

Farmington Observer

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IN THE PAPER TODAY

Up from Florida: Farmington police returned Friday from Florida with a man suspected in a fraud case. /3A

Fight aftermath: Harrison students and staff see a fight that left three girls injured as an isolated incident, not as an indication of trouble for the school. /6A

On to Meadow Brook! The squeaking wheel got the grease when it came to picking a site for Walled Lake Western's graduation. /8A

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Business casual: Fashion experts explain how to look casual without looking sloppy. /10A

Down On Mainstreet: Celebrate 20 years of selling stationery with Susan Sivak of Barbara's Paper Bag. /10A

TASTE

Easter tradition: For some families, HoneyBaked Hams are an Easter tradition. The company is family owned and operated. /1B

Super supper: Home on the ranch, Bob Ray of Birmingham enjoys creating dishes which reflect a taste of the Old West. /1B

SPORTS

Swim champions: Two Farmington Hills women were winners in recent age-group swim competition. /1C

Track victory: Farmington Harrison began the girls dual-meet season with a win over Livonia Stevenson. /1C

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Only 1 in race as deadline nears



BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington School Board election is shaping up to be an M&M race — maybe and maybe not. Seven people have taken out petitions. Of those, only one potential candidate has said she's definitely running. Farmington resident Linda

Ernberg has filed her petition with the district office. Filing deadline is 4 p.m. today. The election is June 12. One seat is open after Susan Lightner announced she's not running for re-election. That leaves six others who have not

filed or have said they don't intend to run. The ones who said they will likely not run are: Patti Alspach, a Hillside Elementary parent and frequent critic of the district's curriculum. "I know what it is I need to do," Alspach said, "and you can't do it as a board member." Michael Shipice, a Farmington Hills attorney and former school board member. He was undecided Thursday, but added he'll more than likely not run. Kevin Volpe, a Farmington Hills

SCHOOLS

resident who said he was thinking about it, "but if I can't put 100 percent into it . . . I'd rather not." Then there are those who are unknown, uncommitted or were unreachable. They include: Vicki Barnett, Farmington Hills parent and school financing advocate. Barnett is involved in Coalition of Michigan Parents and two years

See RACE, 5A

A grand vision for Grand River



Main street makeover: ETU student Bonnie Wolfe of Southfield shows off her ideas. Her project involved research from the Farmington Observer as well as an interview with a member of the Masonic Temple.

Students draw up new face for corridor

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

This idea was presented on letters and cardboard, but they built several dimensions in the collective imagination. Lawrence Technological University architecture students presented results of their Grand River Corridor study Thursday at the Farmington

Training Center. City officials, business people and residents were impressed. Professor Will Allen's day and night classes worked on the project, which allowed the corridor's potential to be tapped through a student's eyes. They worked on the class assignment in Farmington from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Farmington Beautification Commission members Maria Miller and Eugene Okyle helped coordinate the project with the university. City officials were especially grateful for the students' efforts. Each one was given a letter of thanks by Mayor Arnie Cameron. "Yes, we have an exciting and a community we'll have for a long

time," Campbell said, "and that's a vision." Mindful of the area's historical nature, students put a new face on the corridor. Areas surrounding The Winery, the Masonic Temple, and Warner Historical Museum received overhauls in the conception.

See VIEWON, 3A

Parents rap plan to scrap Early 5s

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Some parents are upset with a Farmington Public Schools' recommendation that it discontinue a program for pre-kindergarten students. Early 5s allows students who are not developmentally ready for kindergarten time to adjust. Citing inconsistencies with district goals and other reasons, a committee has called for the program's elimination.

A parent wasn't included on the committee. Many, including those whose children have gone through the program, voiced their opposition at a board of education study session April 4. "I felt like they had their mind made up, and they're trying to railroad this through without parent knowledge and involvement," said Marie McConnell, whose son, Jonathan, 5½, is in Early 5s. "It's a done deal." No parents were on the committee, school officials admitted. However, they were involved in the initial study commissioned by the district in 1991. This study was done primarily as a

follow-up, said assistant superintendent for Instructional Services Judy White. Meetings of principals with parents were also held a month ago at Fairview and Alameda. Superintendent Bob Masfield said. Said parent Kimberly Cove: "We weren't notified about anything." "We always prefer to have parents involved," board President Cathy Webb said. "Whether it was a time issue or an oversight . . . we would prefer it. But I don't think it would have drastically affected the outcome of the report."

See PARENTS, 6A Judy White

Committee to tune into antennae safety concerns

BY BILL COUFFANT
STAFF WRITER

Mark and Dobra Rowe found a house they really wanted in West Bloomfield. But four days before the closing, she had to call off the deal. That came after some research about the potential hazards of radio frequency radiation. The new house was near antennae used for telephone communication. Rowe's research into the health effects of those antennae had made her decide against being within less than a half-mile of one. So Rowe, her husband and daughters Amanda and Lilah settled in Farmington Hills — only to

find that Cellular One had plans to build a tower in the subdivision commons. At the request of neighbors, she lent her research efforts to the question of their safety. Less than a year after that subdivision, Rolling Oaks, rejected the proposed antennae, Rowe is still trying to get answers. "That's what is disturbing," she said. "We (subdivision residents) didn't start with fear, just questions. But now there is fear (about the dangers of antennae, power lines and other sources of radio frequency radiation)." Although industry proponents of the antennae

have pointed out their benefits as to convenience for personal and business use, and fire and police professionals as well as citizens have benefited from cellular 9-1-1 calls, questions from many quarters remain about the technology. And Rowe, a Yale graduate with a doctorate in business from the University of Michigan, said those questioning the safety of cellular technology are not just "concerned local residents," but experts from the fields of medicine, engineering and various agencies of the federal government.

See SAFETY, 6A