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TODAY

Foiled ya: It took a wedding - sort of - to celebrate a birthday. /A3

OPINION

Shame: It's unfortunate that kids defaced a gay pride mural at Harrison High School. /A12

Drug testing: It's time we all read the constitution. /A12

COMMUNITY LIFE

Together: Imagine married couples leaving for work in the morning, and going to the same place of employment. Kathie O'Donohue looks at Farmington area couples who live and work together. /B1

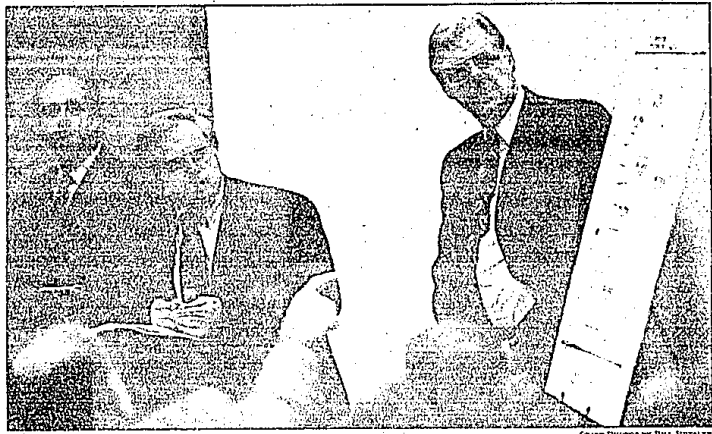
Internet: Staff writer Larry O'Connor writes about a woman meeting a love over the Internet. /B1

ENTERTAINMENT

Circus: The Shrine Circus, the circus with a heart, is a labor of love for the Shriners who run it. /E1

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Listen: David Sharpe (above) points toward map details while Tom Maki of MDOT and residents Larry Shoup and Robert Townsley listen.



At right, John Barber, his mom, Joan Barber, Tullio Carlesimo and Rose Catallo take in what MDOT officials say about noise on the freeway.

Sounds of silence

Residents tell Lansing their story

By LARRY O'CONNOR
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Nearly 100 residents made sure their concerned sounds over I-275 noise carried to Lansing where Michigan Department of Transportation officials sit.

State transportation commission members listened, but said highway reconstruction is going ahead in two weeks - on schedule and with concrete.

At Tuesday's public hearing at Capital City Airport, Farmington Hills Meadowbrook quadrant residents asked MDOT to reconsider using asphalt or look at other noise reduction measures, including a sound wall, for a 1.6-mile stretch from I-96 to Eight Mile.

A surface change would delay the project, which is expected to be done in one year instead of two, MDOT officials said. Residents said they don't want to impede

needed reconstruction but need relief from freeway noise, which registers between 67-85 decibels.

"We don't expect it to be quiet," said Meadowbrook Hills resident David Sharpe. "We expect it to be reasonably quiet."

Commission members - which included a former Meadowbrook resident - said they're "sensitive" to the matter.

They also said they would consider any recommendations made by a consultant hired by the city of Farmington Hills on resident's behalf.

Heavily traveled
Nearly 200,000 vehicles travel I-275, making it the second busiest freeway behind I-76.

Please see I-275, 4

Cellular tower to bear cross

■ A cellular tower bearing a cross will go up on First Church of the Nazarene, despite some concern from residents.

By LARRY O'CONNOR
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Though a cellular tower with a cross fits in with a church's spiritual theme, some Farmington Hills residents believe it violates the soul of a city ordinance they helped draft.

On Monday, Farmington Hills City Council approved AT&T Wireless certificate of need to build the controversial 120-foot cellular tower at First Church of the Nazarene on Higginson Road. The measure passed 5-2 with Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi and Councilwoman Vicki Barnett dissenting.

Those who voted in favor said they had no choice: The request meets the city's cellular tower ordinance.

AT&T Wireless dropped a waiver request that the tower be white instead of the required Michigan gray. That was enough for a majority of council members, who wanted to avoid a philosophical debate on separation of church and state and freedom of speech.

Residents who served on the city's cellular tower ordinance asked council members to stick to the ordinance. The proposal violated a major tenant of the ordinance, which requires towers to blend in, one homeowner said.

"A symbol doesn't take your eyes off of it," said Fran Valley, Council of Homeowners Associations president.

Please see CROSS, A4



Cellular tower at First Church of the Nazarene

Longer parking limits reviewed

By TIM SMITH
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The issue of long-term versus short-term parking in downtown Farmington is again cropping up.

Businesses which use the municipal parking lot on the southwest corner of Grand River-Farmington recently received letters from the city's Traffic and Safety Board, about a recommendation to institute two-hour parking.

FARMINGTON

One of those businesses, Mutual Financial Services, wrote a letter back, balking at the idea, discussed during Monday night's Farmington City Council meeting.

"It's an issue that the Traffic and Safety Board has addressed in the past," said Gary Goss, director of the Public Safety Department and a member of the Traffic and Safety Board, after the meeting. "Particularly on the north side of Grand River, where employees want to park right next to their business establishments."

About 20-25 percent of the municipal lot

Please see PARKING, A5

Hills activist remembered

By LARRY O'CONNOR
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George Thomas Roberts' personality made mind reverts excited.

The Farmington Hills resident always said what he thought and left nothing open for interpretation, say those who knew him.

The Olde Town resident championed causes and unequivocally embraced the city he loved. Mr. Roberts died after a long illness March 13 in Sinai Hospital in Detroit. He was 71.

"He was a good guy," said Massie Kurzeja, an Olde Town resident and activist. "All the good ones are leaving us."

Mr. Roberts was particularly well known in city hall circles. He served on the Zoning Board of Appeals from 1977-85. He also sat on the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Board, which oversees applications for home improvement for low to moderate income families.

Until health problems occurred, Mr. Roberts also served on the Volunteer Handicap Parking Enforcement committee.

"He had a concern for the well being of the city," said Rick Lampi, Hills community development director. "He wanted to be fair about how people and issues were judged. He had a sense of dedication."

Or as Leo Blizman of the Hills Zoning Office said, "George was an original."

Attorney Art Heidt was on the ZBA with Mr. Roberts. He had a keen insight to the problems faced

Please see ROBERTS, A2



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRIDGER

Guest at Gill: Devin Scillian, newscaster at WDIV-TV, shows Gill Elementary School students a watercolor painting of "Fibblestax," the main character of a children's book he wrote.

Newscaster shares love of reading

By TIM SMITH
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Gill Elementary School students might have thought "Oh, Fibblestax?" when they found out WDIV-TV newscaster Devin Scillian loves reading and writing more than - yes - even the electronic medium he is seen on every night.

"I make my living on television," said Scillian during a celebrity reading session Monday, March 8, in the Gill gymnasium. "But I'm a big believer in reading."

Casually dressed, sitting in a rocking chair and holding a microphone, Scillian talked to the youngsters about how reading and writing are essential, long after school and throughout life as well as in doing his high-profile TV job.

He also read his unpublished children's manuscript, "Fibblestax."

One of the Gill students who sat on the gym floor and listened to Scillian's imaginative tale was third-grader Laurie Colbert.

"It lets them know that reading and writing isn't just something we do in school," Laurie said, about what she learned from Scillian's visit. "But that it's something that affects (people) throughout their life."

In a word:
Scillian, invited to come to the Farmington district school for "March is Reading Month," read his story about a thoughtful boy named Fibblestax, who assigned heartfelt words to everything from "smile" to "child."

The visit was arranged by Gill student teacher Jay

Please see READ, A5

