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Farmington Observer

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SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Who's the mayor?: Why it's Jo Anne McShane, the top vote-getter in the recent Farmington City Council election. She becomes the city's second woman mayor. /3A

Shoppers not slowed: Pickets marching on behalf of striking newspaper employees had little effect on business at a Farmington Hills location. /4A

Racial complaint: A woman is suing a local property management company, claiming she was fired because she is black. /6A

Government takeover: Students will swarm over the Farmington Hills City Hall on Student Government Day. /9A

TASTE

Winter warm-up: Wake up to a bowl of hot oatmeal. It's good for you and chases chills away. /1B
Holiday tables: Tips for decorating your table for festive dinners with items you already have. /1B

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Candy queen: The Sydney Bogg Candy Company's new owner keeps the 60-year-old Detroit-based business going strong. /6B

Holiday help: Martha Stewart's magazine staff demonstrates decorating tricks at a Hudson's workshop. /6B

SPORTS

A very big game: A state Class AA football championship was at stake when Greg Call and his Catholic Central teammates took on Holt in the Pontiac Silverdome Saturday. /1C

LOTTERY

The Lotto jackpot was worth at least \$2 million. The Michigan Lottery numbers for Saturday, Nov. 27, 1995 are:

■ DAILY 3:
059

■ DAILY 4:
3404

■ LOTTO: 13, 16, 27, 28, 36,
42

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Mother's intentions examined



BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

The closing arguments in the preliminary examination of an infanticide murder case against a Japanese woman in Farmington Hills did not suffer from translation Wednesday. Assistant Oakland County Prosecutor Paul Walton and attorney

Neil Fink, representing defendant Itsumi Koga, agreed not to require a live translation at the afternoon session in 47th District Court in Farmington. But they agreed on little else as they argued the issue of premeditation. Koga, 34, is charged with the murder of her infant son who died Nov. 2 by drowning in a pond behind their Farmington Hills apartment.

"Regardless . . . the child did not get into the water on its own," he said. He said the woman could have changed her mind and retrieved the baby, called 9-1-1 or woken her husband and alster to help her. "She chose not to," Walton said. "That is murder." And between 11 p.m. and 2 a.m., when the baby drowned, Walton maintained that no one could have come to its aid. "Its screams will fall on no one's

"The issue is whether there was the time to take a second look," Walton said. Walton said Koga, who came here to live with her husband Akihiro, an engineer at Nissan, had waited until her husband and visiting sister were asleep. She then took the child, in its night clothes, to a pond in the early hours of the morning and either threw it into a secluded area of the pond or let it roll into the pond, Walton said.

See EXAM, 2A

Strummin' that 12-string at Wooddale



To the delight of students: Guy Lewis entertains Wooddale Elementary School students with a tune on his 12-string guitar. Students look happy with the performance.

Musician carries educational tune

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

All that was missing was a few roddies and a vendor selling concert T-shirts. Otherwise Wooddale Elementary's media center, resembled a first grade Woodstock. Guy Lewis Straszka and his "Chautauque Express" had center stage Wednesday. To set the tone, Straszka pounded an Native American drum loud enough to shake the most obstreperous leaves off the trees outside. And his? "Crazy Havan" session have called them better. His repertoire included a lush rendition of

"Happy Birthday" for a special Wooddale teacher, strummed on a 12th century style lute. The children's entertainer had his audience clapping and singing along to Revolutionary War tunes and folk numbers. "Can you play rock 'n' roll?" asked Straszka incredulously, repeating a question one of the children posed. "Don't tell me you kids like rock 'n' roll." Oh, but you do, said William Straszka. "Straszka had a repertoire of folk playing tambourine, blue harmonica and banjo and singing. While things while he touched off a series of

scorching guitar lines. Chautauque (pronounced shut-sque) Express is in its 10th year, taking children on magical musical journeys. Music, history and even math are interwoven into his presentations. "How many strings does this instrument have?" asked Straszka, holding up an eight-string mandolin. His collection of stringed instruments includes an acoustic guitar, mandolin, banjo, ukulele and electric guitar. He uses each one to convey a sense of history. With mandolin in hand, he tells how the British coined an anti-Yan-

kee ditty during Revolutionary times. "Those soldiers brought a song they thought would make us mad," Straszka says about "Yankee Doodle." "Did that song make us mad?" Children respond with a chorus of "no." "I think the performance not only raises their interest in music and musical instruments," said Wooddale Elementary principal Leszenia Jones, "but I think the integrated approach showed music as an important part of our culture." See MUSIC, 2A

Man gets probation in pot case

BY JILL HOCKMAN
STAFF WRITER

A Farmington man who pleaded guilty to drug manufacturing last month after police found a sophisticated pot-growing setup in his basement has been sentenced to two years of probation — in spite of the Oakland County Probation Department's recommendation to send him to jail. "I don't give probation easily," Circuit Court Judge Michael Callahan told 41-year-old Larry Alan Willer. "If you violate it and I get my hands

on it, I'll send you to prison." Callahan, a Wayne County Circuit Court judge, was in Oakland County Circuit Court to help handle drug cases. During a July 21 search of Willer's Alta Loma home, police from the Oakland County Narcotics Enforcement Team found 821 marijuana plants, ranging from six inches to three feet in height, according to court testimony. Police estimated the street value of the pot to be between \$200,000 and \$251,000.

During a September preliminary exam on the case, police told of the sophisticated marijuana cultivation system found in Willer's basement. The operation featured special lights with timers, three rooms with coiling and walls covered with aluminum foil and an enriched oxygenated water system to speed "healthier" plant growth, police said. Willer pleaded guilty to the drug manufacturing charge (grow-

See SENTENCING, 5A



Larry Willer

Planners peddle bike path that links cities

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

When considering a bikeway, Farmington city planners have followed a route that will likely be easy to pedal. The proposed path cuts a six-mile through Farmington but would connect to the existing bikeway along Farmington Road and 10 Mile, and extend it to Eight Mile Road. The planning commission made its recommendation to Farmington City Council at a Nov. 20 meeting.

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Farmington's portion of the bike path would go eastbound along 10 Mile Road, to southbound Power, to westbound Nine Mile, to westbound Freedom and to southbound Farmington Road. The area in the plan has existing sidewalks, city officials said. At a week, they don't anticipate the same type of complaints the recently built Hillsdale path generated from residents along Farmington Road north of 10 Mile.

"It would be unlikely there wouldn't be some (complaints)," said Planning Commission member William Burke, who served on the subcommittee. "There are some people who simply don't think there is a need for one. . . . I don't see any conflict (of property) involved." By taking an eastbound turn on 10 Mile, cyclists would avoid the sharp downward slope on south-

See PATH, 2A