

# Farmington Observer

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IN THE PAPER

**TODAY**

**They're empaneled: Sixteen jurors — eight men and eight women — were empaneled Thursday for Dr. Jack Kevorkian's felony trial that begins Tuesday. /6A**

**TASTE**

**Sweet onions: OSO Sweets, grown in the foothills of the Andes Mountains in Chile, are the only sweet onion available during winter. /1B**

**Focus on Wine: New beverage splashes for your glass. /1B**

**MALLS & MAINSTREETS**

**Video View: Fans of designer Isaac Mizrahi watch him present a new collection via satellite broadcast linking 12 Saks Fifth Avenue stores through the big screen. /**

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## Family Night critters 'paws' to entertain

By BILL COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

The animal kingdom will be well represented at Farmington Hills third annual Family Night Friday at the Farmington Hills Activities Center.

"There will be a variety of entertainments for kids and parents beginning at 6:30 p.m. and going until 9 p.m. The entertainment is free and includes one-hour swimming sessions in the pool at 6:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., crafts, a children's play and other games and activities.

But if last year's Family Night is any indication, the animals will be a big attraction. Mike Clark, owner of Savanna Reptiles and Fish, a Livonia pet store, will share some of his favorite critters at this year's festivities in "A Walk on the Wild Side."

"He'll be bringing snakes, spiders and lizards," said Hills City Naturalist Joe Dersek. "I believe he will have a tarantula, but I'm not sure what kind of snakes. And he'll bring some kind of mammal as well."

Last year Clark brought a box constrictor and "Max" the ferret, both popular features at the event.

"We had crowds around the animals all night," Dersek said. "The kids really loved the animals."

And if the real animals aren't enough, Detroit Lions mascot "Rooney" and Detroit Tigers mascot "Paw" will be appearing at the event.

"Last year we had Paw," said Eric Wurmlinger, Hills assistant recreation director. "There is like a fraternity of mascots. So they got together and Rooney agreed to come. He's very high energy."

The two mascots will join Farmington Hills Recreation Division's mascot Perky the Panda to sign autographs and pose for pictures between 7-8:30 p.m.

This is the third visit to the city for Paw, who appeared at the Kid's Day and Family Day in the Park. Rooney, who became the Lions' official mascot at the Thanksgiving game last season, will be making his first visit to Farmington Hills.

Both mascots make more than 100 visits a year, but have only appeared together twice before.

"We'll make it and take it" craft area, a big hit with creative kids last year, will be back.

See FAMILY NIGHT, 4A

## Cable rate hike creates friction



With the Telecommunications Act and other FCC actions, officials of cable TV authorities like SWOCC find themselves with less control over issues like rate increases. The new order caused several bitter exchanges at a recent meeting.

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission and Time Warner officials used their monthly meeting to exchange verbal jabs over a \$1.88 monthly rate increase.

And there were no winners at the

SWOCC meeting Feb. 13. The losers? Cable customers.

SWOCC has filed a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission, but officials admit the regulatory entity has no authority over the hike that last month lifted expanded

basic service rates from \$11.28 to \$14.37.

A "social contract" with the FCC allowed Time Warner to make the increase.

Subsequently, Time Warner dropped the rate \$1.17 for its 458 broadcast basic service customers from \$11.75 to \$9.58 a month.

FCC also waived the 30-day notice. A majority of customers, who take the expanded tier of basic channels, found out about the new rates when they received January's cable bill.

Time Warner-FCC agreement was finalized Nov. 30, which wasn't

enough time to give notice, Time Warner Regional General Manager Bob McCann said.

"In the grand scheme of things, a \$1.88 a month ain't a lot of money," McCann said.

"For what it's worth, (Time Warner vice president) Tom (Bjorklund) and I are pretty nice guys. It's not fun getting beaten up over this. We're just trying to do our jobs."

SWOCC members took issue with the lack of a 30-day notice and the increase.

See CABLE, 5A

### A proposal with flair



SHARON LEMMON/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Quite a courtship:** Tim Salley climbed a ladder to Michelle Mead's Muirwood balcony to deliver a proposal of marriage. Mead said yes.

## She said . . . yes

### Lovestruck mate climbs to the occasion

By TOM BAER  
STAFF WRITER

What's a young lady to say when her gentleman friend uses the occasion of Valentine's Day to climb a ladder to her apartment balcony armed with a ring, a dozen roses and a proposal of marriage?

Well, the lady in Building 24618

of the Muirwood apartment complex in Farmington Hills didn't hesitate. She said . . . yes.

And then there was a lot of cheering and confetti started flying out of champagne bottles.

Tim Salley and Michelle Mead, 34-year-old Farmington Hills residents, will be married in early June.

The unorthodox proposal — Tim was clad in a tuxedo with a red cummerbund — was a whopping surprise to Mead, although the entire Salley family seemed to be in on it.

Brothers Tom and Todd were co-conspirators, Tom playing music on a boom box, Todd holding the lad-

der steady. Todd should know about leaders. He's a volunteer firefighter for Farmington Hills, working out of Station 4.

Bruce Salley, father of the clan, was on hand, as was Uncle Greg Salley with his camcorder.

See YES, 3A

## Parking lot protest dead-ends on Pickett Street

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Despite protests from residents, Pickett Street is getting a parking lot.

The Greenery Extended Care Center's site plan for a paved lot adjacent to its Grand River facility has been given the go-ahead by the Farmington Planning Commission. Several people who live nearby spoke out against the project at the Feb. 12 meeting.

The Greenery bought the property in May and announced plans for a parking area. A house on the property has been torn down to make room for the lot, which is designed to alleviate congestion on Gill Road and Earl Court.

City Manager Frank Leubhoff, Greenery representatives and an architect met with residents Dec. 13 to explain the plan.

Site plan approval included a resolution that calls for a brick wall and landscaping to make the parking area blend in with homes on the residential street.

Also, as part of the resolution, the planning commission will not consider further expansion of the Greenery under a special exception permit.

"I'm trying to be positive," Pickett Street resident Jan Dahlfors said. "I

keep thinking, 'Maybe the brick wall will look better than the house.'"

A brick wall is what Dahlfors felt she ran into at the planning commission meeting. Several spoke but didn't have any sway on commission members.

They also questioned why the house was demolished before the

See PICKETT STREET, 5A

### Good-bye, Mr. Costick

Farmington Hills residents and city employees will have a chance to give City Manager Bill Costick a proper farewell this week.

Costick, who has worked for the city 16 years including more than 11 as city manager, has accepted a position with a private development near Petoakey, Tuesday, Feb. 20, will be his last as city manager.

The public is invited to an open house in the city council chambers at City Hall, 31615 W. 11 Mile Road at Orchard Lake Road, from 5-7 p.m. today, Monday, Feb. 19. Light refreshments will be served.

City employees will wish their boss well in the council chambers from 3-4:30 p.m. Tuesday, his last day on the job.

For more information, call 474-6116.

## FARMINGTON FOCUS

### The Taste of Farmington

The Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce is again offering its annual Taste of Farmington on Tuesday, Feb. 27, from 5-8 p.m. at Michigan National Bank headquarters, 27777 Inkster Road.

The Taste of Farmington has traditionally showcases area restaurants and caterers. Tables will be set up and hosts will provide small portions of food items they have selected as their best. Cost is \$15 per person.

In conjunction with Taste of Farmington, local businesses are invited to set up a table display to

promote their business.

Reservations are inquiries can be made by calling the chamber at 474-3440.

### Any Diamonds out there?

The Farmington Area Commission on Aging is accepting nominations for the fourth-annual Diamond of the Community Award.

The award is presented to a person, resident or non-resident, at least 75 years of age, who continues to make an active contribution to the Farmington area.

Nominations will be accepted through March 15. The winner will be announced as part of the Volunteer Recognition Breakfast in April. The winner will be notified by mail.

Send nominations to: Diamond Award, 33735 Cadillac, Farmington Hills 48335.