

# Farmington Observer

HomeTown  
Putting you in touch  
with your world

Sunday  
January 24, 1999

Serving Farmington and Farmington Hills for 112 years

VOLUME 112 NUMBER 39

FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 70 PAGES • <http://observer@ccnet.com>

SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

© 1999 HomeTown Communications Network, Inc.

## Love & Marriage

The Observer would like to feature you in the Feb. 14 special wedding and anniversary section. We're planning to run testimonials on happy marriages from couples that have been married 25 years or more. Submissions, including a wedding photo and a recent photo, must be mailed by Monday, Feb. 1, to Farmington Observer Editor Joanne Maliszewski, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48335. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the return of your photographs. We're also planning a story on bridesmaids and groomsmen and would like to hear from people who have been one of the other at least five times. For information, call (248) 477-5450.

## WEEK AHEAD MONDAY

**Meet: The Farmington Hills City Council will meet at 7:30 p.m. in council chambers, city hall, 31555 11 Mile.**

## THURSDAY

**Rainbows: You're invited to attend the Rainbow Recognition Awards Breakfast of the Farmington-Farmington Hills Multicultural-Multiracial Community Council at 7:30 a.m. at the William Costick Activities Center, 28600 11 Mile. For tickets call Farmington Community Library Director Beverly Papai, 848-4301.**

## INDEX

- Obituaries A6
- Classified Index E6
- Real Estate E6
- Crossword E7
- Jobs H1
- Automotive J1
- Home & Service J7
- Taste B1
- Arts & Leisure C1
- Sports & Recreation D1

# Fumes: High school evacuated



Friday was report card day but students got a reprieve when Farmington High School was evacuated due to an odor, similar to paint thinner. The FHS-North basketball game also was postponed.

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
tsmith@ccnet.com

Fumes originating from a construction area at Farmington High School freed evacuation of the building about noon Friday.

But no students or staff members became ill from the odor, said James Myers, executive director of K-12 student services for Farmington Public Schools.

"Nobody that we know of was sick due to it," Myers said. The problem also forced the postponement of Friday evening's boys basketball game between FHS-North. The contest will be made up at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 23. All teams have an open date on the league schedule for emergency make-up games. Myers said an odor, similar to paint thinner or turpentine, began being detected about 11 a.m. Friday. The

problem was caused after workers put sealer down on a concrete floor in a classroom being built in the technical wing. "The fumes came out of the open spaces and the (solvent-like) odor came back out into the building," Myers explained. "It wasn't that strong. But we just didn't know what the effect would be. So as a precaution, we sent people home."

Please see FUMES, A4

# Plethora of potholes perturbs motorists

BY JOANNE MALISZEWSKI  
STAFF WRITER  
jmaliszewski@ccnet.com

After a couple of weeks of cold, blustery weather, you may like this January thaw. But it's murder on the roads and your car.

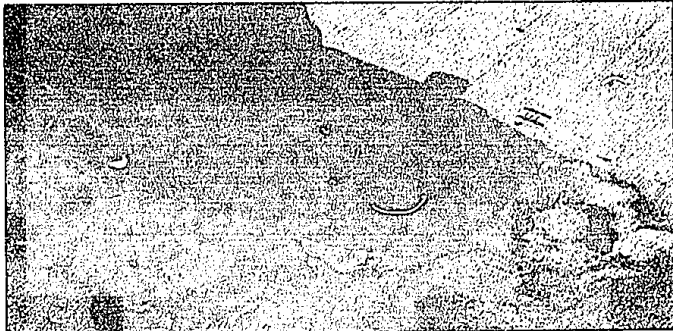
In a word, the problem is potholes - big, deep ones. And they are what everyone - at least everyone who drives - is talking about.

The drive over a pothole can be jarring to a motorist's central nervous system, but the real damage is done to a vehicle's wheels and rims, with repairs costing as much as \$350-400 a wheel, said Chip Habermehl, manager of Center Tire on Farmington Road. "Actually, I've only had two calls: one reminding us of the condition of Farmington Road, and the other about the condition of roads in general," said Kevin Gushman, Farmington public services director.

Under scrutiny is Farmington Road with its myriad of potholes, especially those between Eight Mile and Nine Mile roads.

The city of Farmington offices were closed Monday due to Martin Luther King's birthday.

Please see POTHOLES, A7



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DECKER



**Rough ride: Parts of I-275, such as near Grand River (above) are full of potholes. At left, Farmington maintenance workers fill potholes on Farmington Road north of Freedom Road.**

# January freeze-thaw hinders pothole patching

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
tsmith@ccnet.com

Motorists need to remember this the next time they are dodging potholes on Farmington Road between Grand River and Eight Mile Road: It's not the city of Farmington's fault. Workers from Farmington's Department of Public Services go out almost

**'We've had two weeks of continued freeze-thaw, freeze-thaw, and that leads to the rapid deterioration of any temporary patches.'**

Frank Lauhoff  
—Farmington city manager

every day to patch up potholes on the Oakland County-operated road. But this month's relentless freeze-thaw cycle is making their job almost

impossible. Repaired potholes seemingly open up again almost by the time they get to the next crater.

"We've had two weeks of continued freeze-thaw, freeze-thaw, and that leads to the rapid deterioration of any temporary patches," said Frank Lauhoff, Farmington city manager.

Such problems are cropping up all over the city. Please see THAW, A7



STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LESTER

**Back in: Former Hills City Manager Bill Costick has returned to city government near St. Louis in Missouri.**

# He's back in the (foot)Hills

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER  
loconnor@ccnet.com

After a short-lived tenure in the private sector, Bill Costick is back in the hills.

The former Farmington Hills city manager is back in municipal government; This time as city manager of 30,000 population Wildwood, Mo., which is outside St. Louis and in the foothills of the Ozarks.

Costick, 55, who was Hills manager for 15 years and has the former Mercy Center named in his honor, left in 1996 to work for Bay Harbor, a resort area near Potosky. Eight months ago, he was hired to run Wildwood, a city only incorporated a year ago.

"I missed public service and city management," said Costick, whose wife, Pat, still lives in this area while the couple finds a new home. "Private

Please see MANAGER, A6

# Demolish or not: City officials are faced with decision

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER  
loconnor@ccnet.com

A 60-year-old Farmington Hills man found living in a regular last week remains hospitalized while city officials determine whether to demolish his dilapidated home.

Meanwhile neighbors on Lundy Street are thankful something is being done to help the man, whom they had seen slowly deteriorate during the past eight years. So is one Farmington Hills city employee.

Barb Coccione of the Farmington Hills Zoning Department said animal control called her after complaints about the man's dog, which was found dead in the home.

Coccione continually left notices and talked to the homeowner, who was frightened and incoherent. "He was alarmed by my being there; He told me to go away," said Coccione, who wasn't allowed into the home. "Even though I'm there to make sure the house is up to code, I can't disregard the resident. I have to go to the next step."

**'Even though I'm here to make sure the house is up to code, I can't disregard the resident. I have to go to the next step.'**

Barb Coccione  
—Hills employee

The city employee contacted Adult Protective Services and talked to his case worker. The social worker tried to talk to the man in July but couldn't get anywhere.

Through Coccione's urging, the social worker set up a hearing in December to have the man declared mentally incapacitated. Since no relative could be found, the court assigned a guardian to his case.

Coccione went into the house shortly after the man was hospitalized last week. The home was immediately boarded up. "It was very filthy; It's not habitable," said Coccione, adding

Please see SQUALOR, A4

# PlayScape takes shape

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
tsmith@ccnet.com

All signs point to "Kids World" starting to take shape in June, following Farmington City Council's purchase of equipment and materials for Phase 1 of the planned Shinwassee Park family playscape.



The council, during Tuesday's regular meeting, approved a recommendation to accept a bid for \$76,107 from Engan, Tooley and Doyle, Michigan representatives for the Miracle Recreation Equipment Company.

Council members also authorized the display of three thermometer-styled signs, to update the public about playscape fundraising efforts and who's the latest to contribute.

Signs - complete with a changeable list of major donors - will be assembled by

Please see PLAYSCAPE, A6



8 53174 10005 4