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IN THE PAPER TODAY

Chill Cook Off



STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LAMMICK

Chill heads: *Celebrity judge Bob Reboj of the Farmington Hills Fire Department discusses recipes with U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg at the fourth annual Chili Cook Off in downtown Farmington. For a story and more photos, see Page A9.*

OPINION

Tower: *The Farmington Hills City Council should be careful not to set a precedent with the latest cellular tower./A12*

COMMUNITY LIFE

Discussion: *A highly spirited debate brewed during a Palestinian-Israeli discussion./B1*

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Court

Renovate or build new?

Architects that will be hired by Farmington and Farmington Hills will be expected to provide answers to that question and others for the 47th District Court's future.



BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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During the next two months, two well-known architects and designers are expected to answer three key questions involving 47th District Court:

- Can the existing structure, a former schoolhouse, be renovated?
 - If not, where could a new one be built?
 - Perhaps most important to officials from both cities, how much will renovations or a new building cost?
- Farmington and Farmington Hills city council members met Monday and agreed with 47th District Court Administrator Dave Walsh's recommendation to hire French Associates.

City and court officials believe the existing facility is too small, especially with increased workloads. Between 35,000-37,000 cases are heard at the 10 Milo Road court

Please see COURT, A5

Library to close for renovations

BY TIM SMITH
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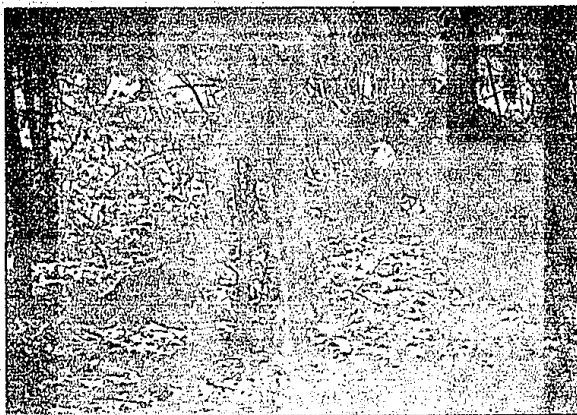
The Farmington branch of the public library will close during the month of August to allow for major renovation projects to begin, said Library Director Bev Pappi during Monday night's Farmington City Council meeting.

"If we have to be closed, that's the least damaging time," said Pappi, noting that August is considered the slowest month of the year in terms of library usage.

The popular Summer Reading Program, expected to draw about 3,000 children, won't be hindered, mostly having taken place during June and July.

"I'm really excited about details of some of the enhancements we're making at the Farmington branch, they're well overdue," Pappi said, during a presentation to the council. "... I've described the branch as a gem

Please see LIBRARY, A8



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREKLEN

Investigating: Farmington Hills police Officer Mark Meredith photographs the wooded area where a woman's body was found Wednesday afternoon

Body found in woods

BY JOANNE MALISZEWSKI
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Police were questioning a Farmington Hills man Wednesday evening about the death of a 28-year-old French woman, whose body was found in a wooded area across from his apartment complex earlier in the day.

Julie Yasa of Paris was found dead in a wooded area on the south side of Nine Mile, east of Drake, and across from the Fairmont Park Apartments at about 1:30 p.m., said Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer.

Early Wednesday evening police were awaiting a search warrant for the man's apartment on Gleno Court.

"It could be a suicide overdose," Dwyer said, adding that pills were found under the woman's body and similar looking pills were found outside the man's apartment.

"They apparently met through the Internet," Dwyer continued. "He apparently paid for her ticket to come here. He said that she had come to the apartment and indicated she was going to commit suicide."

Dwyer said that he didn't know where Yasa had been living since her arrival in the United States about a month ago. Police also found the woman's passport.

Yasa's body was found by police after the

unidentified Fairmont Park apartment resident called police to say he saw a body in the woods across Nine Mile when he was driving out of his complex, police said.

Yasa, who was described as of small build, was found face down about 150 feet into the woods and fully clothed. Her hair was pulled back in a bun, said Assistant Chief Chuck Nebus.

While police officers and evidence technicians began their investigation in the woods, police had the Fairmont Park Apartments man for questioning in a patrol car parked on Nine Mile.

Dwyer said he expected the Oakland County Medical Examiner to have a preliminary cause of death Thursday.

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Restaurateur plans to rebuild eatery

BY TIM SMITH
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Yock Poy Lau couldn't help but shake his head when he peered across the parking lot at the heap of rubble that used to be his Hong Kong Chinese Restaurant.

"It's 21 years of my life right here," said Lau Monday afternoon. He had just spent the day watching a bulldozer demolish the burned-out shell of his restaurant, which was destroyed during an early morning fire on Nov. 11, 1998.

"Every day that I was here, a lot of customers would come in. I miss them all. But what can you say," said Lau.

One thing to say to him is that Lau intends to rebuild his business at the northeast corner of Orchard Lake-Grand River in Farmington.

Lau said he hopes to re-open here in six months or so. That might be optimistic. He would need to have an architectural rendering and site plan approved by the Farmington Planning Commission. Such drawings are currently in the development stages, he noted.

While the bulldozer pushed the rubble into a big pile, to be picked up and hauled away this week, Sandy McPhail of Dan's Subs (located just north of the Chinese restaurant site) walked across the parking lot and brought Lau a steaming hot cup of coffee.

"I take him coffee whenever I see him standing out in the parking lot (after the fire)," McPhail said later. "I think it's unfortunate what happened to his business. It's sad to see someone right next to you lose his business. It could have been us."

McPhail said business at Dan's Subs has not suffered in the aftermath of the blaze, which broke out about 4 a.m. Nov. 11 inside the Wash Hut Dry Cleaners/Coin Laundry, located on the east side of the restaurant.

High winds, of between 40-to-50 miles per hour, resulted in the fire spreading to Lau's adjacent business. Damage to the Chinese restaurant was estimated at \$200,000, not including the cost to replace it.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREKLEN

Clean up: The charred remains of the burned-out Hong Kong Chinese Restaurant and the Wash Hut are cleared.

The fire eventually was ruled accidental (triggered by an electrical malfunction) following investigation by the Oakland County Sheriff Department's Fire Investigation Unit, said Gary Goss, director of the Farmington Public Safety Department. Goss said the fire originated inside the Wash Hut.

Meanwhile, McPhail said it "would be great if he (Lau's restaurant) goes back up. It would be good to see a growing business on a thriving corner."

Dan's Subs and the Hong Kong Chinese Restaurant have been business neighbors for about 20 years, after the independent sub shop moved from the Uptown Farmington Plaza.

According to Farmington City Manager Frank Lathoff, the owners of the Wash Hut have also indicated they plan on rebuilding at the same location.

But the businesses will have to do more than merely rebuild their former facilities.

"That corner was highlighted in the master plan as

Please see REBUILD, A8

M-5 to open this summer

BY JENNIFER PLACINTO
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The pavement is down and the traffic lights are strung, so many people may be wondering why the M-5 highway between 12 Mile and 14 Mile isn't open yet.

"It's because there's still some paving, guard railing, and signs and other safety and operational work to be done before the roadway opens this summer," said Mark Stuecher, Michigan Department of Transportation construction manager for M-5.

"M-5 is going well," Stuecher said. "Last year was just an excellent season. We started the season behind schedule and finished ahead of schedule."

Spring construction on the second phase, which cost \$23.5 million, is expected to

Please see M-5, A7



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREKLEN

A good book: Sarah Brereton reads "Green Eggs and Ham" with Superintendent Bob Maxfield at a Dr. Seuss celebration.

Hats off to Dr. Seuss

BY TIM SMITH
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Perhaps if Dr. Seuss were at Hillside Elementary School Tuesday, he would have been inspired to write another children's book: "Dr. Bob on the Job."

"To honor the late children's author's 95th birthday, Farmington Public Schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield was among several guests to read Dr. Seuss classics to children. Maxfield read "Green Eggs

Please see DR. SEUSS, A11



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