

IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Moving about: Some not so unfamiliar faces will be in new places in the Farmington Public Schools this fall. /3A

Can we talk?: Public safety union representatives and Farmington officials meet today in an effort to kick-start stalled negotiations. /4A

Oh shoot!: At last Sunday's Farmington Hills Police Open House, you could try your hand at bringing down a bad guy. /13A

OPINION

Why change?: If it's not broken, don't fix it. That's good advice for those who want to change the way Farmington Hills' mayors are picked. /22A

Deserving kids: Just a few more words about the youngsters honored recently by Farmington Youth Assistance before they become Farmington-area history. /22A

Write on!: Letters, we get letters . . . on a variety of subjects. /22A

SPORTS

CYO champions: Farmington Our Lady of Sorrows is the Catholic grade school champion in baseball and softball. /1B

State tourney: Brother Rice tried to keep its baseball season going Tuesday in a Class A quarterfinal game. /1B

SUBURBAN LIFE

What to do: Quite a few suggestions are offered to help youngsters beat those nothing-to-do blues. /1C

ENTERTAINMENT

Family show: Big Apple Circus pitches its colorful tent at Meadow Brook. /8C

CREATIVE LIVING

Branching out: The Four Seasons Bonsai Club of Michigan is ready for its 21st annual show, which starts Friday and features demonstrations as well as displays. /1D

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Webb, Inch storm to board wins



The lightning, thunder and downpour Monday may have shocked some residents, but there were no surprises in the annual school election. Cathy Webb and Jack Inch won re-election in the Farmington District.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

On a night of severe weather and tornado sightings, there still wasn't enough of a fury to sweep away two

entrenched incumbents.

For trustees Cathy Webb and R. Jack Inch, Monday's Farmington Board of Education election was a breeze. Both were re-elected to four-

year terms on the school board.

Webb was the top vote-getter with 649; Inch was second with 501. Challenger Kenneth Stein finished a distant third with 279 votes.

A poor voter turnout — no doubt affected by thunderstorms that rumbled through the Farmington area Monday afternoon — provided the final anticlimactic wind in the election. Only 1,088 — just 2 percent — of the district's 54,532 registered voters cast ballots.

Webb and Inch figured to be difficult to unseat, which explained the lack of challengers and interest in the election.

Webb took eight of nine precincts, including the absentee balloting. She won a second four-year term handily.

As Webb's son, Matt, read the results aloud in the Farmington Hills City Hall lobby, well-wishers clapped.

See W18E, 7A

Adventures of the Hills DPW



JOHN STROMBLAND/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

All strung out: Mickey Glaser strings up his weed-eating device before going to work for the Farmington Hills DPW.

DPW: In demand for all seasons

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

They are at least jacks of all trades, and sometimes masters.

The Farmington Hills Department of Public Works is everywhere: keeping city parks and grass along roads mowed, making emergency road repairs and overseeing larger street projects and keeping the city's vehicles — "emergency and otherwise" — on the road.

"We have 292 miles of roadways to maintain," said DPW superintendent Dan Rooney. "That's the

most of any city in the county." With 38 employees, specialization has its limits. Although the DPW has mechanics, supervisors and road inspectors, just about everyone knows about snowstorms.

"I like it (plowing snow) for a change," said mechanic Fred Ort. "Of course, after 12 hours straight you've had enough for one day."

Ort, 30, recently won a state mechanics Olympics and has worked for the city for seven years.

"I had worked in a private garage before I started working for the

city," the Brighton resident said. "You (would) have to get work in and out in a hurry. Here, you can take the time to do a good job. I like that."

While Ort is tuning up one of the city's 176 vehicles, Bryan Pickworth, 25, of Westland supervises a mowing crew on a traffic island at the Halsted/10 Mile/M-102 interchange. The crew, composed of "seasonals" (usually college students) are mowing near a heavily

See DPW, 5A

Direct election of mayor opposed

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

They came wearing buttons that said "It works — DON'T change it." They spoke to the council and they were unanimous in their opposition to a change in how Farmington Hills elects its mayor.

A former mayor, former councilman, planning commissioners, Year 2000 Committee members and council watchers were unanimous in their opposition to the idea of the direct

HILLS

election of a mayor. The city council currently chooses the mayor and mayor pro tem at its first meeting in January.

Councilman Terry Sever, who has been pushing for the direct election of the mayor to be placed on the November ballot, volunteered to be the target of criticism on the issue and said the buttons reminded him of an earlier time, 21 years ago, when residents opposing cityhood came with signs and buttons.

"It seems like history repeats itself," he said. "The township had worked, but the citizens needed a better government."

Councilman Aldo Vagnozzi, whose recent decision to throw in with council members Cheryl Oliverio, Jon Grant, Nancy Bates and Sever for the needed number to place the issue on the ballot, said the change would not fundamentally change the way the city operates. It would, he said, end the bickering and politics involved when the council chooses the mayor and mayor pro tem for a one-year term.

In a letter to the council, planning commission chairwoman Jeri VanHouten said the current system allows "minimal opportunity for empire building."

Planning commission member Paul Blizman called it a bad move at a "cynical time" when public officials are already held in low esteem.

Former Mayor Fred Lichtman, a member of the city's charter commission and father of current Mayor Larry Lichtman, quipped that he was a "ghost of council's past" in chiding the council for embracing the idea.

"(It's of no significance (to change to a directly elected mayor), then the whole proposition is unproductive and useless."

The charter amendment would provide for six council members plus a mayor, who would be elected separately. Three of the council seats (four-year terms) and the mayor (two-year term) would be up for election every two years. The mayor would be limited to two terms.

See MAYOR, 2A

Tennis, anyone?

The Detroit Tennis & Squash Club on Drake Road in Farmington Hills will be the site of the Inaugural Silver's Super Seniors Tennis Tournament June 23-25.

Men and women 55 years of age and older are eligible. Entry fee is \$50 for singles and doubles. For more information, call the sponsoring Arthritis Foundation, Michigan Chapter, at 350-3030.

Sky diving, anyone?

Farmington's Jaycoes will host a sky-diving trip on Saturday, June 25. Those interested should meet at 7:45 a.m. outside the Old Orchard Movies on Orchard Lake Road north of 12 Mile.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

A sky-diving class begins at 9 a.m. that Saturday in Tecumseh. For more information, call 477-JCCS or 615-4452.

Softball, anyone?

South Farmington Baseball has been offering sports activities to youngsters for 25 years, and league officials plan to celebrate the silver anniversary with . . . a softball game.

The game is scheduled for 2 p.m. Saturday, June 25, at Knights of Columbus Field at Middlebelt and Nine Mile roads.

South Farmington officials are looking for past

board members, coaches, players and their parents who'd like to play. Past Miss Farmingtons are also being sought to participate.

Those interested should call Roxanne Fitzpatrick at 450-2295.

Memory Lane

From the June 10, 1954, edition of the Farmington Enterprise:

■ Earl Billing, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Billing, 21124 Middlebelt Road, was home from the Navy on a 30-day leave. He was to be honored at an open house.

■ Attraction at the Civic Theatre was "Bob Roy," starring Glynis Johns and Richard Todd.

■ A 1954 Buick Special with a V-8 engine was advertised at \$2,255 at Jim Burns Buick in Farmington.