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IN THE PAPER

TODAY

No garbage: When it comes to recycling, some Farmington-area kids don't think it's a bunch of garbage. /3A

Remember the roots: Samantha Yelian, an eighth-grader at O.E. Dunchel Middle School, recalled her Asian heritage in an award-winning essay. /5A

The big seven-oh: The Farmington Exchange Club, one of the area's oldest such organizations, turns 70 this year. /10A

Open house: A former Red Wing hockey star will be on hand at the seventh annual Farmington Hills Police Department open house. /12A

TASTE

Cheesecake champions: Local cooks share prize-winning cheesecake recipes. /1B

Wine column: Meet Michaela Rodeno of St. Supery winery in the heart of the Napa Valley. /1B

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Valuable changes: Tel-Twelve Mall in Southfield remodels its facade to let in light and dollar-wise shoppers. /6A

Lending a hand: The soon-to-open Parisian department store in Livonia has \$10,000 for a worthy agency serving metro families. /6A

STREET SCENE



Blues news: They may be howlin' in Chicago, but in Detroit, where there once were a few bands and a few venues, there are now plenty of performers and a strong club circuit. /8A

SPORTS

Softball tourney: Farmington was assured of having a district champion Saturday since the field included all four schools. /1C

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Highmeadow high fives honor



BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Seven years ago, Highmeadow Common Campus didn't exist. Today, the school is the apple of the nation's educational eye.

Highmeadow is a national exem-

plary school.

Principal Janice Colliton received the word in a phone call last week from the Blue Ribbon Schools Program of the United States Department of Education. She's still awaiting written notification.

"All I know is we got the award," Colliton said. "Yesssss!"

Highmeadow's honor completes something of an exemplary hat trick for the Farmington Public Schools.

Last year, North Farmington High came away with national exemplary honors. Kenbrook Elementary was chosen as a state exemplary school in 1991.

Highmeadow was selected as a state exemplary school earlier this year. It's application went to the national committee, which looks at leadership, teaching environment,

curriculum and instruction, student environment, and parent and community support.

There was a special emphasis on math and science this year, Colliton said. Some 276 schools nationwide were selected by the Blue Ribbon Schools committee.

Highmeadow has quickly gained a reputation for excellence in six years of existence.

As one of the district's two schools of choice, Highmeadow takes an al-

See HIGHMEADOW, 2A

Two swingers from Farmington



SHARON LEMMEL/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

What a picnic! Swings are for swinging, as Farmington High School senior Lindsay Shook (left) and junior Jeremy Biddle demonstrate recently at Shiawassee Park in Farmington. The students were enjoying a picnic with their FHS Journalism class.

Officials expect happy ending to bookstore closing

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Books for Less at Grand River and Farmington Road is closing. A real estate broker, though, is certain a new tenant will be found to write another chapter on the highly visible corner of downtown.

Books for Less will cease operation June 16 after the store's owner decided not to renew his three-year lease.

"I have had a number of calls," said Mary Bush, an associate broker at Thompson-Brown Realty in Farmington Hills. Bush is the leasing agent for the owner of the Elfman

Building, Mohinder Chattha.

"I'm confident, given the appropriate amount of time, we can lease that space. As far as I'm concerned, it's the most prime retail site in downtown with its exposure and visibility on Grand River and Farmington."

A potential vacancy in the most

prominent spot in downtown is not the most ideal situation. However, city officials are not worried.

"No, I'm not concerned. It's a prime corner," Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff said. "I'd expect

See CLOSING, 2A

Father, son collar burglary suspects

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

Mirl Spencer, Farmington Hills deputy police chief, has worked with a few partners in his 35-year career as a police officer.

But few were as impressive as the West Bloomfield officer he teamed up with about 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, when they caught two teen-agers suspected of burglarizing a house in White Lake Township.

"He asked the right questions," said Spencer, referring to his partner. "He conducted himself well. He was quite professional."

The partner is also his son, Robert Spencer. And he was equally impressed.

"Dad's got tremendous instincts," said the younger Spencer, who was an Oakland County sheriff's deputy before joining the West Bloomfield police in August 1992. "And he can really move for a guy his age."

Father and son teamed up by accident. The younger Spencer, known as Bob, was getting ready to work on a jack at his father's house on Cedar Island Road, when his dad came home with a serious look on his face. "He's usually easy-going, so when I

saw that look I knew he was serious," said Bob. "We decided to check it out."

The serious look was prompted by two teen-agers the elder Spencer noticed on the way home. "They were coming out of a wooded area that usually doesn't have many visitors," he said. "They seemed nervous."

Acting on instinct, the plain-clothed Spencers approached the teen-agers and asked if they were lost. "They were nervous and evasive," said the elder Spencer. "It was obvi-



See TEAM, 4A Mirl Spencer

Remembering a friend

Bob Kourtakis, award-winning sports writer and author with ties to the Farmington area, is dead, a victim of AIDS.

His memory lives on, however, thanks to four friends who have established the Bob Kourtakis Memorial Scholarship. Beginning this year, the scholarship will provide \$500 to a deserving North Farmington High School senior.

The inaugural recipient, Lisa Bagley, received the scholarship Thursday evening during the school awards convocation. Bagley intends to study journalism at the University of Michigan.

Kourtakis was a 1964 graduate of North Farmington, as were close friends Jon Sonbay, Gary Krone, Craig Damiani and Jeff Poeszart. The four, all Farmington Hills residents, started the schol-

FARMINGTON FOCUS

arship with donations from Kourtakis' friends and family.

"We wanted to ease the financial burden of a student — and remember a friend," said Sonbay, a paralegal.

Kourtakis, who graduated from Michigan State University in 1988, wrote sports for newspapers in Westchester County, New York, and co-authored "Behind the Green Curtain," a controversial book about alleged corruption in the MSU football program.

Kourtakis, a hemophiliac, contracted AIDS through a contaminated blood transfusion, Son-

bay said. He died Nov. 24 at his home in Tarrytown, N.Y., at 27 years of age.

Survivors include his wife, Kim; mother, Robert; and brother, Tony.

All about the library

Attention anyone interested in learning more about the Farmington Community Library.

A library orientation program is planned.

At the Farmington Hills Branch on 12 Mile Road between Farmington and Orchard Lake roads, sessions are planned for 7:30-8:15 p.m.

Wednesday, June 8, and Monday, June 13. At the Farmington Branch on Liberty Street, sessions are planned for 2:15-3:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 7.

For more information on or to register, call the libraries at 553-0300 (Farmington Hills Branch), or 474-7770 (Farmington Branch).