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IN THE PAPER TODAY

Lifeline



STAFF PHOTO BY LIZ CARROLL

Example: Todd Lipa, supervisor of youth programs, introduces David Kinchen during a luncheon during which the Farmington Hills/Farmington Community Foundation presented a check to support afterschool programs. Kinchen participated in the programs when he was younger. For a story and photos, turn to page A3.

COMMUNITY LIFE

Progress: A 10-year-old Farmington Hills boy with cerebral palsy can finally communicate with his family thanks to new computer technology. /B1

SPORTS

Diamond dandles: The 14-year-old NFWB Cobras are World Series champions after winning the USSSA baseball tournament Sunday in Sterling Heights. /C1

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Improvements will close library



The downtown Farmington Community Library branch will be closed in August to make way for improvements under a \$11.7 million library millage election last year.

BY TIM SMITH
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Farmington branch of the Farmington Community Library.

Signs are starting to emerge about the pending shutdown of the downtown

"No Donations Accepted," reads a hand-printed sign taped to an exterior door. One wall of the reference section

is devoid of shelves and books. Squeezes of carpet are missing, revealing old glue and tile.

"And 30 carts of our books are over there (at the Farmington Hills branch on 12 Mile) draped with plastic," said MarTlyn Smith, head librarian of the Farmington branch.

Both branches are slated for extensive renovations, paid for out of returns from a successful \$11.7 million library

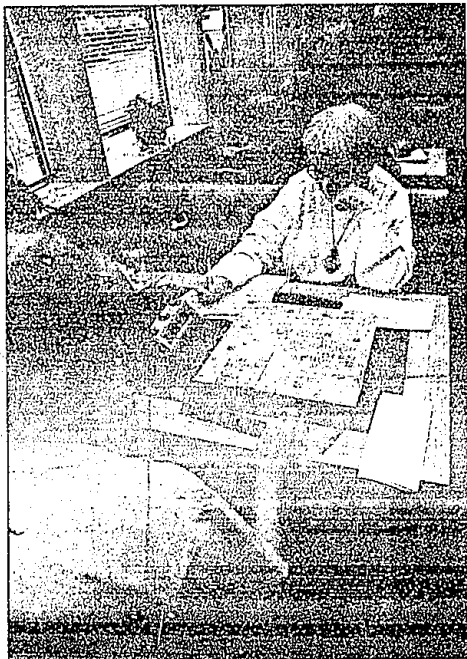
millage election last September. Of that amount, about \$1.02 million is earmarked to improve the 23-year-old Farmington branch.

"It's going to be a big project," Smith said. "And it is going to be an inconvenience for people if the book they need isn't here..."

"But August is our quietest month and usually most of our (summer) pro-

Please see LIBRARY, A7

SCRABBLE



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DREXLER

Up first: Virginia Hampton and Edna Miller play the first game of the evening.

Players compete with words

BY DIANE GALE ANDREASSI
SPECIAL WRITER

Jim Wedell likes to think that the mishmash of letters in front of him looks like a monkey's typing.

Yet like any other regular Scrabble player he knows picking letters from a bag is the luck of the draw.

"Ninety percent of the time you have a bad looking rack," said Wedell, adding that the "rack" is Scrabble lingo for the wooden letter stand.

Still Wedell and others who regularly go to Scrabble clubs in the metropolitan area easily conjure up 30 point-words from a monkey's typing.

"That kind of expertise comes from studying dictionaries and computer programs. The only places you'll ever find "tl" and "aioia," for example, are in the dictionary or on a Scrabble board. But Scrabble players know them as great ways to dump a lot of vowels or to take a turn without passing.

"It's a good way of kicking the

rust off the brain," explained Wedell, who sells insurance by day and is in his second year of the Scrabble club circuit in the metropolitan Detroit area. "It teaches you to learn the language better. And it teaches you spelling."

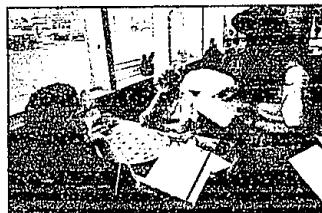
In fact many of the players have memorized all the two-letter and three-letter words in the dictionary. The real pros have gone onto the four- and five-letter words.

Scrabble players can study these common lists and learn other tricks with

LeXpert, a computer program written by M.G. Ravichandran, who is the husband of Carol Ravichandran, director of the West Bloomfield Scrabble club.

"The best Scrabble word is the word that wins the game," said Carol explaining that it's challenging to create a word

Please see SCRABBLE, A5



Let's look: John Terrell and Virginia Hampton have a dispute over a word. Carol Ravichandran settles it with a look through the book of accepted scrabble words.

Charter proposals will face voters in November

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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The state Attorney General's office has massaged the ballot language. Now Farmington Hills voters have until Nov. 2 to lamber up on a series of charter amendments.

Farmington Hills City Council adopted the state attorney's recommended language changes at Monday's meeting. The state Attorney General's office gives preliminary approval while the final OK comes from the Governor's office.

"There will be no delay," said City Attorney John Donohue. "We should be getting a letter from the Governor's office very shortly."

In its initial ballot language, the city went over the 100-word limit on both questions and statement of purpose in a few instances, City Clerk Kathy Dornan said in a report to council.

The city also received state clearance to combine questions regarding initiative and referendum petitions into one proposal.

Ballot questions if approved would:

■ Increase city council member salaries from \$1,900 to \$5,000 annually and the mayor's from \$2,700 to \$7,500;

■ Require initiative and referendum petitions be signed by 10 percent of the total vote cast in the city for the Secretary of State in the previous election.

FARMINGTON HILLS

Petitions currently need 15 percent of the vote in the last election;

■ Increase from one to two years the period in which city council could act to amend or repeal ordinances that were adopted or rejected by voter referendum;

■ Allow council to create administrative departments in addition to those five created by City Charter;

■ Allow relatives of council members, appointees or employees to be hired provided that council approves within 30 days. The City Charter currently requires council approval before a relative is hired;

■ Require a city managerial audit every 10 years opposed to the current five-year cycle, and;

■ Increase the amount from \$3,000 to \$10,000 for items and contracts required to go through the bid process. Questions regarding the managerial audits and bid amounts didn't need language revisions, city officials said.

Hills voters may see yet another ballot question Nov. 2.

A group opposed to the recently-

Please see CHARTER, A7



Still open: Roosevelt's co-owner Duane Gmerek talks with staff members Susan Queen (foreground) and Kelli Murphy.

Health officials say threat has passed

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

Owners of Roosevelt's Billiards Bar & Grill in Farmington Hills said they called county health officials about four weeks ago, after an employee was diagnosed by his physician as having hepatitis A. "We cooperated with health authorities completely," said William Gitre, who along with Duane Gmerek are partners in G & G Entertainment, Inc., the parent organization of Roosevelt's Billiards. "We thought about closing," he said,

ROOSEVELT'S BAR & GRILL

"but health officials said the danger had already passed.

Like other counties in southeast Michigan, Oakland is in the grips of a widespread outbreak of hepatitis A. While most of the cases have been attributed to infection from random person-to-person contact,

Please see HEPATITIS, A10

Her death tells a story

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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Laurette Lewis likely died next to the man whose required care from a debilitating disease consumed her living hours, authorities say.

A neighbor found Lewis, 48, dead in her room at the Park Motel in Farmington Hills Sunday. She was found lying next to her husband, Jim, who is bed-ridden with multiple sclerosis and couldn't get help.

Cause of death has not been determined, though also suffered from kidney problems, police said. The medical examiner's office is awaiting toxicology reports.

Her death doesn't appear to be suspicious, Farmington Hills police said.

Authorities found an empty bottle of

Please see DEATH, A7



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