

# Farmington Observer

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## IN THE PAPER TODAY

All natural: The Tree House for Earth's Children is the name of a new organic, health store in Farmington. /A2

## COUNTY

Special Olympians: Winners one and all were the superstars who performed at this year's Special Olympics. /A7

Building overview: The Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College is in need of renovation and repair, according to its president. /A9

## OPINION

On the bond: Check our endorsement on the Farmington School District millage renewal and bond election Tuesday and plenty of letters on both sides. /A16, A15, A17

## ENTERTAINMENT

Movies: See if you agree with our movie critic's picks for this year's Oscars in top categories including best picture. /E1

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## Dwyer: Snuff out teen smoking

Farmington Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer outlined a proposed ordinance to stop underage cigarette smoking and selling to teens. One council member urged caution before approving such a plan.

BY WILLIAM COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER  
Farmington Hills is weighing a new ordinance to put teeth into the city's efforts to stop children from smoking — despite some council reluctance.

At a council meeting Monday, Hills police Chief Bill Dwyer laid out the problems with underage smoking and outlined a city ordinance to punish retailers who sell tobacco products to youngsters, as well as those who buy tobacco products ille-

gally. "Narcotics enforcement is our number one priority," Dwyer told the council Monday. "But we must also wage a campaign against gateway drugs such as cigarettes. Abuse of tobacco products is at an all-time high."

The chief cited statistics from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration concerning the effects of tobacco use on young people.

Of the 3,000 young people who

become smokers each year, 33 percent will die as a result, he said. Minors succeed in buying tobacco 70 percent of the time and tobacco use among children has risen since 1994 during a time when the tobacco industry has spent \$4 billion in advertising.

"Michigan is higher than the national average," Dwyer said. Under a new federal law, retailers risk a \$250 fine if they sell tobacco

See SMOKING, A5

## Irish eyes are smilin'



Celebrating: James Rennie (left), Debbie Mitchell and her husband, Matt Mitchell, all from Windsor, sway and listen as the band, Blackthorn, plays a ballad called Kilkelly Ireland on Monday afternoon at Cowley's Old Village Inn in Farmington. In photo below, from right, Beverly Hamilton-Earn, a friend, Debbie Pehrson, sisters Daun Hamilton-Bregni and Rochelle Hamilton dance to the band. The Hamilton sisters grew up in Farmington Hills.

## Green flows for St. Patrick's Day

BY WILLIAM COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER  
Farmington and Farmington Hills sported a lot of St. Patrick's Day green Monday.

Local Irish-American taverns were overflowing with patrons who came for the music, revelry and green beer. In return, they left plenty of greenbacks around town.

"I think this is our best year ever," said Greg Cowley, tending bar at Cowley's Old Village Inn on Grand River in Farmington.

With the WCSX Morning Crew to start things up, there was a line of celebrants at 8:30 in the morning.

"It's a holy day of obligation," said Eileen Ashley of Northville with smil-

ing Irish eyes. Ashley and her friend, Kathleen Flanagan of Detroit, were havin' a pint as the band, Blackthorn, prepared to entertain the packed, smoky bar.

"Every year we take the day off," Flanagan said. "We start here and go to other Irish bars."

Although most patrons had taken the day off, there were a few who had called in sick, like a West Bloomfield man who didn't offer his name.

"I try to do this every year," he said, looking not a bit pale.

The Keane family of Canton was enjoying the crowning finish to a St. Patrick's Day weekend Monday. Jerry Keane had just walked in the St.

See ST. PATRICK'S, A2



Cookin' at Cowley's: Blackthorn band members from right: Fred Klein, Richard McMullan, Gary McMullen and Dennis Green.

## Beat-up driver swears off 1 finger salutes

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

A Farmington Hills man said another motorist responded with a fist after the Hills man flashed him the middle finger during a traffic incident. The altercation took place on northbound Farmington Road near Freedom around 7:30 a.m. Friday, March 14.

Lou Elias said he was attacked by the driver of a pickup truck, who was angry after Elias pulled in front of the truck. Elias said the driver sped up behind him and put on his high beams, which prompted Elias to reply with the obscene gesture.

The truck collided into the back of Elias' 1988 Dodge Acura. Elias said he got out to check the damage — holding a large flashlight for protection — when the driver of the truck got out. "The next thing I know he rushes me and gets me down on the ground," Elias said. "He banged my head on the street and I was in shock. At that point I thought, 'I'm going to die right here in the middle of the road in front of all this traffic.'"

A Farmington Department of Public Services employee saw the fight, separated the two and called police. When contacted this week, the employee said he didn't want to comment.

Elias said he went into shock and thought he had a seizure during the incident, but refused to be taken to a hospital. "I worried about the bill," he said. "There's no way I could afford it."

The driver of the truck told Farmington police Elias' vehicle cut him off, causing him to crash into the rear end of Elias' car with the icy road conditions Friday morning. The driver of the truck was ticketed for the accident, police said.

The driver said he was protecting himself from the other motorist brandishing a flashlight, police said.

Police will send a report to the Oakland County prosecutor's office, which will consider any further charges.

Elias said he learned one thing from the incident. "I don't think I'll ever give anybody the finger again," Elias said. "I usually don't do it because I feel bad afterward. I guess you learn to just stay in the car and, if possible, take off..."

## Detroit sewer costs flushing our way

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Detroit Water and Sewer Department needs to rebuild its sewer system and will be looking to its suburban neighbors like Farmington to pick up part of the \$1.07 billion tab.

Dave Mariner of Farmington's sewer and water consultants Orchard, Hiltz and McCliment gave Farmington City Council members an overview of the department's pro-

posed sewer separation plan at Monday's meeting. At the state of Michigan's behest, Farmington spent \$13 million for its own sewer separation and pump station in 1990. Detroit Water and Sewer Department needs to do the same to prevent combined sewer overflows from polluting waterways.

"Detroit is faced with the same situation you were a few years ago," Mariner said.

As a result, suburban customers might see anywhere from a \$20-\$50 rate increase per home a year to help pay 10 to 20 percent of the \$1.07 billion figure, according to one estimate given by Detroit water officials.

That price tag, though, is a far cry from the \$4 billion cost the state Department of Environmental Quality estimated it would take to complete Detroit's sewer separation pro-

ject. The state agency is going over Detroit's proposed plan.

Detroit's system receives treated sewerage from Farmington and other communities. Farmington sends 6 cubic feet per second to the Detroit system and another 1.37 cubic feet per second through the Farmington-Evergreen system, which eventually ends up in the Detroit system.

See SEWERS, A8

## You have 2 days

It isn't too late to get an absentee ballot application to cast your vote in the Farmington Public Schools' millage renewal and \$110 million bond issue election on Tuesday, March 25.

Applications must be received at the school board office by 2 p.m. Saturday, March 22. The office is located at 32500 Shitawassee, Farmington, Mich. 48336. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call 489-3300.

## You have almost 4 weeks

Time is short for filing your income taxes. State Rep. Andrew Ruczkewski offers the 60-page Michigan Taxpayer's Guides at his district office, which can be reached at (517) 373-1793. It's also at both Farmington Community Library

## FARMINGTON FOCUS

branches in Farmington and Farmington Hills or

### Author goes out of country

Farmington Hills hypnotherapist William Buhlman, author of "Adventures Beyond the Body," (Harper Collins, 1996) has gone international.

A London book publisher has just released a hardcover edition of the book, which chronicles Buhlman's two decades of out-of-body experiences. Buhlman says millions of people have

had out-of-body experiences, though they might not recognize them because they don't have a reference point.

When he's not lecturing across the country, Buhlman is busy on his second book, dealing with the out-of-body experiences of children.

"With children, it's very natural. They're open to it," says Buhlman, who has a computer web site where visitors can express their ideas on it. Buhlman was featured in a segment of "Sightings," a syndicated program which aired in February on the Sci-Fi network. British television is preparing a documentary for its Discovery Channel on Buhlman and the phenomenon. Filming will begin April 26.

The author's book is available locally at Borders and Barnes & Noble. Internet surfers can find him at www.out-of-body.com.