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IN THE PAPER

TODAY

It's a deal: Two Farmington Hills women sell what others have thrown out, and a charity benefits. /3A

Asked and answered: People called in questions about the proposed \$6 million ice arena in Farmington Hills during a recent cable TV show. /5A

Something extra: Fantasy Car Raffle ticket buyers will get something extra this year when they spend \$100 for a chance at a new Corvette or \$30,000 cash. /6A

Calling it quits: A trustee on the Clarenceville Board of Education has announced her resignation. /8A

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Sidewalk Sales: It's the big week for clearance sales at almost every mall and main street shopping area. Check the Added Attractions calendar for a complete listing. /9A

Fall preview: Let's go backstage at Hudson's annual Fash Bash to see what's new for fall and winter. /9A

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Rib ticklers: Find out who won our Best Homemade Barbecue Sauce contest. /1B

SPORTS

New at North: Brian Swinehart has been named boys varsity basketball coach at North Farmington High School. /1C

Quite an achievement: Robert DeMattia will receive the 1994 Mercy Achievement Award at the Meg Mallon golf outing. /1C

SPECIAL SECTIONS

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Many give Proposal A an F



By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Telephones have been ringing off the hook at the Farmington and Farmington Hills city offices with residents' questions and complaints about summer tax bills. "It's been continuous and crazy," said Hills assessor Dean Babb.

"There is a lot of confusion about tax bills. A lot of people expected big-time savings and didn't get it. But, like I've tried to explain to people, you got what you voted for."

Babb is referring to Proposal A, which passed by a 2-1 margin statewide in March. The measure, which was strongly supported by Gov. John

Engler, shifted part of the tax burden from property taxes to sales tax. But many residents expected a much lower property tax rate, Babb said.

Fatoy Cantrell, Farmington's city clerk/treasurer, said she expected the deluge of phone calls she received from residents.

"Absolutely," she said. "I was expecting a lot of calls, which we got. In fact, it hasn't been as bad the last few days as I would have thought."

Farmington summer tax bills were sent out June 30, she said. Residents not only complained about amount of their tax cut, but also about the bill,

which many found confusing.

Babb and Cantrell said the new bills have a different format and a faint white line divides the dollar and cent columns.

"This really smells bad," said one Hills resident.

Cathy Ryder, a mother of three, said it was not a misunderstanding by residents, but a "hoodwinking" by politicians and schools.

Ryder, whose two younger children are in parochial schools by choice, said she was a school board member

See TAXES, 4A

This senior's now a U.S. citizen



ANN HEMLEY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

took the oath: Farmington's Martha Turner: "I feel exalted. Exalted — that's the word." She became a citizen during July Fourth ceremonies in Detroit.

Resident Scot her U.S. citizenship — finally

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

At age 88, Martha Turner finally became a U.S. citizen July 4, and that means many things.

She can vote, say the pledge with pride and wave the stars and stripes with even more conviction.

Better yet, added the native of Currie, Scotland: "Now I can go out

to town and speak my mind."

One suspects that hasn't been a problem before.

Turner, who lives in Farmington Place senior citizen residence, proudly states her civic duty in this country didn't waver despite what her passport might have said.

She was a founding member and past president of the PTA while her

late husband, Samuel Barr Turner, was a trustee on the Farmington Board of Education in the 1960s.

She's been involved in the Red Cross, St. Martin's Episcopal Church and Eastern Star.

In her 60s, Turner became a proponent of senior citizen issues. She wouldn't mind relinquishing that role in her 80s.

With all her community involvement, the question remains: What took so long to become a U.S. citizen?

There's a story behind that. Turner proceeds to narrate in a slight burr betraying the tongue of the tartan land.

See CITIZEN, 4A

8-year-old helps cops get robbery suspects' number

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Observant, quick-thinking and anonymous. That's the 8-year-old boy who helped Farmington Hills police officers arrest two Detroit men in connection with an armed robbery July 6.

Edward Spinks Jr., 44, and Stephen Kately, 25, both pleaded innocent to charges of armed robbery, conspiracy to commit unarmed robbery, illegal possession of a firearm and possession of a shortened barrel shotgun. If convicted, they face up to 15 years on the first two counts and

An 8-year-old boy who saw the man running to the Bronco took down the license plate number and got in touch with Farmington Hills police.

up to five years in prison on the other two counts.

As the 29-year-old manager of the Shell gas station at Grand River and Haggerty got into her car at 3:51 p.m. with a bank bag containing \$17,124.25 in cash for deposit, a man jumped into the car and was able to wrestle the money away from her after

a struggle, in which the woman kicked and punched the man.

He then ran behind the station past the car wash and got into a 1993 black Ford Bronco. The two men then drove west on M-102.

But an 8-year-old boy who saw the man running to the Bronco took down the license plate number and got in

touch with Farmington Hills police.

Officer Rick Norman was the first to spot the suspected Bronco on I-696 near the Grand River exit and drove west, but he couldn't locate it. He then radioed officer Robert Plotke, who saw the Bronco driving east on I-696 as Plotke was getting onto the freeway at the Orchard Lake interchange. A traffic slowdown allowed the two officers to catch up with the Bronco near Franklin Road.

See ARRESTS, 4A

A parade with purpose

The Farmington Founders Festival Parade must be a good place to pick up girls. Just ask Gerry Clark. He latched on to a gal named Doty there in 1968 and they've been together ever since.

Gerry Clark was riding a horse in the parade in '68, when the Founders Festival was just a couple of years old. His parents owned the old Founders Riding Stables at Nice Hills and Halet, and horses were a big part of their lives. Someone kept telling Doty that Gerry thought she was cute and why didn't she just hop on that horse with him.

It took Gerry about half the parade to talk Doty into it, the story goes, but at about Grand River and Power she finally agreed. They've been in the

FARMINGTON FOCUS

saddle together ever since.

They were married July 16, 1968, and will celebrate their 26th wedding anniversary at the festival parade on Saturday, July 16, of course.

The Clarks are spectators at most Founders Festival parades — they love to watch it from the spot where she first said yes — but this year they'll be part of it.

Gerry recently bought a restored blue 1965 Chevrolet pickup truck. He'll be driving it, wife at his side, in Saturday's parade.

The Clarks have been Farmington Hills residents since the early 1970s. Gerry is a truck driver. Doty is an underwriter for an insurance company. They are the parents of two boys, Brian and

Jason.

"Pops is a big guy, but just a big softie at heart," said Brian Clark, "and he sure is still crazy about Mom."

"I guess I'm sort of like my Dad, being a big softie. I want everyone in Farmington to know how great my folks are and how proud they make my brother and me for still being happy and together after all these years."

"I'm married and have a son, so that makes them grandparents, too. And we owe it all that 1965 Founders Festival Parade."

The 1994 edition of the Festival Parade begins at 10 a.m.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington, 48336; faxed to 477-9722; or dropped off at the newspaper office.