

# Farmington Observer

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## IN THE PAPER TODAY

**The final 4:** The Farmington Hills City Council plans to interview the four finalists in the running for the position of city manager. The winner will replace Bill Costick. /A8

## OPINION

**The paper says:** Endorsements for school board in Farmington, Walled Lake and Clarenceville appear today. /A10

**OCC keepers:** The Observer makes its picks for the board of trustees at Oakland Community College. /A10

## SPECIAL SECTION

**U.S. Open:** The Observer presents a section previewing the U.S. Open Golf Tournament.

## CLARIFICATION

**Wrong band:** The caption under the color photograph on the front page of the May 30 Observer should have referred to North Farmington's band.

## INDEX

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# Now it's Sen. Willis Bullard

It wasn't the runaway that some predicted, but State Rep. Willis Bullard became the state senator from the 15th District Tuesday by beating Barry Brickner in a special election.

BY WILLIAM COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

Poll workers could listen to their voices echo in the gym at Longacre Elementary in Farmington Tuesday as State Rep. Bill Bullard won the 15th District senate seat. Bullard beat Farmington Hills Democrat Barry Brickner, 10,614-7,310, in Tuesday's special election

most notable for the low turnout. "It was an unusual election for a state senate seat," said Bullard. "Barry Brickner did very well in Farmington Hills and West Bloomfield in part because he is from Farmington Hills. I think that is sometimes more important than whether or not it is a Republican district, especially with a low turnout."

And the term "low turnout" was no overstatement. Only 9.31 percent of registered voters cast ballots with totals as low as 4.1 percent in Lyon Township, West Bloomfield (12.8 percent) and Farmington Hills (12.4 percent) had the highest turnouts. Only 10 people voted in Novi Township.

"We had only a 6.3 percent turnout (603 voters out of 8,014 registered)," said Farmington Clerk/Treasurer Patsy Centrell. "When I left Flanders (Elementary School) at 8:30 (a.m.), the third voter



State Sen. Willis Bullard

See SENATE, A2

## Take me to the river



**Woods wading:** Dan Harrison of Farmington Hills tosses wood and debris from a branch of the Rouge River that flows near Grand River and Middlebelt. Harrison has been volunteering for the last 10 years and lives on another part of the river. Below, Alicia Polk of Farmington Hills combines the rescue with a girlscoot project.

# Cleanup flows at Rouge

BY WILLIAM COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

Government is sponsoring a cleanup of the Rouge River near Grand River and Middlebelt. The project is a joint effort between the city of Farmington Hills and the state of Michigan. The cleanup is being held on Monday, June 11, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The project is a joint effort between the city of Farmington Hills and the state of Michigan. The cleanup is being held on Monday, June 11, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

When it started, many of the volunteers from Farmington Hills and the state of Michigan. The cleanup is being held on Monday, June 11, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The project is a joint effort between the city of Farmington Hills and the state of Michigan. The cleanup is being held on Monday, June 11, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

"This brings back memories of my Girl Scout days," said Barbara Boden of Farmington Hills, who was taking part in her fourth cleanup. "This is one of the best sites I've had. I've been to many other sites, but this one is really special."

Barbara Boden is a volunteer with the Rouge River Cleanup. She has been participating in cleanups for several years. She is a member of the Farmington Hills Planning Director's Commission. She has been participating in cleanups for several years. She is a member of the Farmington Hills Planning Director's Commission.

See FOCUS, A3



# Gunmen escape with \$15,000 in city bank robbery

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Farmington police and the FBI are investigating an armed robbery that took place at First Nationwide Bank on Orchard Lake Road Friday afternoon in which two masked bandits netted more than \$15,000.

No one was injured during the hold-up. At 5:50 p.m., two men in blue fatigued colored work clothes carrying semiautomatic weapons and wearing black masks walked in through the south entrance and told employees to get out down on the floor. No customers were inside at the time.

"It's apparent that they were familiar with the business in the area in that there were no customers in the bank and they spent very little time in the bank," Public Safety Deputy Director Mike Wiggins said.

"They just didn't happen to stumble upon this bank. They did their homework."

A Farmington Hills woman went up to the drive-thru window, but drove away when she noticed a man pointing a gun at a teller who had her hands up. She went to a nearby Midas Shop and told an employee to call police.

One of the suspects jumped over the counter and emptied cash drawers while the other watched, police reports said.

The two masked men left on foot and were seen running along the north side of the building. They are described as two medium built black males 6-foot-6 to 6-8 in height.

Bank surveillance cameras had not been turned on earlier in the day, police reports said. Witnesses said they saw three vehicles leave the bank parking lot around the time of the robbery, including a brown late 1980s Cadillac DeVille with two occupants. The vehicle was seen traveling south on Orchard Lake and east on Grand River.

Another witness told police he saw a black man dressed in all blue clothing was standing on the corner of Orchard Lake and Grand River around 6:30 p.m. Evidence technicians and tracking dogs were brought to the scene. Robbers dropped five \$20 bills, which were to be examined for fingerprints.

The bank robbery is the first in the city in 10 years. Coincidentally, the last bank job took place at the same spot, but under the name of Bloomfield Savings & Loan, in 1985.

Police caught the two culprits in that hold-up within six minutes of the robbery.

# School parking has neighbors pulling out all the stops

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Residents of a Farmington neighborhood are feeling like a tennis ball. They're being sent back and forth between the city and the school district and say all they're getting is the same racket.

Laelano and Prospect Street residents complained to Farmington City Council Monday about Farmington High students parking in their neighborhood. The teens drive fast, leave trash and create a glut of vehicles, residents said.

One resident, Jenny Tobis, 72, was suffered a mild heart attack after speaking out. She is in good condition at Providence Hospital, her son said.

"I think she got herself worked up," Richard Tobis said. "She's not going to anymore city council meetings."

Congestion has increased as sophomores are old enough to drive. Between 60-70 vehicles park on Prospect and Laelano streets, city officials said.

"You're waiting for an accident to happen," said Jenny Tobis during the council meeting. Added Shawn Rechkemmer:

"We're prisoners of our houses and back yards because we can't do anything."

Farmington High students parking on nearby residential streets has been an ongoing problem.

Last year, the city enacted permit only parking was enacted on Lakeway, Valley View and Prospect streets to curb congestion in a response to students congregating in the area.

Such solutions are stop-gap measures, city officials said. Students simply park in other neighborhoods and transport the problems there.

City officials suggested residents take their complaints to the Farmington Board of Education. A few residents said they already have, but have been told by school administrators to go to city council.

"That's all this city council can do. Move the problem," City Manager Frank Laubhoff said. "The city council has no authority over the school board."

"The real solution to the problem lies there with the schools. They're in the driver's seat, so to speak," Superintendent Bob Maxfield has

See FOCUS, A3

## Damn those Yankees!

Auditions for the school district/community musical "Damn Yankees" will be held at 8 p.m. Tuesday, June 11, in the auditorium of North Farmington High School, 13 Mile east of Farmington Road.

Callbooks will be Thursday, June 13, at North Farmington. Auditions are open to Farmington Public School employees, Farmington-area residents and 1995-96 students from the three public high schools. Participants should make themselves familiar with songs from the musical.

Some "Damn Yankee" songs will be used in the audition. For more information, call Sue Cobb at 489-3539 or 632-7613.

## FARMINGTON FOCUS

**Paperback books wanted**  
Farmington-area residents and business people are being asked to help raise 2,000 paperback books for the library at Detroit's new Veterans Administration Medical Center, which opened last Sunday.

spearheading the Bound for Glory Book Drive is Kevin McCabe, chief executive officer of McCabe Funeral Home, which has facilities in Farmington Hills and Canton Township.

People wishing to donate books may drop them off at McCabe Funeral Home, 31050 W. 12 Mile, between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. daily. The book drive runs through Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 1996.

"By donating books to the new VA Medical Center, we hope we can make veterans' stays there a little more pleasant," McCabe said.

Added Wayne Snyder, chief of voluntary services at the VA facility, "The patients really love westerns — we almost have to ration them."

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48335; faxed to 477-9722; or dropped off at the newspaper office. For the computer literate, the Internet E-mail address: pachy@online.com.