

Farmington Observer

VOLUME 105 NUMBER 60

MONDAY, APRIL 25, 1994 • FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 40 PAGES

FIFTY CENTS

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IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Drake Road smashup: Three men were injured and a 1994 Olds Bravada was totaled in a collision on northbound Drake north of 12 Mile Friday afternoon. /2A

With dispatch: That's how the people in the Farmington Hills police communications room handle their jobs. /3A

Slammed home: In his anti-drug drive, former pro basketball player Spencer Haywood penetrated teen-age notions of invincibility and slammed home his message at North Farmington High. /3A

Gush and gurgle: The president of Farmington's Longacre Woods Condominiums likes to keep the lawn watered — but he didn't expect to get soaked with a \$772 sewer bill. /5A

MALLS & MAINSTREETS



What's up, Doc?: Michigan gets its first Warner Bros. Studio Stores at Lakeside and Briarwood malls. /9A

Health matters: The Women's Health Boutique in Southfield just cut the ribbon on an unusual boutique, retailing very special fashions and products in a very private setting. /9A

TASTE

Flavorful fiesta: Celebrate Cinco de Mayo, a Mexican national holiday, with festive foods. /1B

Recipe Make Over: Laura Letobar cuts the fat in Chicken Almondine from 69.2 grams to 8.25. /1B

SPORTS

Momentous victory: North Farmington celebrated the biggest win in the history of its girls soccer program last week. /1C

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Schools hope bill 'insures' bids



BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

The devil may be in the details, but school districts would as soon settle for the fork.

They'd like to stick it into the monopoly held by the teacher union's preferred health carrier.

School officials, including those in the Farmington District, are poring over language in the recently passed bill that limits the bargaining power of teachers' unions.

The bill, OK'd by the Senate Wednesday, appears to clear the way for school districts to accept competi-

tive bids on health insurance.

That's welcome news for Farmington Public Schools, which is already locked in a battle with Michigan Education Special Services Administration (MESSA), a health-care administrator and a subsidiary of the Michigan Education Association.

Both sides are awaiting an arbitration ruling by Oakland County Circuit Court Judge David Breck over the district's attempt to switch health-care administrators for 1,200 employees. Breck's decision is expected any day.

School officials are not ready to express joy yet.

"That part, everyone is unclear on," said Farmington School Board president Cathleen Webb.

The district has always had the right to accept bids on health insurance claims, Webb said.

However, MESSA has not released claim histories in the past. That's prevented other carriers from bidding, Webb said.

See BIDS, 8A

At the old ball game



SHARON LEMISKI/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A local upper deck: Neighborhood kids Dante Sanders (left) and Justin Dovenmuehle watch a North Farmington High School baseball game from the upper reaches of the school's football bleachers. Stories of Farmington-area high school sports squads may be found in the Observer Sports Section.

New leader voices enthusiasm

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

She's been involved with radio, TV and now she's home . . . with laryngitis.

Caren Collins was only on the job a day and a half as executive director of the Southwestern Oakland County Cable Commission and her voice was kaput. Collins, 36, was named to the position Friday.

"Can you believe it? Of course I used my voice all the time, and I didn't get laryngitis," said Collins, who has an extensive background in

broadcasting. "Here I am not even broadcasting, and in one day I have laryngitis." She succeeds Lark Samouelian, who left Feb. 25 to become project manager of the Michigan Government Television Network.

Collins, a 1976 graduate of North Farmington High and a telecommunications student of Dean Cobb, steps into the SWOCC executive director's seat with a heavy resume.

CABLE COMMISSION

Her voice will be familiar to WJRM listeners as she provided road reports on the station as broadcast supervisor at AAA Michigan. She also has extensive experience in television news.

Collins was news director at WEYI in Flint and KAR in Amarillo, Texas. She was also a news consultant with Frank N. Magid Associates in Cedar

See CABLE, 8A



Caren Collins

4 years later, civil rights case to get hearing

BY BILL COULTANT
STAFF WRITER

The state of Michigan is calling it a violation of a Detroit man's civil rights. The tile company that fired him is calling it politics.

After more than four years, a public

hearing is set for May 19 in Detroit on the firing of Terrance Mathis, who was hired Jan. 31, 1990, and fired three weeks later from a Farmington Hills tile retailer, Kay and Kay Tile.

The charges were filed in March of 1990 with the Michigan Department

of Civil Rights. After two weeks of working in the company's Troy warehouse, Mathis was assigned to work at a Troy location.

Four days later, Mathis was reassigned to Pontiac. A week later he was laid off, allegedly because there

were "too many stockpersons" at that Pontiac location.

But Mathis, who is black, filed the complaint saying that others with less seniority, who are white, were

See HEARING, 8A

A highway won't be there

Students at Oakland Community College, Orchard Ridge campus, and motorists who travel the main road through the Farmington Hills facility should take note.

The highway, a private road known as Oakland Drive, will be closed to through traffic beginning Thursday, April 28, until about Sept. 1. A renovation of two buildings on campus is the reason for the road closure, said George Mergner, director of campus services.

"We're talking some pretty major stuff," Mergner said. "When you start getting Dumpsters and cranes and that kind of equipment in there, it becomes a safety hazard for the people who transit through."

The road, which connects Farmington and Orchard Lake roads, will be open as far as the parking

FARMINGTON FOCUS

lots on the east and west ends of campus, Mergner said.

The closing has been coordinated with the police and fire departments, as well as with SMART, which runs a bus line along the road. Emergency vehicles will be able to get through, Mergner said.

Oakland Drive is a popular alternative for drivers wishing to avoid busy 12 Mile Road to the north.

"We know it (Oakland Drive) is a private road," Mergner said, "but a lot of people think it belongs to the city."

Mergner suggests 12 Mile or 11 Mile roads as alternatives for local east-west traffic.

Good for (Musical) laughs

Mike Dejs, host of "Patterns in Music" on radio station WJRM, will join the Farmington Community Band for "Musical Laughs," the band's annual May concert at 3 p.m. Sunday, May 1, in the auditorium of Harrison High School on 12 Mile Road west of Middlebelt.

The performance will be held in honor of Farmington-area handicapped and senior citizens. "Nursing home residents will be bused to the concert and provided with refreshments," said Ginny McDonald, the band's business director.

The event is a joint effort for many community groups, including the Farmington Area Arts Commission, the Farmington Public Schools, and many area service groups.

For more information about the Community Band, call 478-5014 or 489-3412.