington family."

See BILL, 4A

The recyclers cometh, rain or shine



Pitching in: Mike Lane of Waste Management Inc. picks up curbside recyclables on a cold, rainy day in Farmington Hills.

Hauler talks trash: Recycling has bins, future

BY BILL COLTANT
STAFF WRITER

It's a foggy, cool April morning as Mike Lane drives his recycling truck through the winding streets of Farmington Hills subdivision.

Other than an occasional car, the sounds of glass bottles breaking as he unloads recycling link and the gentle hum of his constant-looking truck are all that break the silence.

He doesn't mind the isolation.

"Actually, this (50 degrees with a slight breeze) is about perfect weather," he says before hopping out of the cab to retrieve another, chartreuse-colored bin and spill its contents into the bins of broken glass, plastic, tin cans and newspapers.

"When it gets to be 70 to 80 degrees, that's a little hot." Understandable when you consid-

er that Lane's routine includes rising from house to house, getting out safely but quickly, grabbing the bin of recyclables and sorting them out as he throws them in the appropriate compartment on the truck. It's not a relaxing job.

"Most people are pretty nice about leaving only what we can recycle," says the 29-year-old Farming-

ton resident as he leaves behind some plastic foam containers. "But once in a while you have something we can't take."

As Lane snakes his truck through the "Old Homestead" subdivision near 11 Mile and Drake, he keeps an eye on the special TV monitor that serves as a rear-view mirror.

See RECYCLING, 3A

Ex-mayor tells council to play fair on arena costs

BY BILL COLTANT
STAFF WRITER

Although the Farmington Hills City Council members are going full-speed ahead on a plan to ask voters for bonding authority to build a new ice arena, a former mayor cautioned them not to try and soft-pedal the cost.

The council adopted a resolution that spells out preliminary ballot language for the Aug. 2 primary, 6-0, with councilman Jon Grant absent. Council members also appointed a

six-person committee to study architectural proposals for the arena and the parks and recreation commission on May 2 to discuss the alternative of asking voters to renew the parks and rec millage early for up to 15 years to cover any shortfall.

Former Mayor Ben Marks, who praised the work of the ice arena study committee, present Mayor Larry Lichtman and the council, warned that not bracing the public for the possibility of a shortfall over the next

few years would be a mistake. "You have to tell the public that there's a chance this would have to be continually funded," Marks said. "Give the public the downside."

Marks, who served on the council for nine years, said he had initially been opposed to the project, but has been convinced that it could be a good project for the city.

Although the ice arena study committee said the facility would probably break even or lose up to \$150,000 in the first year and eventually make

money, Marks said there is no guarantee of that.

"I think you would be rearming an old chestnut," Marks said, adding that the city expected to make money on its San Marino golf course, but didn't until the past couple of years.

The city should make sure any revenues from an ice arena should go to paying off its debt or go to maintaining it, he said.

See ARENA, 4A

WalkAmerica at OCC

Don't forget . . . part of the annual March of Dimes WalkAmerica fund-raiser will take place in Farmington Hills Sunday, April 24.

The start and finish of the 20-kilometer (just over 12 miles) walkathon will be at the Orchard Ridge campus of Oakland Community College. Registration begins at 9 a.m. Sunday and the walk starts at 9 a.m.

Farmington Hills will be one of 13 Detroit-area sites for WalkAmerica Saturday and Sunday. Last year, about 1,046 dodged the raindrops to participate in the Farmington Hills event. They raised about \$109,000 for March of Dimes programs. Across the area, about 15,000 walked to raise \$1.2 million.

Walkers and volunteers are needed for the

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Farmington Hills event. For information on how you or your company, club or organization can support WalkAmerica, call Patrizia Radzick at the March of Dimes office, 423-3200.

Here's to healthy kids

Celebrate kids' health in body, mind and spirit," says the Farmington Area YMCA flyer, announcing an event to be held from 4 p.m. Saturday, April 23, at the local YMCA, 25100 Farmington Road, north of 12 Mile, Farmington Hills. Don Powell, an authority on fitness for children,

will speak. Other activities will include puppet and magic shows, face painting, food demonstrations, a water safety program and an open swim. For more information, call the YMCA at 553-4020.

All hall volunteers

More than 400 volunteers of the Senior Adult Division of the city of Farmington Hills' Senior Adult Division will be honored at 9 a.m. Monday, April 23, at a brunch and ceremony at the Mercy Center, on 11 Mile east of Middlebelt.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21599 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336, faxed to 477-9722 or dropped off at the newspaper office.