

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Artists take note: The Farmington Hills Police Department will hold a poster competition for Farmington-area public and parochial high school art students. /3A

Hours on ice: The Farmington Hills City Council has approved rates and times for a new ice arena. /5A

Traffic travail: Motorists could lose a little Freedom in a plan to alleviate congestion at the Grand River, 10 Mile and Halsted intersection. /6A

Ask the voters: The Clarenceville Board of Education tonight is expected to approve putting two tax proposals on the June 12 ballot. /7A

COMMUNITY LIFE

Resurrection: When the Rev. Mark Sommers came to North Farmington Community Church, there were only 21 members. /11A
Homework: Columnist Lynn Jahncke, a Farmington Hills resident, gives home schooling high marks. /11A

OPINION

Better and harder: Oakland Community College officials should regroup and try again for a millage hike. /18A

LET'S GO!

Symphony Jr.: A suburban civic symphony is getting ready for a children's concert to be presented April 2. /1B

Pass the popcorn: Tell us about your "Circle of Friends" to win a special evening out with your friends. /1B

SPORTS

Baseball outlook: Harrison High was playing well at the end of last season and hopes to continue when the 1995 campaign begins. /1C

Swim standouts: This year's All-Observer team includes a number of Farmington high school athletes. /5C

INDEX

Building/Business	1F	Real estate	..E-F
Calendar	..1D	Creative Living	..1D
Classifieds	..E-G	Crossword	..8E
Auto	..E-G	Let's Go	..1E
Employment	..F-I	Optician	..1B-19A
Index	..7E, 8F	Sports	..10

HERE'S HOW TO REACH US

Newroom: 810-477-8480
Newroom Fax: 810-477-8722
Sports: 313-883-2141
Reader Comment Line: 313-883-2043
Classified Advertising: 313-881-0900
Display Advertising: 313-881-2300
Home Delivery: 313-881-0800
Cable/TV Weekly: 313-883-2182

Fire aimed at Hills family



Fire's aftermath: Farmington Hills firefighter Al Ellis clears away debris surrounding what might be evidence at the site of a serious house fire on Glengrove Monday.

Dr. Michael Hartman and his family were lucky to escape unharmed from their Farmington Hills house, which caught fire early Monday morning. Officials are treating the fire as an arson.

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER



Gray clouds cast an eerie darkness above the charred roof and boarded up windows of Michael Hartman's Farmington Hills house, with the arson reward sign leaving the only clue as to why.

Hartman, a podiatrist, was able to get his wife, two young children and pets out of the \$300,000 house on Glengrove after the sinister blaze was started in the early Monday-morning hours.

"There's no doubt that this was arson," said Farmington Hills Fire Chief Richard Marinucci. "There were two gas cans with wicks on the front porch. They were melted by the heat."

The fire, which woke Hartman at about 3:30 a.m., quickly spread to the roof. Hartman and his wife were able to climb the stairs to their children's upstairs bedrooms and get them to safety.

"They were lucky," Marinucci said. "If the foyer had been on fire, they might not have made it upstairs."

Marinucci said the fire department's investigation is nearly complete and the Hills police department is also looking into the case.

"Given the hour at which the fire occurred, it's not likely that the arsonist didn't plan on hurting that family," he said. "That's a pretty serious situation."

Deputy Fire Chief Pete Baldwin, who arrived at 3:35 a.m., said the entire roof was ablaze at that time. Firefighters were able to keep the fire from spreading to neighboring properties.

They also were able to remove some valuables, like an antique piano, with minimum damage. After a search, Baldwin was even able to find one of the family's cats, Cleo, alive and in good shape.

"When I moved some burned debris behind the toilet, there it was," he said. "It was in fairly good shape considering."

'All that wood'

But the combination of having to remove the ceiling and the great

See FIRE, 2A

Farmington students administer class acts

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Community service and high school students: When combined, they can accomplish more than the average bear.

Some 128 high schoolers turned up on a sunny Saturday to share a ray of kindness with their community. Volunteer service day March 18 was organized by the Student Roundtable and coordinated through the Farmington Hills Volunteer Center.

Their raised hands scrubbed pots and pans, picked up litter, tapped on piano keys, and reached out to those who are often lonely.

"It felt good to help out for a good

cause like Meals On Wheels," said Harrison High freshman Greg Slinenko, who helped clean 200 pots and pans, "and I met some friends there from other schools."

"I want to do it again." So does Harrison senior Jodie Barringer, who was one of 10 students who worked at the Hamilton House. The assisted living center on Drake Road cares for people with Alzheimer's disease.

Students painted residents' nails, sang songs with them and played games.

"They wanted us to come back."

See CLASS, 2A



Bagging it: Farmington-area students (from left) Melissa Lindgrin, Dianna Boyer and Andrea Platt pick up trash in downtown Farmington Saturday.

JOHN STORMAND/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Potential board candidates slow to commit

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

So far, three people have taken out nominating petitions for the Farmington School Board. The June election is far from a triple threat, though.

Michael Shipce and Patty Alspach are still weighing whether or not to run for one open seat on the board of education. Both potential candidates are on hold for different reasons. Filing deadline is APRIL 10.

"This is one consideration for Shipce who is an attorney, 56, too, is who also runs."

Shipce, 38, previously served on the board from 1976-89, having the distinction of being one of the youngest ever elected at 18.

"I want to make sure there are people running"

Michael Shipce and Patty Alspach are still weighing whether or not to run for one open seat on the board of education. Both potential candidates are on hold for different reasons.

who support progressive education and openness," Shipce said, "things the district has worked on in the past."

Farmington High Parent Advisory Council president Linda Eberg has already announced her candidacy.

Alspach is reluctant to commit, mainly because of what the job entails. The Farmington Hills parent has been outspoken, calling for the district to raise academic standards.

"You wouldn't believe all you have to do to get ready to run," said Alspach, who is a PTA member and on the district's Mission 2007 planning team. "I can't believe I sound that wishy-washy, but it's a real hard decision to make."

Alspach also is unsure her back-to-basics message is a majority-held opinion. She appears to like her role as an "advocate."

Last year, back-to-basics candidate Doug Swistkowski dropped out of the race.

"I'm not running unless I'm following through," Alspach said.