

Farmington Observer

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Sunday
January 10, 1999

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VOLUME 112 NUMBER 311 FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 53 PAGES • http://observer@centric.com SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS © 1999 HomeTown Communications Network, Inc.

THIS WEEK AHEAD

MONDAY

Meeting: Farmington Hills City Council reconvenes for the first time after the holidays 7:30 p.m. in city hall.

TUESDAY

Work blahs: Farmington / Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce and Botsford Hospital host "Prescription for Burnout" 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Botsford Commons Assisted Living Center, 31400 Archwood. Cost is \$5 a person. Information: 474-9235

Speakers: The Council of Homeowners Associations of Farmington Hills will meet at 7 p.m. with social time and follow at 7:30 p.m. with a regular meeting in lower level meeting room at the Farmington Hills Library on 12 Mile Road. Speakers are Jim Stark of the Northwest Gazette and Joanne Maliszewski, editor of the Farmington Observer. The meeting is open to the public.

ZBA: The Farmington Hills Zoning Board of Appeals will meet at 7:30 p.m. at Farmington Hills City Hall, 31555 11 Mile.

WEDNESDAY

Diversity visit: Farmington Branch Public Library hosts its annual "Carousel of Cultures" 7 p.m. People can learn dances, crafts or tastes foods from around the world.

THURSDAY

Informal: An informal writing class is offered at 1 p.m. every Thursday at the Senior Center in Farmington Hills. Everyone is welcome. Call 473-1830.

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Gas companies fuel residents' anger

Farmington Hills residents began complaining in August about representatives from natural gas companies, who are not taking out the required \$25 permit required by city ordinance. One company has been ticketed.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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Farmington Hills residents aren't warming up to upstart natural gas companies representatives knocking on their doors. They have frightened some residents and irritated police and prompted the city's Consumer Protection Commis-

sion to get involved. With deregulation of utilities, the door-to-door reps are actively soliciting new customers. The problem is they're not taking out the \$25 permit required by city ordinance. Residents started complaining to the city and police in August about the sales visits. Soliciting without a permit is misdemeanor, which if convicted carries up

to a \$500 fine and 90 days in jail. Police have issued one ticket to one salesman representing a gas company. Authorities are not questioning the company's legitimacy but are worried about residents' safety. "They've been asking to see copies of old gas bills," Farmington Hills police Sgt. Tim Swanson said. "(The residents) were a little leery about showing them this information." A Stamen Court resident is thinking about phoning an attorney to get out of a deal his wife signed. Tom Hervin said his wife signed with Energy America on the promise of receiving a rebate. He immediately tried to phone the

company and returned a letter allowing him to rescind the offer. He's not heard from the company. "It's a classic run-around," Hervin said. "They got what they wanted and they're not around." His wife, who is from the Philippines, asked the solicitor if he had a license and he said he did but didn't show it. What makes Hervin particularly angry is the sales rep walked off with part of his Consumers Energy bill. "I have a giant shredder. I don't give out personal information to anyone," Hervin said. "Who knows what they're

Please see GAS, A4

Kids and seniors narrow the gap

BY TIM SMITH
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Senior adults and middle school students are using cyberspace to narrow the generation gap and find out they have more in common than they might think. They're doing it through "Computer Buddies," a Farmington Community Education pilot program teaming 10 seniors and selected East Middle School students. Side by side, teens and those with decades more life experience collaborated on the computers, printing out address labels, creating holiday greeting cards, working on budget spread sheets. Perfecting a Beanie Baby Web site was the team of eighth-grader Michael Smith, 13, and senior citizen Francis Houstekier.

Meanwhile, eighth-grader Scott Morris, 13, and Ruth Beno, who turns 70 on Jan. 15, teamed up at the keyboard to work on a family tree for Beno.

"I'm getting a better understanding of the computer, which I never used until October," Beno said. "It's an introduction to computers, but it's also an introduction to another century of children."

Beno noted how tolerant and cooperative youngsters can be, while Scott merely



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRANLIER
Bridging the gap: Geri Murray learns how to make labels with some help from her buddy, Aatif Jaleel. Teacher Barbara McCune watches the lesson.

Please see BUDDIES, A5

Man dies in van on freeway

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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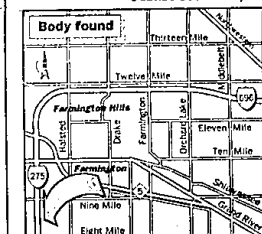
Michigan State Police say a 44-year-old man whose body was found inside a van stranded on I-275 in Farmington Hills died from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning.

The man identified as William Turner worked for Shining Star Carpet Cleaning. He was found in the van on the freeway's southbound shoulder between Eight and Nine Mile shortly after noon Jan. 6.

The Oakland County Medical Examiner determined he died of acute carbon monoxide poisoning. It's not known how long he'd been dead.

A gas-powered cleaning machine, which was running when his body was

Please see DEAD, A5



Report: Expand full-day kindergarten sites

BY TIM SMITH
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Doing more to welcome families and young children into the educational mix is a prevalent theme in comprehensive early childhood committee recommendations for Farmington Public Schools.

The report, formally accepted Tuesday by the school board, was detailed by officials in mid-December. At that time, officials stressed that the extensive recommendations are a starting point, and need to somehow be merged "within" the preceding elementary study report, said James Myers, executive director for K-12 student services.

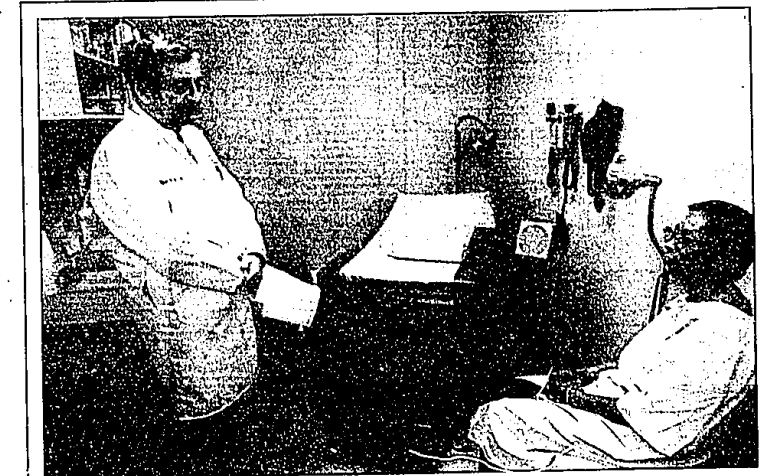
"We're going to have to continue to review our efforts," Myers said. "... What we're doing in (the) early childhood study does not stand alone and can't stand alone. Education really is a lifelong process, starting at birth."

One of the recommendations, which were research-driven, is to expand Educare, a tuition-based (\$2,000 annu-

ally) full-day kindergarten program, from four sites (Alameda, Fairview, Forest, Hillside) to as many as possible.

The district, however, wants the program to be something all families have access to, which is why tuition scholar-

Please see REPORT, A6



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRANLIER
Caring: Dr. William Hryniuk, M.D., director of the breast cancer clinical program consults with patient Marcia Davis.

Compuware managers lend a hand

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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People often remember when to give gifts, but sometimes they give gifts because they simply need to remember.

With the latter in mind, Compuware's Thomas Costello Jr., is one of 74 senior managers at the Farmington Hills-based computer software corporation who contributed a hefty sum in the ongoing fight against breast cancer. Managers raised \$3.8 million for the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute, which is named in honor of Compuware founder Peter Karmanos' wife, who died in 1989 from the disease.

Managers raised \$3.8 million for the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute.

Please see KARMANOS, A4

