

# Farmington Observer

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SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

IN THE PAPER  
**TODAY**

COUNTY

**Rave review: Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson generally was received warmly by area politicians following his State of the County address. /A6**

**Repairing damage: Damage to area roads caused by winter's ravages, as well as widening projects, are high on this week's list of road watch concerns. /A6**

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

**Holiday happenings: Photos with Peter Rabbit take center court as spring merchandise arrives at the stores. /B6**

**Where Can I Find?: Readers offer their favorite sources for Beanie Babies. /B7**

TASTE

**2 Unique: Speaking from a culinary standpoint, potatoes are one of a chef's best vegetable friends. /B1**

**Portion control: All foods can fit into your diet if you choose a variety of items and eat them in sensible portions. /B1**

ARTS & LEISURE

**Art festival: The 14th annual Michigan Wildlife Festival, March 14-16, celebrates conservation. /C1**

**Video exhibit: Active art experience takes Cranbrook Art Museum to the cutting edge. /C1**

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## Bond's issue: Aging schools



**Editor's Note:** This is the first in a series of stories based from on-site tours of Farmington School District buildings that would get improvements if voters approve a \$110 million bond issue March 25.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

School buildings don't age gracefully — even if it's one named William Grace.

The Farmington Hills elementary school is 40 years old and is one of

the buildings that will be renovated if voters approve a \$110 million bond issue on March 25.

Farmington Public Schools has \$92 million of the bond money earmarked for expansion and renovations of its facilities, which average 36 years in age.

The improvement plan calls for \$1.49 million of work at William Grace Elementary, which is a typical suburban school that has been reconfigured and renovated piecemeal through the years to keep up with the growth of the area.

For instance, windows and a corridor have recently been replaced.

"That's what we've been doing, picking away through the general

fund," said Cheryl Cannon, assistant superintendent for finance.

Otherwise the school — built in 1957 — has relied on its sturdy brick exterior to see it through.

Physical wear at William Grace is more evident in what's dubiously dubbed the "Florida Room." The special education area was once a separate mobile classroom that was later physically connected to the west end of the

**'All of our buildings are not going to look like Hillside. We are trying to provide comparable facilities and comparable opportunities.'**

Cheryl Cannon  
—assistant superintendent

building. Pipes freeze and break frequently, school officials said. Brown spots on ceiling tiles indicate water leaks where runoff from the main building falls onto the lower roof.

The room would be completely renovated.

William Grace, like many Farmington schools, was built in a time

See BOND, A3

### Life in the middle



Cued up: East Middle School eighth grader Alex Bogheri shoots pool with his buddies at the William Costick Activities Center in Farmington Hills, at the city's youth program. For a closer look what our community and others offer middle school-age youngsters, see Page A5.

## Burglars hit sub shops for cash, food

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Burglars made off with more than \$4,500 and had a sandwich to go in a pair of break-ins at two Farmington submarine shops.

Tubby's Sub Shop and Subway, both on Grand River, were burglarized after closing March 3. Some \$4,500 in cash was stolen from Tubby's, while thieves collected another \$20 in change from a cash drawer at Subway.

At Subway, the brazen burglars made themselves a sandwich, said Farmington police Detective Scott Hermann.

The break-ins coincide with similar ones at Tubby's Sub shop in Orchard Lake and Plymouth March 6.

"We're looking at a fairly organized group because of the number of Tubby's that have been hit and identical MOs," Hermann said.

After an unsuccessful attempt to break-in through a back door, thieves managed to pry open the front entrance at Tubby's at 31715 Grand River.

Once inside, they pried open a drop-off slot on a floor safe in the office and stole more than \$4,000. Another \$250 was taken from a canvas bag and \$100 from a tray in the office.

A box of chicken steaks and mini steaks were also stolen during the Tubby's burglaries. Offices in both burglaries were ransacked, Hermann said.

Burglars stole \$350 in cash from a Tubby's on Orchard Lake Road after closing March 6, Orchard Lake police said.

The thieves tried to get in through a back door before going in through the front entrance. The shop's office was also ransacked. "They sound very similar," said Sergeant Fred Rosenau of the Orchard Lake police.

Scott Hermann  
—Farmington police

**'We're looking at a fairly organized group because of the number of Tubby's that have been hit and identical MOs.'**

## Match to sofa only worsens odor problem

BY WILLIAM COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

It was right out of the movie "Dumb and Dumber." Farmington Hills firefighters from Stations 1 and 4 responded to a fire at the Independence Green Apartments on Lincoln Court at 6:45 p.m. Thursday that had started on a sofa.

The apartment resident told firefighters that she was asleep at the time of the incident.

Her son, 12, had been using matches to get rid of a foul odor on the sofa when one of the matches caught some papers on fire.

The boy was able to put out the fire with an extinguisher, but there was a good deal of smoke and the sofa and carpet had been burned. Papers had also accelerated the fire that caused a total of \$1,000 in damage.

The boy told firefighters he had passed gas and could not find any air freshener. He used matches to get rid of the smell and laid down a used match on a tissue paper that ignited and caught papers under the sofa on fire.

The boy tried to put out the fire with a pot of water, but spilled most of it. He woke up his mother and then got the extinguisher from the hallway and put out the fire.

A neighbor heard the smoke detector and called 9-1-1. Arriving first on the scene, a Farmington Hills police officer removed the sofa from the apartment.

### Chairs at the polls

Look for chairs at Farmington area polling places on March 25. In response to a question during a presentation to the Interagency Council of Farmington/Farmington Hills Thursday morning, Cheryl Cannon made that pledge.

Cannon, assistant superintendent for business, was presenting information about the upcoming election, asking voters for \$110 million to improve school buildings and add technology.

The question was raised about senior citizens who can't wait in long lines to cast their ballots. Cannon said they would provide chairs at all the school building voting sites.

### Catering at The Longacre House

Farmington Hills' historic Longacre House

## FARMINGTON FOCUS

now offers in-house catering.

Director Ben Marks said a recent Republican Club dinner was the first event they'd catered there.

"It's very exciting for us because it's a new revenue generator," Marks said. They offer breakfasts, corporate lunches and "full-blown dinners," Marks said. The building hosts a maximum of 119 people.

### Big bucks bowling

Team Farmington Special Olympics brought in more than \$10,000 at its fifth annual Bowl-A-Thon on March 1 — with money going to provide uniforms, equipment and maintenance for its

year-round program.

"This was an outstanding effort," said Mark Fisher, chair of the event. "Businesses, organizations and individual in our community really pulled together to make another year of this successful program possible.

Biggest money raisers were Resource Technologies and MetroBank.

### Looking for cultural cues

The Multicultural/Multiracial Community Council hosts an open, public workshop on understanding the nuances of culture at 6 p.m. Thursday, March 13, at the Farmington Training Center.

Moderator Samir Haddad and a panel of seven speakers will talk about how people from different cultures have different behaviors, and how to deal with them.