

# Farmington Observer

Sunday  
October 2, 1997

SERVING THE COMMUNITY  
FOR 110 YEARS

VOLUME 111 NUMBER 2

FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 96 PAGES • <http://observer.eccentric.com>

SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

## IN THE PAPER TODAY

**Splitted: Students at Mercy High School in Farmington Hills enjoyed spirit week activities last week. Shown is junior Lynda Winslow after the pie eating contest. /A2**



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## Stepping Into Autumn



STAFF PHOTO BY DEAN MINICELLI

**Color tour: Farmington Hills Naturalist Joe Derek, right, leads a group of senior citizens through Heritage Park last week as part of a nature walk. Another fall color walk is scheduled for seniors at 10 a.m. Monday, Oct. 6. The cost is \$2. For details, call 473-1830. Derek will also lead any residents interested in a trip through Farmington Hills' Woodland Hills Nature Park for a guided tour from 9:30-11 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 4, as part of the park open house. Refreshments will be served. Call 473-9530.**

## Eatery gets health dept. OK Maggots found in 'isolated' case

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Three customers at a Farmington Hills steak house said they found maggots on their food, prompting a complaint with the Oakland County Health Department. A restaurant spokesman said it was an isolated incident that was quickly addressed.

A Detroit woman said she was eating with her daughter and niece at the Lone Star Steak house on Orchard Lake Sunday afternoon when the incident occurred. She made the discovery after moving the sauteed mushrooms and onions from her T-bone steak.

Lone Star's shelled peanuts — a popular feature at the Texas-styled restaurant — were the source of the larvae, a district manager said.

"Unfortunately, they did come from our peanuts. We took care of the issue and the health department just gave us a clean bill of health. They're very satisfied," said Lamark Brown, Lone Star district manager.

"We don't know if it's a bad batch or what, but it has been taken care of." Brown refused to comment on the police report or possible litigation.

The woman who spotted the insect larvae has retained attorney David L. Moffitt. Although no suit was filed as of Tuesday, Moffitt said they'll likely seek damages for negligence in excess of \$25,000.

"My niece said that's probably just some rice," said Barbara Jett of Detroit. "I said that's not rice because I didn't have any rice on it."

"I took the knife and scooped them on a napkin. After that, my daughter yelled when one of the maggots dropped on her plate. When I look back on the napkin where I put those two things, they weren't there. So, they must've crawled away."

After notifying wait staff and management, Jett and her daughter and niece went outside where they vomited, she said. They also called Farmington Hills police, who interviewed the general manager and manager.

According to a police report, the general manager removed all peanut buckets from tables. The manager said she only saw one larvae on the table. Man-

## Melissa's miracle continues

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Melissa Garr has made a enough of a remarkable recovery to ask her father a question they and others have been wondering since a freak accident left their daughter comatose and in critical condition.

"She wants to know why. Why did a tree limb fall on her?" said Mike Garr, Melissa's father. "All we can say, 'We don't know why Melissa.'"

In the past week, the Farmington High student has gone from being on life support to recognizing visitors in the coma rehabilitation unit at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital. She began to use sign language in order to communicate.

"She knows it from school," said Mike Garr, Farmington Hills fire lieutenant. "We started watching her hands and she began signing letters of the alphabet. She was able to sign, 'I love you dad.'"

The Farmington High student was critically injured after a tree limb struck her on the head at the Farmington Glen Aquatic Center July 23. Damaged so severe that doctors could only register activity in the lower brain stem when neurological tests were done in mid-August.

Melissa, 16, is not able to speak because a tracheotomy tube restricts air passage needed to vibrate her vocal chords. Surgery is planned to replace the tube.

She's getting her point across by other means.

At one point becoming frustrated while using sign language, she grabbed a chalk board from her father and began writing messages herself.

Melissa is also becoming increasingly agitated. She pulled her feeding tube out of her stomach and indicates she wants to go home, her father said.

"I spoke with the doctor and he said that was a stage she had to go through," Mike Garr said. "They see that a lot with coma patients: They get agitated and frustrated. The doctors and nurses are amazed at her recovery."

Since being able to communicate, Melissa is keen to show she remembers key events — including a trip she took with her mother Susan to Mackinac Island.

During the Michigan-Nature Dames football game Saturday, her father bought her a squeakable football in the gift shop. He gave it to her to exercise her fingers, but was amazed to see Melissa throw the ball. The two played catch for five minutes, he said.

"It's taken Melissa herself and a lot of prayers to bring this miracle," Mike said.

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

Farmington school board Trustee Priscilla Brouillette asked about location of electrical outlets in a proposed new science lab at Farmington High School recently, indicating that the board won't be a rubber stamp as far as bond issue projects are concerned.

Brouillette's question, and inquiries from other board members during the Tuesday, Sept. 23 regular meeting, showed that it's will need to be dotted and its crossed before the first nail is hammered next spring.

Such scrutiny will be expected by residents who are footing the bill for the projects included in the two-part \$93.1 million bond issue that was approved by voters on Sept. 16, said board member Joseph Svoke.

"I would hate to get into a situation," Svoke said, "(where) we get so far down the line and say, 'Oops, we forgot to take this into consideration.'"

"We received a very heavy message from the public. They made the

commitment and now their expectation is that the district will come up with facilities that will last."

He emphasized that it is up to staff persons to "come forward" if they have a question or concern, Svoke added.

Concurring was Superintendent Bob Maxfield, who said he was generally comfortable with the architectural plans presented on additions and renovations to Farmington and North High schools, and O.E. Dunckel Middle School. "But the challenge is there, that we don't leave anything to chance."

Those three schools were first to have their projects brought to the

## District cuts bond tax rate

The Sept. 16 approval of a \$93.1 million bond issue in the Farmington Public School District meant an increased tax rate of 1.64 mills.

But, due to a rollback required by Proposal A, the increased levy will actually be about 1.26 mills, according to school board members, which last week set 1997-98

millage rates if 2.28 mills for debt and 12.61 mills for operating.

By adding the two figures, homeowners will pay 14.89 mills, which is 1.26 mills more than 1996-97. The difference between 1.54 and 1.26 mills is estimated to cut taxes by \$23 a year for the owner of an average home in the district.

board, with preliminary architectural work actually having been done in advance of the bond issue. Cheryl Cannon, the district's assistant superintendent for business and finance, said Farmington, North and Dunckel are

Please see BOND, A2

## Just Grand

Cafe's tunes, ambiance draw nightlife



BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

If Saturday night's all right for fighting, as pianist rocker Elton John proclaimed, then Friday evenings must be for sipping coffee and swooning to syrupy love songs.

Patrons at the Grand Cafe are mesmerized by another piano player, Jerome Malloke, whose melodic voice serenades the clientele in the downstairs coffeehouse in the Cook Building on Grand River in downtown Farmington. With "Lady in Red" by Chris DeBurgh, the placid, relaxed mood is set on this Friday night.

"This guy is so good, they're booking him for weddings," said Lance Kwas, Grand Cafe owner about the 1996 Harrison High graduate.

The marriage between piano music and coffee seems rather odd at first. After all, the image of java-inspired haunts is one of smoke and chatter to folk music.

The smoke-free ambiance, as well as the waffling music, helps bring people out.

"Look at how clean it is," said Maggie Lashbrook, 17, Livonia Ladywood High senior. "It's so much cleaner and brighter."

Lashbrook is finishing an apple caramel shake with friend Mark Pala-

Please see GRAND, A8



STAFF PHOTO BY JEFF KUSKIS

Young crowd: Jim Tapin serves some coffee and drinks to a table of customers at the Grand Cafe.

## Petition drive

Merian's Friends are coming to Farmington. Carol Frederick Poenisch, founder of the grass-roots organization, which favors physician-aided suicide, will speak at 7:45 p.m. Oct. 15 at the Farmington Library, 23600 Liberty.

The group is working to collect 350,000 signatures by the end of the year to put a "Right to Physician Aid in Dying" proposal on the ballot in 1998. Poenisch's mother, Merian Frederick, suffered from Lou Gehrig's disease. Frederick committed suicide with the help of retired pathologist Jack Kevorkian.

The Oct. 15 event is sponsored by Farmington chapter of the American Association of University Women. For more information, call Jon Dolan at (810) 473-8545.

## FARMINGTON FOCUS

### Lending an ear

You don't know what to do. You've got a family to feed and you just lost your job. Or, you're in high school, and your friends have been pressuring you to smoke, try drugs, have sex. Or, you're scared that when you get angry, you might take it out physically on someone you love.

Perhaps talking to someone can help. Eastern Michigan graduate counseling students are partnering with Farmington High School to offer free counseling services from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Wednesdays, for anyone who lives in the community. To schedule an appointment, call the FHS Counseling Office at 489-3447 during daytime hours.

### Trick or Treat

Get in on The Great Pumpkin Hunt, a scariest fund-raiser for the Leukemia Foundation being hosted by Arlene Prey of Prudential Great Lakes Realty in Farmington Hills.

The treasure hunt, or road rally, will begin at 6 p.m. Oct. 18 at an undisclosed location. Thirty dollars per couple covers the hunt, dinner and prizes. The money will go to send a local jogger to Hawaii to run a marathon to raise funds to fight leukemia. To sign up, call Prey at 626-9100.