

Farmington Observer

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IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Not mandated: A program that would've had students work in the community as a graduate requirement has been put on hold. /2A

'Posting' a winner: A Farmington Hills artist has won the 1995 Detroit Institute of Arts "Art & Flowers" poster competition. /7A

DEAR to their hearts: Warner Middle School in Farmington Hills participated in the recent DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) program. /8A

TASTE

Passover planning: Paul Kohn of Quality Kosher Catering in Southfield understands that preparing for Passover is an awesome task. /1B

Uncorking the best: The wines of Guigal are famous worldwide as some of the very best from France's Rhone Valley. /1B

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Spring filings: Rabbits, blooming gardens and Easter activities abound as the malls welcome spring. /4B

Where Can I Find? Mr. Tile comes through for everyone who has ever remodeled their bathroom. /4B

SPORTS

Defending champ: Harrison returns nearly every member of the softball team that won the Western Lakes title. /1C

Hoop standouts: The top boys basketball players in Observerland are featured in today's sports section. /2C

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Rate increase: Due to the rising cost of newsprint and ink, the price of your Farmington Observer will increase beginning today, April 3. The paper will cost 76 cents at newsstands and stores. Those who receive Observer home delivery will pay 40 cents per copy. As usual, your Observer will continue to carry local news and advertising along with valuable money-saving coupons.

Board, unions post double-play



BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

After a judge struck down an existing three-year contract, the Farmington Board of Education and its employee unions have worked out separate deals covering six years total. The board ratified the agreements at its regular meeting March 27.

Teachers, custodial and support personnel keep their 4-percent raises granted three years ago. The Farmington Education Association also agreed to a new three-year pact that calls for 2-percent annual increases. Also, the board can select health insurance carriers for 900 union employees. A lawsuit filed by the district

over medical coverage led Oakland County Circuit Judge David Breck to strike down contracts originally agreed to in 1992. The union's preferred carrier, Michigan Education Special Services Association, admitted it made a \$4 million mistake in a price quote for health insurance three years ago. MESSA's initial quote — which the district had asked be confirmed at the time — was factored into the unions receiving 4-percent raises, board members contended. The judge agreed and nullified the

contracts. Breck's actions inadvertently expedited negotiations toward a future deal. Contracts voided were set to expire in June. "Obviously, it's to the benefit to all parties to have a three-year contract," board President Cathy Webb said. "For the employees, it gives them stability and security and gives them the ability to plan. I think it's the same for the district." Added Webb: "Really, none of us

See CONTRACT, 2A

... and the clothes smell wonderful'



SHARON LEMMEL/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Out to dry: Denise Moore, a Farmington Hills homemaker, gathers laundry off her clothes line Monday as the breeze blows. She never replaced her dryer when it broke two years ago, but said she doesn't mind hanging laundry. "I love it," she said. "It's relaxing . . . and the clothes smell wonderful when they come off the line."

Fox leaving, her legacy will stay behind

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

The historic home Jean Fox has called home in Farmington Hills is cluttered with boxes, furniture and memories. But Fox, who is moving to Washington, D.C., to live with her son John and his family, is not one to dwell on the past, no matter how highly she

reverses it. "I'm beyond the age of discretion," she says when asked how old she is. That's Jean Fox. As she looks out the drawing room window of the historic Moseman home in Blidestone Woods, Fox thought back on an era dating back to her arrival in Farmington Hills in 1968, "the township days." "If you don't get involved in public life, you can't get your thing done," she says. With high, white-hair, animated gestures and a commanding style, Fox says she's going to Washington "just to be a grandmother."

'You just do the best you can with life as it comes at you. You don't win 'em all.'

Jean Fox

Most who know her, and many people do, would find it hard to believe that this hard-driving woman who has championed history, education, politics and park preservation, could define herself in one role. And Fox, who will give up her beloved gardening and be content to enjoy a "maintenance-free" garden in her son's spacious D.C. digs, concedes there is a lot for her in the nation's capital. And Jean Fox is not one to concede much. Proud of her past That has not always won her friends, but it has influenced people. Recounting her newspaperman fa-

ther's experiences covering World War I and Versailles, Fox is just as proud of her time in her native Indiana at the farm and newspaper. "My father used to say, 'I worked hard to earn my enemies,'" she says, shaking her fist appreciatively in imitation of her late father Floyd McCall. As a newspaper editor and publisher with the Southfield Sun (1956-74), the Farmington Forum, which she founded (1967-74) and the Novi Sun-Forum, (1972-74), Fox used her independence and newspaper heritage to advance. But the grandmother used her academic prowess (she has a Master's from Indiana and is a Phi Beta Kappa) and her ability to influence people for the public good in helping Farmington Hills create a non-contiguous historic district. The author of several articles and monographs of history, Fox turned that passion to action in helping preserve history and the natural beauty of the area.



Jean Fox
Off to Washington

She has been active in politics.
See FOX, 3A

Wow! Council agrees on Timbercrest roads

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills Councilman Aldo Vagnozzi's assertion that he would vote for approval of architectural plans for the controversial Timbercrest development floored Councilman Terry Sever — literally. The action came at the March 27 regular meeting. The council has already approved the site plan for the 97-acre project at Middlebelt and 12 Mile. It also approved the road improvement agreement, which Vagnozzi opposed. "It meets the requirements under the agreement," Vagnozzi said. At that point, Sever fell over backward in his chair. The councilman came up laughing. Neither

he nor the potted plant behind him seemed the worse for wear. The city approved the elevations for the shopping center on the corner of the project, which will account for 7.25 acres. A residential brick on the front and a similar type of brickwork for the rear of the buildings was approved. Bob Carson, the attorney representing the developer, Jonna Realty Ventures, said the landscaping will also be beautiful and include much of the commercial part from the residential area. When the addition of people to the architect's rendering of the buildings was noted by council members, Carson quipped, "two or three children have been born" since the project was initiated. The council's approval of road improvements

would include \$320,000 in federal grant money through the Michigan Department of Transportation, \$118,000 of city money and at least \$212,000 of the developer's money for road improvements. Vagnozzi voted against approval because, he said, the city was paying too much. The improvements would include storm sewers, sidewalks, and road improvements at the entrance to the residential area and to 12 Mile and Middlebelt. Carson said the project didn't need Michigan Department of Natural Resources approval because the wetlands on the property were not affected. In other action, the council:

See COUNCIL, 2A