

Farmington Observer

Check out the coupons inserted in today's issue of your home-delivered Observer - and save an average \$20 to \$30 a week on your grocery bill. For home-delivery, please call 810-965-4724.

VOLUME 109 NUMBER 93

MONDAY, AUGUST 19, 1996 • FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 44 PAGES

SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS
© 1996 Robinson Communications Corporation

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Action Jackson: The arm that helps hold up the law has also learned that it's important to give something back./A3

Still going strong: A youth center for Farmington-area young people continues. Signup for center activities begins Sunday, Aug. 25, at the Youth and Families Activities Fest/A9.

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Service and selection: Dan Nordstrom, owner of the store that bears his name in the just-opened Somerset Collection in Troy, explained the success of his business to the Women's Economic Club./B4

TASTE

Heavenly ribs: Chef Larry Janes shares secrets for making mouth-watering ribs./B1

Pop that cork: If you've discovered Benzinger Family Wines, but not their Imagery Series, then you've missed the most creative work from the winery./B1

INDEX

Auto report	D1	Movies	A11
Classifieds	B-D	O&E On Line	B6
Autos	D5	Obituaries	A10
Employment	C3	Personal Scene	A8
Real estate	B6	Police & fire	A10
Crossword	B7	Sports	C1-2
Mails	B4-5	Taste	B1-3

Mega movies squeeze Civic

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

When it comes to movie theaters, this area's viewing tank is spilling over, a Farmington theater owner said.

News of a new 20-screen multiplex cinema receiving approval in Livonia doesn't leave Civic Theatre owner Greg Hohler optimistic.

Already, there are 53 movie screens in the area, including 13 discount ones. More first-run screens are planned for Haggerty, north of Seven Mile and within the seven-mile radius of the Civic's trade area.

"It won't help it," said Hohler, whose family has operated the downtown centerpiece since 1940.

"My basic opinion is that theaters are going through the same phenomenon gas stations went through 20 years ago where there was one on every corner.

"And you know what happened to them."

Twenty screens in north Livonia and another 20-screen complex planned on Northwestern Highway in Southfield will push the number to 93 within his trade area, Hohler said. Something will give.

In some cases, it already has. Livonia Mall and Terrace cinemas have gone from first-run to second-run movie houses in order to compete.

Second — or sub-run theaters as they're known — screen films after they've appeared at first-run establishments. They usually charge discount admission: \$1.50 in the Civic Theatre's case.

A sub-run cannot show a release until it is completely off the first-run circuit. More first-run screens are delaying the time when new films are available to discount theaters like the Civic, Hohler said.

"I was running 'Mr. Holland's Opus' while it was out on video," Hohler said.

"If you have 20 additional screens, they're going to be holding onto everything under the sun."

Increased competition has forced Hohler to go for a different audience.

He's increased the showing of independent, smaller budget releases. "...but there are not that many good ones," Hohler said.

See CIVIC, A9

'Students pass; test fails'

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Public School students remain a cut above the national average in reading and math, according to results of a standardized test.

But the test itself is not expected to make the cut.

For the second year, reading and

math scores improved districtwide at the third and fifth grade levels on the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills. However, CTBS will be replaced with another national standardized test next year.

"It's getting old," said Frederica Frost, director of Assessment. "The relevance to our curriculum is becoming less and less, particularly in language.

"We don't want to waste instructional time if it's not what we teach." As a result, students didn't take the language portion of the test. Also, cognitive ability was not measured as had been in the past.

Farmington has used the CTBS since 1990.

There's plenty of replacements to choose from, including the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Stanford, and California Achievement.

A new test published by CTB McGraw-Hill — which also publishes the CTBS — features more performance and essay tests rather

than being multiple choice.

A committee will have to be formed and recommendation made to the Board of Education.

"It's a long process," Frost said. "We have to look at several instruments and compare them to what we're teaching."

Sixth graders took the CTBS for the first time during the 1995-96 school year, and finished above the national average.

Eighth grade performance dipped in reading and math, though.

See TEST, A3



Little detail: Tracy Finlayson, a 1996 graduate of Farmington High, decided to spend her summer working to "Keep Farmington Beautiful" while working for the Downtown Development Authority, as well as the Village Mall and other downtown buildings downtown.

She weeds and waters for a nicer city

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Tracy Finlayson, a 1996 graduate of Farmington High, decided to spend her summer working to "Keep Farmington Beautiful" while working for the Downtown Development Authority, as well as the Village Mall and other downtown buildings downtown.

Finlayson, who is currently a student at the University of Michigan, has been working in the downtown area for several weeks. She is responsible for weeding and watering the plants in the area.

"I've found so many neat things," said Finlayson, who will work her first summer job in the downtown area. "I've found so many neat things."

Finlayson is currently a student at the University of Michigan. She is responsible for weeding and watering the plants in the area.

"I've found so many neat things," said Finlayson, who will work her first summer job in the downtown area. "I've found so many neat things."

Hills hopes to put the flow back in traffic

BY WILLIAM COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Waiting at a traffic light in heavy traffic — or worse yet, waiting when there's a little traffic — drives some Farmington Hills residents crazy.

But help could be on the way.

The city approved spending almost \$100,000 to study ways to relieve congestion and ease traffic flow without any new major construction projects.

"We're looking for ways to improve the problem using the existing road network," said Farmington Hills Director of Public Services Tom Biasell.

On Aug. 12, the city council unanimously approved spending \$97,500 to hire Metro Transportation Group, Inc. of Hanover Park, Ill., and its sub consultant, Market Opinion Research of Farmington Hills to conduct the citywide study.

"It's a massive undertaking," said Hills Traffic Engineer Kevin McCarthy. "It's really too large for our staff."

McCarthy said the study will focus on ways to "maximize" the city's roads and signals, taking into

See TRAFFIC, A8

Baseball dugouts a hit

North Farmington High School has new dugouts on its baseball field thanks to some residents and businesses who donated labor and materials for the recent project.

Businesses — Fendt Builders Supply, Medusa Cement and Smith Lumber and several others — supported the community project by donating materials. Cash donations also were received.

"Two years of planning and teamwork truly paid off," said Toby Gosselin, a Farmington Hills resident and project volunteer.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

1996-97 season on Saturday, Aug. 24, at the Smith Theatre on the Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College in Farmington Hills.

Additions will be held 10-10:45 a.m. for performers ages 7-9, 10:45-11:30 a.m. for ages 10-12, and 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for ages 13 and older.

Female dancers performing on pointe should also bring appropriate shoes. Audition fee is \$12.

The 1996-97 season includes "The Nutcracker" with the Birmingham Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra Dec. 7-8. For more information on the organization or the auditions, call 661-4349.

Applause! Applause! for Mary

Mary Sherrill is Botsford Continuing Health Center's "Applause! Applause!" winner for August.

Sherrill, a senior competency evaluated nursing assistant, has been with the Farmington Hills nursing facility for five years. The Detroit was nominated for the award by her co-workers.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48335; faxed to 477-9792; or dropped off at the newspaper office. For the computer literate, the Internet E-mail address is packy@coonline.com.

Ballet auditions planned

The Michigan Classic Ballet Company, under the artistic direction of Mary C. Geiger, will hold company auditions for the