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IN THE PAPER TODAY

Fine time: Court and police officials await the full impact of the new fine schedule. /A3

OPINION

Downtown lowdown: Farmington Hills City Council and others are surprised by developer's request for downtown development authority. /A18

COMMUNITY LIFE

Talented kid: A 9-year-old Farmington Hills girl sang her heart out in the Big Apple to win a competition. /B1

SPORTS

Soccer previews: Boys high school soccer teams in Farmington are full of optimism as they prepare for the 1997 season. /C1

REAL ESTATE

Divine salesman: Does burying a statue of St. Joseph help sell homes? Many former homeowners are believers. /F1

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Oil drilling fuels concern

BY VIVIAN DEGAEN
STAFF WRITER

Get-rich-quick from black gold like Jed Clampett, in Farmington Hills? Oil derricks slurping up crude oil, right next to sleepy residential neighborhoods east of Haggerty Road between Eight and Nine Mile Roads?

Both seem unlikely, but not as unlikely as a television fantasy.

A natural gas and oil speculation venture, West Bay Exploration Company, of Traverse City, has moved closer to begin "angle-drilling" for fossil fuels in southwest Farmington Hills, with a well head targeted near the Meadowbrook Hills, Woods and Forests subdivisions and an underground pipeline system that leads to a storage tank in Livonia.

According to city officials, the company has secured permits from state and environmental agencies to proceed, but still needs the official approval from the Farmington Hills City Council before it so much as scratches the ground.

While council members did not vote on the agenda item Monday, they did establish a Public Hearing Nov. 17 regarding West Bay's approval, allowing time for a public utility session about the application.

Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi said he has heard plenty of opposition to oil from the local homeowners and condominium owners associations, but legally, the city may not have any recourse but to approve the requested natural resources rights.

"The thought of a oil well and oil drilling right next to a heavily residential neighborhood just doesn't seem proper," Vagnozzi said.

Residents dislike the physical sight of such construction and are concerned about

Please see DRILLING, A4

All that jazz



Music makers: Bassist Dan Jordan, left, and Jack Brokensha on vibraphone, produce the sounds that recalls an elegant and storied musical tradition at the historic Botsford Inn in Farmington Hills.

Sound idea puts swing back into Botsford Inn

BY NORMAN PRADY
SPECIAL WRITER

It's about 6:30 of a Thursday evening.

They're bringing in chairs, 75 or 80 of them, placing them around a half-dozen or so large round tables and a few small ones.

They're folding napkins into linen tents, a putting one between the forks and knife at each seat.

In about an hour and a half,

this room, maybe the size of a three-car garage, but with much better paneling, will stop being a room and will become a passenger station on a trip to time suspended.

In this room, under its slim beams beneath a ballroom where Clara and Henry Ford waltzed across a springboard dance floor, a certain kind of music will let you choose an age to be, a year to live in.

A certain kind of music the

Please see JAZZ, A2



Keyed up: Pianist Matt Michaels has played with jazz greats such as Al Hiatt.



Good vibes: The regular jazz nights at the Botsford Inn is attracting patrons who enjoy the timeless musical journey provided by outfits like the Jack Brokensha Quartet. Some jazz aficionados have been listeners for more than 40 years.

STAFF PHOTOS BY BRYAN MITCHELL

Teachers grasp spirit of their profession



BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

New Farmington Public School District teachers are looking at the end of their careers to figure out how to start

them.

Last week's "Teaching with Heart and Soul" workshop, led by minister David Blake of Fellowship Lutheran Church in Sterling Heights, provided teachers such as Shawn Hernton with almost a Golden Rule created specifically for the classroom.

Hernton and other teachers joining the staff were treated to a mixture of music and interactive dialogue, designed to inspire them into being almost educational missionaries. They soon will have the chance to apply Blake's lesson; classes for 1997-98

begin Tuesday.

"What we really want our new teachers to establish for themselves, is a real commitment to their profession as almost a calling," said Judy White, the district's assistant superintendent for instructional services. "... To reflect on what it is they want to do over their careers to enhance the lives of children."

Blake played his guitar and sang as he told the famous "Wizard of Oz" story. According to White, the minister revealed "how each character in that story already had the strength they

Police seize pot plants

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills police were investigating a home burglary, but instead found 94 marijuana plants growing in the basement with a potential street value of more than \$100,000.

Farmington Hills police made the discovery after being called to Cora Street, near Fink in the city's southeast part of the city, to investigate a side door that had been left opened Aug. 15. A room in the basement was being used for harvesting marijuana plants.

Police got a search warrant from 47th District Court Magistrate Dennis Phency and seized the plants and two one-ounce bags of marijuana bags in a freezer.

A mature marijuana plant has an estimated street value of \$1,000-\$2,000, depending on the health of the

Please see POT, A1

Developer, residents urged to talk it over

BY VIVIAN DEGAEN
STAFF WRITER

In an unexpected turn Monday, opposing sides of a proposed residential development at Orchard Lake Road between 12 and 13 Mile Roads were asked by the Farmington Hills City Council to consider compromise before going to court.

Representatives from the HighMeadow Acres Homeowners Association, and of Steven Schafer, Phoenix Land Development, were rendered speechless when City Manager Daniel Hobbs asked for a moment to speak before the two related items on the agenda were addressed by council.

"Currently, the way things are going with this zoning issue, we could end up in a win-lose situation where the only answer is, I'll see you in court," Hobbs said.

Suggesting both sides try working with an objective third-party in an "alternative dispute resolution," Hobbs said the effort would pay off in money saved and image.

Please see TALK, A4

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Tickets are available at all Ticketmaster outlets. For program information, call the Farmington Area Philharmonic at 248-478-2076.

Get well wishes

Farmington Observer Community Life columnist Bev Cornell, who with her trusty dog, Bristol, answers pet and wildlife questions, will be going on hiatus soon. Bev is scheduled for surgery on Friday, Aug. 22, at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, where her pelvis will be removed. Her leg was amputated 14 years ago due to bone

cancer but she has led an active life and is well-known in the Farmington community. In addition to writing her column, which appears twice a month, she teaches swimming at the Farmington Family YMCA, where she is on the board of directors. She is also an active wildlife rehabilitator licensed by the state DNR.

You can send best wishes to Bev Cornell in care of The Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington MI 48335.

Fieger speaks

Attorney and gubernatorial candidate Geoffrey Fieger will be guest speaker at the Farmington Democrat Club meeting 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 27, at the Botsford Inn, Grand River Avenue. For information, call Barry Brickner at 258-4930

Please see TEACHERS, A5