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THE PAPER TODAY

Kids: *Kid's Day in the Park is always a favorite for families during the Founders Festival./ A9*

OPINION

Good job: *It was a smart move by the Farmington City Council to buy the Civic Theatre and to ensure that it remains a movie house and an anchor for downtown./ A14*

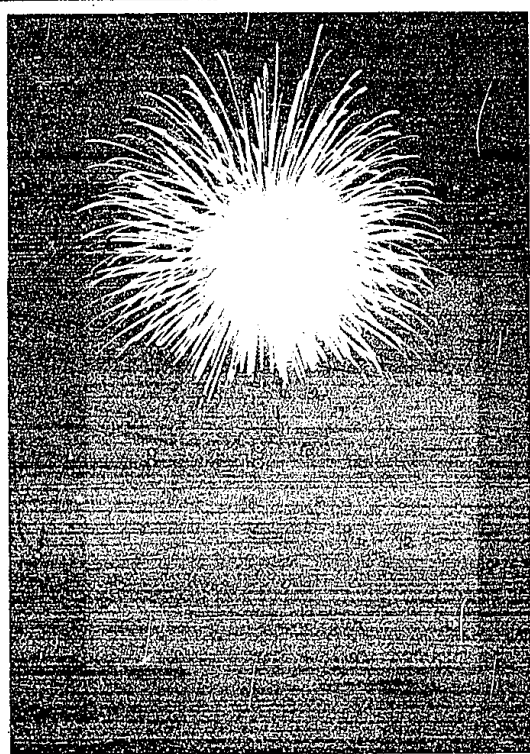
COMMUNITY LIFE

How do you spell relief? *Some local pain sufferers are finding relief in a therapy program called Healing Touch, which deals with energy forces surrounding the body. Find out more about the clinic at Mercy Center./ B1*

SECTION C

What's up? *Farmington and Farmington Hills police and fire news./ C7*

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Bursting in air: Families relax and take in the Farmington Founders Festival fireworks display at Founders Park Sunday night.

With a bang Founders Fest opens

A cheering crowd estimated at between 3,000 to 4,000 gave the Farmington Founders Festival fireworks show a rousing reception Sunday night.

People of all ages from Farmington and Farmington Hills, Livonia, Plymouth, Canton and Detroit sat on lawn chairs or blankets or stood at Founders Park on Eight Mile Road in the Hills, listening to marching music as willows, peonies, huge

Please see B008, A7

Comfort to play role at Civic

The Farmington City Council ratified a purchase agreement for the Civic Theatre as well as a contract for a management company whose owner plans to make some comfort changes in the theater and to continue with second-run movies.

BY TIM SMITH
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Farmington Civic Theatre's new regime plans to give customers the same kind of entertainment that's been served up since 1940 under the Hohlber family ownership.

Second-run, family movies will still be at the core of theater programming. But patrons should expect to see comfort-enhancing changes after Sept. 1 when Greg Hohlber turns ownership over to the city of Farmington. The theater will be managed by Wixombased M.K.A. Inc.

For starters, the box office will be relocated to the west side of the lobby. That will allow an expanded concessions counter and make more room for people to wait in line. The theater will remain open while renovations are being made,

The new look also will include ushers, weekend matinees and a rebuilt stage for live acts such as Soupy Sales and Gallagher II.

except a four-day period in the fall. One screen will be shut down at a time while renovations are under way.

"Forty years ago, things were done in reverse," said M.K.A. President Bill Clark, during Tuesday's Farmington City Council meeting. "One of the targeted areas would be to enlarge the concessions to service twice the number now being served there."

The new look also will include ushers, weekend matinees and a

Please see CIVIC, A12

Big top brings area couple home

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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After 210 shows under a tent, the Kelly Miller Circus ringmaster and his wife are glad to be home — if only for a while.

Livonia resident Barry DeChant and wife Karen, who is a clown with the Oklahoma-based traveling circus, return today for two performances at Farmington Hills Founders Sports Park on Eight Mile Road, between Farmington and Drake. Show times are 4:30 and 7:30 p.m.

DeChant, a WKBD-TV 50 sportscaster in the mid-1960s, joined the circus with his wife, Karen, in March.

Barry DeChant, who retired

Show times are 4:30 and 7:30 p.m. today at Founders Sports Park.

from Ameritech in 1991, has performed as a clown for the Royal Hanniford Circus. Karen DeChant is a retired teacher who performs as "Kari the Clown."

In four months, the DeChants have traveled through the Southwest, South and Midwest. After 11 dates in Michigan, the Kelly Miller circus heads to Canada. They've had just two days off since March.

Please see CIRCUS, A5

Resettling is unsettling

BY RICHARD PEARL
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Resettling refugees can be an unsettling business. Just ask Devin Unick of Farmington Hills. On June 26, Unick, founder of Project Kosovo, got a call telling him the Albanian refugee family his group was to resettle would be arriving at Metro Airport in two hours.

ALBANIAN REFUGEES

Unick and a couple of other volunteers, Judy Farrer of Farmington Hills and Sue Bishak of West Bloomfield, scrambled to reach the airport on time, only to find the family wasn't on the flight. "How could they leave if they were on any other flight?" As of last Friday, July 4, in fact, Unick and the other 40 Project Kosovo members still were awaiting



47th district trio keeps order in the court

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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Court officers are the verbal equivalent to a tack on a chair. They utter "rise" and behinds automatically shoot up to the heavens.

In court, those who wear white shirts make sure no one is dissenting his or her honor. They make sure court runs, if not on time, then at least orderly.

Officers direct visitors at Farmington 47th District Court to take off baseball caps, spit out chewing gum and put away newspapers before a proceeding.

"I'd rather tell them first. He (Judge Fred Harris) gets rather nasty," said Court Officer Bob Mitchell as an aside.

The former U.S. Marine works in Harris' courtroom. Harris is also a former Marine.

Mitchell is joined by Roy Hazen and Jerry McKenzie at the banks of 47th District Court judges and magistrates. All three are retired police officers.

At court, they use their 75-plus years of law enforcement experience. Also, the court setting allows them to rekindle police station camaraderie without the accompanying stress.

Hazen, who works for Judge Marla Parker, spent 26 years as a Detroit police officer. His father was also a police officer.

Hazen retired at 46 but yearned to work again. Five years ago, he became a court officer.

"(I like) being around the system," Hazen said. "It's been my life."

Mitchell started in 1989 working for Judge Harris after retiring from the Farmington Public Safety Department for medical reasons.

McKenzie retired as a Farmington



In the house: Jerry McKenzie, court officer for 47th District Court, hands a case file to magistrate James Brady.

47TH DISTRICT COURT 1997-98 BUDGET	
Revenue	\$2.78 million
• Tickets, fines, fees	\$2.25 million
• Probation fees	\$.30 million
• Civil case fees	\$.10 million
• Miscellaneous	\$.13 million
Expended	\$2.21 million
• Salaries	\$1.18 million
• Benefits	\$.47 million
• General operations	\$.56 million
Source: Revenue	
• The city councils of Farmington and Farmington Hills are allocating \$200,000 annually towards a new court facility. The fund totalled \$400,000 at the end of the 1997-98 budget year.	

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Hills police detective two years ago. At the urging of Hazen, McKenzie became a court officer. It's a job he's been "blessed" to have, McKenzie said.

All three keep things in line. During a highly publicized road rage case, Hazen barked at a daily newspaper photographer who went outside the jury box and began taking photos of the defendant. The photographer later apologized.

"I feel if anyone's rights are being violated by the news media, I bring it to their attention," Hazen said.

Mitchell once had to wrestle with a 300-pound man who didn't agree with



a judge's ruling. He had to use Mace. "The best way to keep things orderly is to intimidate the s--- out of everybody," Mitchell said. "You've got to show them who the hell is boss or they will walk all over you."

"You've got to show them whose house it is and who is running it."

In the court's narrow hallway, things can get hairy, too. Mitchell remembered a double homicide where victim and defendant families shared the same elbow space.

"I sat between them in the gallery. We kept a lid on it," Mitchell said.

Most district court cases involve civil infractions, misdemeanors and traffic violations. Court officers often diffuse any potential problems with words of wisdom.

"Most of the time, you have to remember we deal with traffic cases and civil infractions," Hazen said. "They're upset and their pocket book is hurt. I just say, 'Hey, calm down.' It's not worth getting upset."

McKenzie works with the court's visiting judge and three magistrates, who hear traffic cases and small claims cases. He gives them a little "pre-emptive" speech, outlining the do's and don'ts in court.

He also recommends they get to the point.

"If it's a speeding ticket, stay on the subject of the speeding ticket," McKenzie said. "People have a tendency to babble. They always want to get in the last word."

Another bit of McKenzie's sage

Please see ORDER, A2