

Farmington Observer

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SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

8 of 10 refuse to take MEAP

Worried about their futures, Farmington's high school juniors see no good reason to take the revamped state tests. So, many opted out.



Only 18 percent of Farmington high school juniors will bother taking this week's Michigan Educational Assessment Program test and

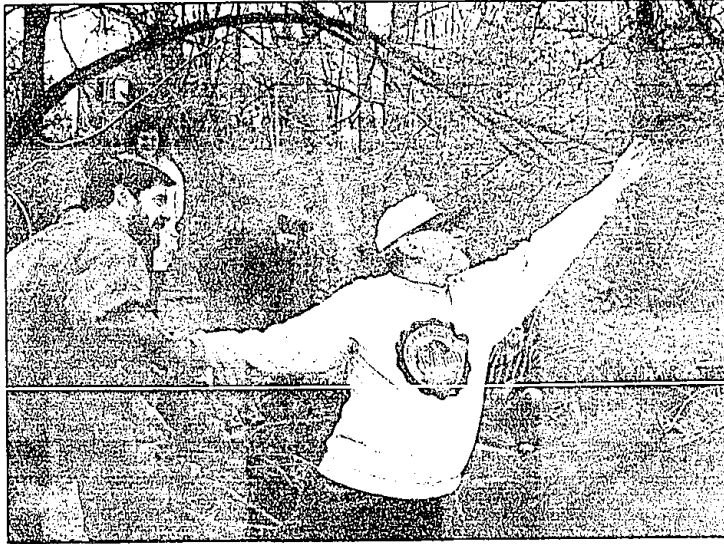
school officials are trying to figure out what to do now.

"We need that information," said Farmington schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield at Tuesday's press conference about the subject. "But we need that information out of all of our kids, not 10 percent of our kids."

Too many parents apparently don't think the so-called high stakes test is valuable enough, or that it will make much of a difference in their young-

Please see TEST, A4

Hands across the water



Darby day: Merv Rose, who was at the fishing derby with Beechview Elementary Cub Scouts Pack 321, unsnags a line from a low branch for a youngster, while Jim Sokoloff of Farmington Hills, who was fishing with his sons, lends a hand. For more on Saturday's derby, see Page A3.



Message to Mom

Why is your mother special? Tell us in 50 words or less and you may win lunch or dinner for your mom (and three other people) at a local restaurant. Mail, fax or E-mail entries by noon Friday, May 1.

MAIL: Community Editor Davo Varga 33411 Grand River Farmington, MI 48335

FAX: (248) 477-9722

E-MAIL: dvarga@oo.homecomm.net

Be sure to include your name, your mother's name, your address and telephone number. You may send a photo, however, judging will be based on your message.

We will print as many entries as possible on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 10. The contest is open to readers of all ages.

TODAY

Their mark: Two men whose lives left an impact on the Farmington area died this week. /A2, A3

COMMUNITY LIFE

The Farmingtons: Local students find 22 different U.S. cities of many shapes and sizes named Farmington. /B1

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HOW TO REACH US

Newsroom: 248-477-5450
Newsroom Fax: 248-477-9722
E-mail: dvarga@oo.homecomm.net
Nightline/Sports: 734-953-2104
Reader Comment Line: 734-953-2042
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Baby deaths trip alarm

The death of a 6-week-old Farmington Hills baby given new impetus to the Oakland County medical examiner for a statewide program to combat positional asphyxiation - fatalities caused when a baby's airways are obstructed and the child dies from oxygen deprivation.

The autopsy performed by Dr. Kanubhai Virani, Oakland's deputy chief forensic pathologist, concluded the cause of death was positional asphyxia - the term used to describe fatalities in which the victims, usually infants, die for lack of oxygen. Sometimes, positional asphyxiation is caused when bedding gathers around the baby's head, said Dragicovic. Occasionally, he said, positional asphyxiation is caused by "overlay," a reference to a parent laying on an infant, causing it to die from lack of oxy-

Please see ALARM, A6

Despite warning, Hills baby dies

Ironically, the father had been warned. But his 6-week-old son - after being fed and changed - seemed comfortable and the Farmington Hills man continued to let the baby sleep on his chest. His fiancée, the baby's mother, was sleeping on a couch nearby.

Please see DEATH, A4

In spirit

WalkAmerica marchers brave rain, cold for the cause of kids

Mercy High School student Maggie Wright wasn't overly excited about participating in Sunday's annual WalkAmerica for the March of Dimes. Maggie, 14, decided that WalkAmerica would be a good way to fulfill a 25-hour community service requirement at Mercy. So she persuaded her mom, Rosalie, to go with her to Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge for the Farmington Hills portion of the walk.

Dimes spokesman Bill Axtell. Of those, most only made it to the third or fourth checkpoint before taking shuttle buses back to the campus. The trek was difficult because of the conditions. Sidewalks were "flooded everywhere," Maggie said. And, virtually everybody sloshed along with water-logged rain gear on their bodies and umbrellas lifted above their covered heads.

Dedication shows

Earlier, while Livonia resident Laurie Blocker was walking with other members of the Precious Star team, she talked about dedication to the March of Dimes by people who participated on a bad day - even though they really didn't have to.

"On a day like this," said Blocker, with husband Dave and children Katie and Danny, "with the pre-paid walk, at least people have made an effort. They collected the money, got the word out

Please see MARCH, A8



Wet watch: Farmington Hills Sgt. Brian DeGrande (left) helps to ensure the safety of walkers at the intersection of Farmington and OCC in the driving rain Sunday.

Angels for Oprah

Joann Pachan, director of the Farmington Hills KinderCare Center on Middlebelt, got a thrill earlier this month when she was invited to a taping of the "Oprah Winfrey Show" for raising lots of money for Oprah's Angel Network.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

decorated angels and sold them. "Meeting Oprah was great; she shook my hand," said Pachan, who has been with KinderCare 12 years. "She's an awesome woman."

Sunday afternoon, as the annual CROP Walk for the hungry hits town to raise money. Walkers will begin and end at First United Methodist Church on Grand River, with the choice of a 2-mile Mini-Walk or a 6.2-Mile Walk starting at 2 p.m. The Harrison Jazz Band kicks off the registration period from 1:30-2 p.m. outside the church.

Classic auto cruise gets a green light

Classic car buffs soon can add downtown Farmington to their list of destinations for summertime nostalgia. The Farmington City Council last week OK'd a request from The Pasta Stop owner Roger Ratkowski to allow Monday night classic car shows in the city parking lot behind his Grand River/Farmington eatery.

Part of the parking lot adjacent to State

