

# Farmington Observer

VOLUME 109 NUMBER 01

MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 1996 • FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 40 PAGES

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IN THE PAPER  
**TODAY**

**Family fun:** A crowd of about 500 turned out for the annual Family Day in the Park in Farmington Hills' Heritage Park. /A3

**Two arrested:** Farmington police have two men in custody following a gas station robbery last Thursday. /A6

## MALLS & MAINSTREETS

**School days loom ahead:** What are the latest looks in back-to-school fashion? /A10

**Sunrise for Somerset:** Somerset Collection, large and trendy, opens soon. What will be the impact. /A10

## TASTE

**Harvest time:** Michigan fruits and vegetables are ripe for harvesting. Freezing and canning can help you savor summer a little longer. /B1

**Cutting fat:** Vegetables recipes are not always lot in fat. Substitute ingredients to trim 17.2 grams of fat from potato soup. /B1

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# Webb writes off write-in

**Cathy Webb, who finished second in a heated House race, at first promised a write-in campaign for the November election. She's backed off, however, fearing she'll fracture party efforts...**

BY WILLIAM COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

Now that the dust has settled from last week's primary election, Republicans are putting on a good face, patching up differences and looking forward to the fall campaign — for the most part.

Andrew Raczkowski narrowly

defeated Kathleen Webb for the Republican nomination for the 37th House District seat now held by Rep. Jan Dolan, 3,496-3,371. In the wee hours of Wednesday morning, Webb and her supporters were vowing a write-in, in part based on a belief that about 2,000 spoiled ballots spoiled the result.

But the ballots weren't spoiled. Only about 500 absentee ballots, which could not be recast were actually spoiled.

In a letter to supporters, Webb said she had decided not to organize a write-in campaign that would "fracture the party efforts to maintain a clear majority in Lansing."

That was welcome news to Raczkowski, who himself had been lost a very close race two years ago to Dolan.

"Even though it was close, I didn't ask for a recall," he said. "I supported Jan (Dolan)."

One Webb supporter said she and several others planned to write-in Webb in the fall election anyway. But that may prove to be a futile gesture.

"I wouldn't say it is impossible to win a write-in campaign," said Farmington Hills City Clerk Kathy Dornan. "But you would have to educate people to write in the name and connect the arrows on the ballot."

Dornan, who has worked on elections for the past 20 years in Walled

See ELECTION, A2

## New city manager takes over in Farmington Hills



Starting with a splash: Daniel Hobbs, Farmington Hills' new city manager, takes in a cool sight on a hot day. He's standing by the fountain near City Hall with the temperature in the 90s.

# New manager at home in the Hills

BY WILLIAM COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills' new city manager comes from a city within eight miles of the nation's capital, but he wasn't reluctant to come to Michigan.

"It was actually a work of chance," said Daniel Hobbs, who

began work Aug. 5. "It didn't matter whether I was six miles or 500 miles from Washington, D.C."

Hobbs managed Greenbelt, Md., the first federally planned city in the country for the past five years. Even though President Bill Clinton chose the ethnically and racially diverse city of 22,000 to promote a

drug-awareness program for youngsters, there were few other times when being close to Washington made all that much difference.

Hobbs, who has moved his wife Irma and their three children to the city, said the Maryland city was so named because it was treat-

ed as part of a green belt around Washington. But Farmington Hills is chlorophyll overladen in comparison.

"I was called by Dick Bennett (who recruited Hobbs)," he said. "He told me this was a situation I should look at."

See BUSINESS, A4

# City's phones get high-tech upgrade

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Sure there is voice mail at Farmington City Hall. When someone calls, the person who answers the phone uses her voice to shout out, "It's for you."

A new phone system will bring the city in line with the technological age.

Farmington City Council approved a \$44,900 telephone upgrade for city offices at the Aug. 5 meeting.

The AT&T system will replace one that is 20 years old and is increasingly becoming a hang-up for residents and city workers alike.

"The technology is there; we want to take advantage of it," City Manager Frank Lauffoff said. "People don't like to be transferred several times. They don't like to repeat their problem over and over."

Callers have to be transferred twice to reach a department head. The antiquated system has become overloaded and prone to disruptions, Lauffoff said.

New technology, to be installed by late fall, will eliminate most of those problems.

With the automated system, residents who call in about tax and water bills, voting records or pet licenses concern will be sent directly to a person in city hall.

If the person is not in, the caller can leave a voice-mail message or ask for an operator.

On public service matters, callers can be directly rerouted to the city's Public Service office on Nine Mile Road.

City officials don't want callers waiting in the automated answering system abyss, either.

That's why those who don't like to leave a voice-mail message can go directly to an operator.

"We recognize a lot of people don't like using electronic voice mail operating systems," Lauffoff said.

The AT&T system is similar to one installed recently at both branches of the Farmington Community Library.

City staff made calls to the library to check the system's sound quality and user friendliness.

AT&T/Lucent Technologies' bid was also similar in its same governmental discount price structure as the one submitted to the library.



The Irish Way: Ananda Lange (left) poses with her Irish pats.

# Her Irish eyes have new view after trip

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

You can take a Yank to Ireland, but in Irish eyes, you can never take the Yank out of an Irish-American.

In fact, the term Irish-American is likely to cause natives to goggle in their Guinness, said a Farmington Hills teen who spent five weeks there.

"They feel if you're born there,

you're Irish," Amanda Lange said. "If you have descendants, they don't view you as Irish-American."

"People in general were very friendly."

The Mercy High senior shares a keen interest in Irish dance and Gaelic language and thought those activities would be met with similar intensity there. Not so.

See IRELAND, A3

## Here's looking at you

Those folks around downtown Farmington with pencils and clipboards aren't census or poll-takers. They're members of the Farmington Beautification Commission, according to a note in the downtown Farmington Newsletter, published by the Downtown Development Authority.

Summer award judging is under way. Each summer the commission selects businesses that reflect outstanding efforts in overall visual appearance, plantings, window displays and landscape maintenance.

## Looking good!

Also from the current number of the Downtown Farmington Newsletter: The DDA has had many compliments on the flowers at the

## FARMINGTON FOCUS

Masonic plexus, the baskets and barrels," says Judy Doynoy, DDA director. "I've traveled to many small communities and we can hold our heads high in the appearance of the flowers, trees, lamps, benches and grassy areas."

The DDA board of directors has committed to maintaining all of the downtown improvements, and it really shows."

## A driving force

Joseph Keating of Farmington Hills was named Bekina Van Lines' Driver of the Month for August 1996.

Keating was selected from a field of 2,500 drivers. He's now eligible for consideration as Bekina's Driver of the Year.

## Let the Blood flow

An American Red Cross blood drive will be held 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 24, at St. Gerald Catholic Church, 21220 Farmington Road, between Eight Mile and Nine Mile Roads. First-time donors are welcome. Call 474-4541 for an appointment.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48336; faxed to 477-8722; or dropped off at the newspaper office. For the computer literate, the Internet E-mail address is