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IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Rally 'round: There were lots of politicians, but not so many ordinary voters, at the inaugural Old Fashioned Political Rally Saturday in Farmington Hills. /3A

Think icy thoughts: The thermometer may read 90, but some Farmington Hills folks are asking you to think cool thoughts — as in ice arena. /3A

In with the old: There'll soon be new — an antique store — on downtown Farmington's main corner. /5A

OPINION

Survive and enjoy: A little common sense can help you enjoy the upcoming Farmington Founders Festival. /14A

Write on! Letters, we get letters, we get lots and lots of letters . . . on a variety of subjects. /14A

SPORTS

Softball stars: Farmington schools take lead roles when it comes to placing players on the all-area softball team. /1B

Diamond results: The South Farmington Barons had a successful July 4 weekend, winning another tournament championship. /1B

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Movies: Meet some teams which need "Angels in the Outfield." /9B

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Bevy of beauties: Meet the candidates who wish to represent the community as Miss Farmington 1994. /1C

Getting along: The Rev. Brewster Gere, this week's guest columnist, wonders why we can't all just get along. /1C

CREATIVE LIVING

Mixed media: Textiles by artist Barbara Moon Boertzel are among the works in the current exhibit at the Sybaris Gallery. /1D

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Farmington, police seek contract



BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Tentative dates have been set for an arbitration hearing between the Farmington public safety officers' union and the city.

Their calendars are marked, but they're hoping the day never comes.

Both sides met for a pre-arbitration hearing June 29 and set Nov. 8 and 10 as possible dates. It would mark the first time the city and police officers' union have gone to arbitration.

State law prohibits police officers and firefighters from striking. Arbitration is used to settle contract

disputes.

An informal meeting took place between the city and union representatives June 16. Both sides declined to discuss specifics, but the city did present another offer to the officers. It was rejected.

"Nothing was settled. We're still kind of in a holding pattern," said James Madigan, president of the Farmington Police Officers Association. "We're proceeding with an arbitration date . . .

"We're still talking. I don't know where we're heading."

The informal meeting was the first

since contract talks broke off in October. No other meetings have been scheduled.

City Manager Frank Lauhoff said he hopes a settlement can be reached before November.

"In terms of formal negotiations, this is the last," Lauhoff said. "The city is not intending to make any more offers."

Officers have been without a contract since Dec. 31. Wages and pension benefits are main sticking points.

See ARBITRATION, 2A

Showing some Enterprise



ALAN HEMLEY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Down for a dunk: Enterprise Rent-A-Car General Manager Mike Kane goes into the tank for a good cause — Farmington Neighborhood House — June 29 during his company's benefit affair. Local insurance and auto dealership personnel were invited to dunk the Enterprise folks. About \$250 was raised, an Enterprise spokeswoman said.

City tries to steer road tax

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

The city of Farmington is not leaving anything to chance with its proposed road improvement millage.

Between now and November, city officials plan to meet with several organizations. They have also sought the help of a public relations firm to trumpet the proposal.

Officials are asking residents to approve a 1.6-mill tax increase Nov. 1.

Money raised — estimated at \$8 million over 20 years — would be used to fix and maintain city streets, which officials say are aging. They say the plan would also eliminate the need for special assessments.

"It's up to us to get the information out," City Manager Frank Lauhoff said.

"I don't look at it as selling anything. I look at it as getting the information out and letting people make the decision. I think if they understand it, they'll agree with it."

Bottom line to many residents is cost.

A mill equals one dollar of tax for every \$1,000 of state-qualified property value. That means a resident with a \$75,000 house would pay \$60 more a year if the plan passes.

A person with a \$100,000 home would pay \$80 more and the owner of a \$150,000 home \$120 additionally.

City officials say those costs pale compared to special assessments, which can range from \$7,000 to \$9,000 for a homeowner over a 10-year period.

"It's a big burden for someone to take on with a fixed income," Lauhoff said.

Special assessments are likely to increase due to rising costs for road repairs.

Planning Commission estimates indicate \$750,000 in road repairs will be needed in the next two years.

State-shared revenues are also used to pay for road repairs. This a month ago not expected to keep up with increasing costs, Lauhoff said.

Lauhoff and City Council members

See ROADS, 5A

City plays host to family-oriented fun July 10-17

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington Founders Festival turns 30 this year, but finding any new wrinkles is tough.

The festival, which takes place July 10-17, has always offered a steady course of family-oriented fun. This year is no different.

"We try to keep it family oriented,"

said Jody Soronen, director of the sponsoring Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce. "That's what we feel the people here like."

Attendance corresponds with that prevailing thought.

More than 85,000 people turned up

FOUNDERS FESTIVAL

at last year's event, which includes the large crowd at the downtown parade.

This year's parade — from the Grand River Target store to Farmington Road — starts 10 a.m. Saturday, July 16.

Information about the 30th Annual Founders Festival will be available in the Farmington Observer July 11.

Tradition is the cornerstone for the festival's success.

Activities such as Kids Day in the Park, a bed race and pie baking contest are designed to appeal to a wide

See FESTIVAL, 2A

WLZ raises \$104,000

The take was in six figures — \$104,000 to be exact.

That's how much money radio station WLZ-FM, located in Farmington Hills, raised for the Michigan Chapter of the Leukemia Society of America through the fifth annual WLZ/Cable & Kelly Radiothon for Leukemia.

The radiothon, hosted by WLZ personalities Ken Calvert and Ed Kelly, ran 28 hours.

In addition to the money raised by auctioning off one-of-a-kind entertainment and collectible packages and pledges for instant requests, the radiothon was assisted by two WLZ listeners, Randy Sheet (aka Rocking Randy) and Jeff Koppitoch.

Sheet raised money by rocking for 28-straight hours in a rocking chair. He co-wrote \$781 in donations by rocking at Larry's 7, eleven at 12:

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Mills and Orchard Lake roads in Farmington Hills. Koppitoch bowled 23-straight hours with a high game of 286 and raised more than \$3,000 in pledges at Timberlane in Eastpointe.

Swinging firefighters

Play ball . . . and raise money for the National Institute of Burn Medicine.

The Farmington Hills Firefighters Benefit Softball Tournament will be 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday, July 9, at Novi's Power Park on 10 Mile Road east of Novi High School.

Two Farmington Hills teams will play against other firefighter-staffed squads. The tournament

has raised more than \$12,000 for the NIBN, fire officials said.

Calling all kids

A swap meet for youngsters is next up on the Summer Fun Series in downtown Farmington.

The event will be 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 13, under the big tent in the parking lot of the Downtown Center. Kids 15 years of age and under will be able to sell or swap games and toys.

Pre-registration is required. Call 615-4345.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21558 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336; faxed to 477-5732; or dropped off at the newspaper office.