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SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

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IN THE PAPER TODAY

Teacher power: School bells are ringing to honor a custodian and three teachers in the Farmington District. /3A

So who's running?: The Walled Lake school race drew nine hopefuls. In the Clarenceville District, only one of four candidates will be disappointed. /4A,5A

Old Glory going up: They raised another American flag in the Farmington area to commemorate the end of World War II 50 years ago. /5A

COMMUNITY LIFE

Eggexpressions of Easter: Forget bonnets. Local residents have taken to the trees for the upcoming holiday. /9A

Educationese spoken here: Reporter Larry O'Connor translates those educator phrases that seem like a foreign language. /9A

OPINION

Go figure! An open seat, a retiring incumbent . . . and only two challengers show up for the Farmington Board of Education election. /14A

LET'S GO!

Going full circle: "Circle of Friends" contest winners enjoy a night out and share their story of friendship. /1B

Curtain up: Talented local youngsters are cast in the musical version of "Heidi" at the Marquis Theatre. /1B

SPORTS

Clean sweep: Bev Cornell won every event she entered in the masters swimming state championships. /1C

Keeping track: Farmington track athletes put their skills to the test Tuesday in dual-meet competition. /1C

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Moving experience: The family still operates this Farmington Hills moving company. /1F

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Council postpones SMART vote



BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington Hills City Council will have to decide whether to let city residents vote on a tax increase to support the struggling SMART bus system, or opt out of the decision, and the service.

County Commissioners Donn Wolf and David Moffitt, who represent the Farmington area, told the council that the Suburban Mobility Authority on Regional Transportation board has not given them current budget information while asking them to support a .33-mill increase to bail out the

system and make some improvements.

"They want a third of a mill and they haven't given us a budget for the last two years," Moffitt said.

Both commissioners complained about the last-minute pitch for the millage proposal by SMART with little in the way of details. Wolf said he opposes the tax but wants county voters to have an opportunity to decide the issue. Moffitt does not favor having the issue on the June 6 ballot for Farmington Hills.

"With all the money we're spending

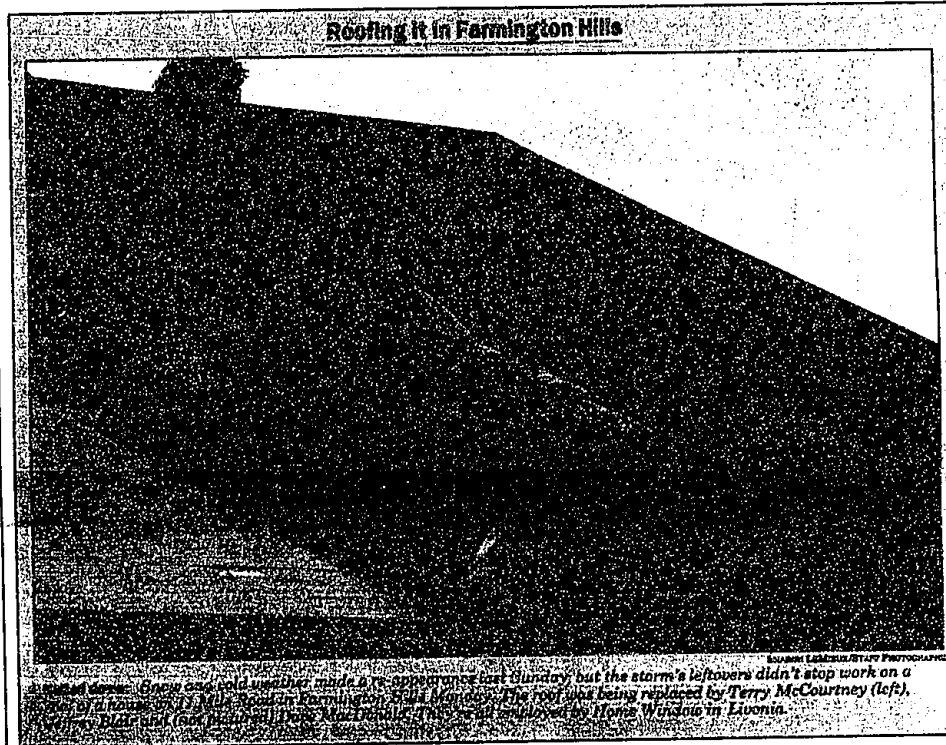
on SMART, we could buy used cars for the people that use it, seriously," Moffitt said.

Wolf said Oakland County is a donor county when it comes to transportation, getting back 70 cents on the dollar, and added that he wants to see the system work.

"We would have another authority if it (the proposal) fails," he said.

Moffitt said user fees should support the system.

See TRANSPORT, 2A



Roofing it in Farmington Hills. Workers on the roof of a new building in Livonia. The roof was being replaced by Terry McCourtney (left), and Bill and (right) in the aftermath of a storm that hit the area last Sunday. Photo by Steve Leitzel for the Farmington Observer.

2 players pitch for school board seat

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington School Board race suddenly has double the intrigue. Jennifer Levin has entered the fray as a second candidate in the June 12 school election. She filed Monday morning before the 4 p.m. deadline. Levin joins Farmington resident Linda Enberg on the ballot for one open seat. Incumbent Susan Lightner announced she is not seeking a fourth term, which was expected to bring out more candidates. When incumbent Jack Cotton announced he wasn't running two years ago, nine people turned out in a hotly contested race. Bobbie Feldman and David York won, unseating incumbent Helen Ditzhary.

That's not the case this year. Seven people took out petitions, but Enberg and Levin were the only ones to file before Monday's deadline. Several potential candidates didn't commit or bowed out. "I want to get involved in the community and I want to contribute to the school system," said Levin, who has lived in Farmington Hills for a year. Her married name is Tappet. This is Levin's first attempt at elective office. She works in the legal department for City Management Corp. in Detroit. The 1987 graduate of Southfield-Lathrup High has her bachelor's degree from Michigan State University and a law degree from Detroit College

of Law. Her mother was involved in the PTA, Levin said. Otherwise, her family is not involved in education professionally. She's not ready to state her position on the issue yet, only to say she is for quality education and the need to provide it "at a reasonable cost." Levin has not attended school board meetings, but has watched them on cable TV. "I think being a young person, I can bring a younger person's perspective to the board," said Levin, 25, who doesn't have children. "I think I can help link those people who don't have children to the school system." A less-than-crowded field doesn't surprise outgoing trustee Susan

Lightner. The 12-year board member had talked to several of those considering a run for the board. Many were concerned about the time involved, Lightner said. "I think that was a big factor for people," she said. Lightner also thinks those who pulled petitions but didn't follow through might run in the future. On the political front, a board of education seat isn't akin to one on a county commission or a city council. "It's never been a stepping stone to bigger office," Lightner said. "It generally attracts people interested in education, period."

Aldo Vagnozzi to run for Hills mayor

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Former Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi wants to try the top city council post again and in the process become the city's first elected mayor. Vagnozzi, who was elected by the city council to the post for 1991, announced his plans to run for the newly created, directly-elected, four-year mayor's job. "I think leadership is the number-one issue," said Councilman Vagnozzi, 69. "I've got a new pair of shoes and I plan to start walking later this month." Vagnozzi, who easily won re-election to a four-year city council term in 1993, has made door-to-door campaigning his trademark.

It has been effective for the father of four and grandfather of six. And should he lose, Vagnozzi would still have two years remaining on his current city council term. Vagnozzi joined four other council members, Terry Sever, Nancy Bates, Jon Grant and Sheryl Oliverio, in embracing the idea of a directly-elected mayor. Voters liked the idea by a 2-1 margin last November. "I do see the mayor as a different role," he said of the job. "The biggest need is to assure residents they are going to have a voice in their own neighborhoods." Vagnozzi would continue to push for early notification of residents affected by projects in the city.

"I believe the residents who are going to be affected by decisions of city government should be advised of those plans early enough so they can have timely input," he said. Vagnozzi, who also served on the Farmington Board of Education in the 1970s, pointed to the innovation of allowing residents to call-in questions and comments to be read during regular council sessions as a way to increase citizen participation in the governing process. Among the accomplishments directly tied to Vagnozzi's initiatives were tackling Detroit Edison's

See ELECTION, 3A