

Farmington Observer

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SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Contest calls: Engineers and students from Farmington work together — and learn from each other — for a robotics project contest entry. /A3

COUNTY

They remember: Friends and peers recall the times of Supreme Court Justice Thomas Kavanagh, who died Thursday. /A6

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Jacobson's: The upscale speciality retailer takes steps to streamline operations and increase profitability. /B4

TASTE

Master chef: Milos Cihelka, former executive chef of the Golden Mushroom, shares tips cooking, and shopping for fish. /B1

Culinary Extravaganza: Mon Jin Lau's chef/proprietor Marshall Chin won first place in the Michigan Culinary Food and Wine Extravaganza. /B1

ARTS & LEISURE

Music: The current Detroit Symphony Orchestra season has a distinct international flavor, 1997-98 highlights several legendary classical and jazz artists. /A1

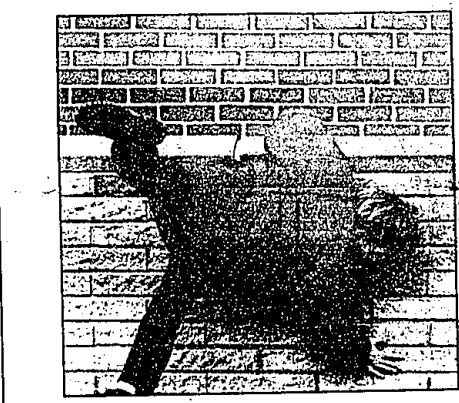
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Good cut



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILLSON LEONARD



On break: Keith Lisiecki, 10, gets a jump on spring by smacking some balls to Jimmy Gallagher, 10, at a parking lot near Tuck and Nine Mile roads Thursday. Above, Keith takes a big cut. At left, Jimmy returns over a wall after shagging a blast that was lazing gone. Although they were on winter break, the boys seemed inspired by the spring-like temperatures here this week and the return of the "Boys of Summer" to spring training in Florida, also this week.

Stress, peers, future burden teens

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

She's been battling depression for two years. She takes medication and she's in counseling. She's only 16. "You can't describe it; it's like a feeling," said Danielle Patterson, who is a sophomore at Mercy High.



Teen suicide: A closer look. Page A5

"It's like a feeling you can't be happy and nothing is ever going to get better. It doesn't just come on you. It's always there pretty much." Teenagers are not as carefree as they used to be, judging by the many money faces. Corporate downsizing, financial instability and an uncertain future — things that supposedly lie ahead — are helping make adolescents anxious, angry, cynical and depressed, experts say. A few even consider and attempt suicide. Patterson said she's never thought of suicide. "But other people have," Patterson said. "We talked about it in group therapy." She's being treated for a bipolar disorder, which is a depression caused by a lack of light during winter months. Many teens have difficulty seeing the light for a better future, said a Farmington Hills-based psychologist. "They see rapid change all around them. Computers are obsolete within a year," said David Walker, a psychologist with Davis Counseling Center in Farmington Hills. "They know when

See TEENS, A2

Bond on tour Maxfield drums up backers

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

They aren't printing T-shirts yet. However, Farmington Public Schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield is going on tour to trumpet the district's \$110 million bond and millage renewal election March 26. Plans include speaking at the annual State of the Cities Breakfast Thursday, Feb. 27, and in front of several PTAs. Town hall meetings are planned: Feb. 26, Warner Middle School; March 6, Power Middle School; March 10, East Middle School; and March 19, O.E. Duncel Middle School. The sessions run 7-8 p.m. Two key dates, though, are Monday, Feb. 24, at Farmington Hills City Hall and Monday, March 3, at Farmington City Council. Those might be tough audiences. Elected officials tend to view proposed tax increases — especially when not their own — as flypaper when it comes to getting attached to them.

"We will certainly be requesting that they support, endorse and understand what we're proposing," Maxfield said. "... (But) it's up to them." Neither city council has talked about the bond, which would raise money to pay for building improvements and buy new computers. Approval would increase taxes by 2 mills, which is an additional \$165 a year for the owner of a \$165,000 home. The Farmington Board of Education backed a motion supporting that people vote in the City of Farmington Hills public safety tax election, which was approved last year. Farmington, Farmington Hills city councils and the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce backed the district's millage renewal request in 1993. That passed by a four-to-one margin. An endorsement from officials of

See TOUR, A4

Hills case sparks state debate on role of liaison officers

BY GARY WORONCIAK
AND BILL COUFANT
STAFF WRITERS

A dispute over student confidentiality issues at North Farmington High School will spur a state-level debate on the role of police liaison officers in schools. Jim Ballard, executive director of the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals, plans to bring up the issue with the Michigan Association of School Boards and law enforcement agencies. On Feb. 4, North Farmington High School Principal Deborah Clarke was ordered in district court to turn over evidence to police in an assault case. Farmington Hills police Officer Duane Fox, the school's liaison officer, had initially been advised of the assault by school officials

■ 'At some point, the matter may require legislation to clarify.'

Jim Ballard
—Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals

who asked his help, including inviting him into interviews with students who witnessed the Nov. 13 incident. Clarke later refused to turn over statements by students that had been requested by police as evidence in the criminal investigation of the case. She cited Michigan law that doesn't allow school officials to divulge such information obtained from students without

See LAISON, A2

Board tackles cell tower plan Tuesday

BY GARY WORONCIAK
STAFF WRITER

The needs of the booming cellular communications industry will be weighed against the concerns of residents again Tuesday as a city board resumes consideration of a new tower proposed to be built on 12 Mile near Orchard Lake and I-696. Airtouch Cellular will again go before the Farmington Hills Zoning Board of Appeals in search of a variance to allow construction of an 80-foot tower, twice the size allowed under current zoning rules. The board considered the request at its January meeting but tabled the matter pending information on precedent for such towers in the zoning classification, and to learn from Airtouch if it could meet its needs some other way. The 80-foot tower would be built on the grounds of a Best Western Hotel on land zoned as expressway service. The board will consider the variance request at its regular meeting Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in council chambers at city hall. It will be the latest flare-up of the issue, pitting cellular phone companies, which say they need more capacity to serve their growing customer base, against residents who are concerned with the aesthetic effect the sprouting towers have on quality of life and, thus, property values. "We definitely feel high towers depreciate the value of our property," Rita Fox, who resides near the proposed tower site, said at last month's meeting. The broader issue has spilled over to the planning commission, which will hold a public hearing March 13 on a proposed ordinance dealing specifically with cellular antennas. At least one zoning board member last month suggested waiting for that ordinance to be completed, but others argued that adoption could take up to a year. If the zoning board approves the variance, the tower would still require site plan approval from the planning commission before construction could begin.

Poem honors Bill Miller

The death of Bill Miller from a heart attack Dec. 27 caused many to reflect on his accomplishments as principal of Boys and Girls Republic. Miller, 59, had held that position at the Farmington Hills school for troubled teens since 1974. A student at the school — which will be renamed William E. Miller School in Miller's honor — expressed his feelings for the principal in a poem written the day after Miller died. Dedicated to the Miller family, the following was written by Justin K. It was entitled, simply, "Miller Poem." He was a man who ran to us with open arms. He was a friend whose love will never end. He was a man who knew how to make us all

FARMINGTON FOCUS

laugh. He was a man with a heart of gold, and had many stories untold. He helped us through bad days without a fuss. He told us stories about his days, and he helped us in a lot of ways. But his love will never end, because his words are from above. We will never be apart from him, because he will always be in our hearts.

Prosperity comes knocking
Farmington Hills resident Virginia Winters

got a little help from mom last month. The 42-year-old Detroit teacher picked her number randomly and bought a ticket for Michigan's The Big Game drawing last month at Rite Aid Discount Pharmacy on Farmington Road. "I saw that I'd matched five of the Big Game numbers drawn, but I didn't know what that meant," Winters said. "So I had to call my mom and she told me it was worth \$150,000." Her plans include helping out mom. "I was hoping to be able to buy a house so my mother could move in with me," Winters said. Winning the lottery was a surprise for Winters, but it shouldn't have been. "I opened a fortune cookie just before I bought my ticket, and it read, 'Prosperity is getting ready to knock on your door.' And it did."