

# Farmington Observer

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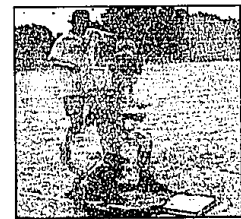
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## TODAY

**TV Book:** *The Observer Newspapers have discontinued the TV cable guide. Reader surveys have shown that the guide hasn't been popular with the majority of our readers. We will continue to focus our attention on improving other aspects of your newspaper. We apologize for any inconvenience.*

## SPORTS



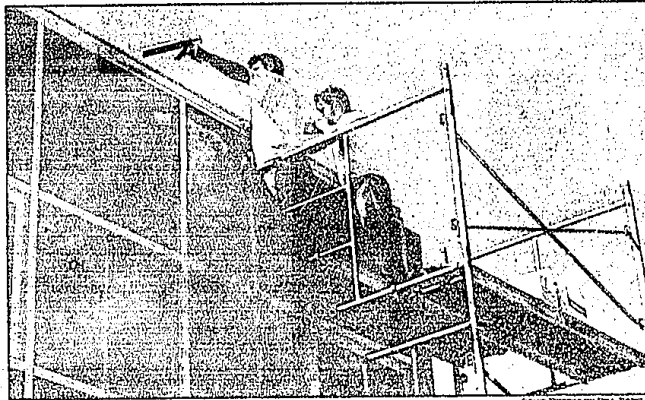
STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DASLER

**Safe:** Former Detroit Tiger pitcher Dave Roze-ma chases South Farmington Blues Crusher Jordan Turner towards first base. For a story about the special game and more photos please turn to the Sports Section.

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## Schools expected to open on time



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DASLER

Working: Jeff Pintrick and Dan McCracken caulk around windows on the rear of O.E. Dunekel Middle School on 12 Mile. Construction and renovations continue through the school district.

Rumors abound whether school will open on time. Officials say it will.



BY TIM SMITH  
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Rumors persist that Farmington High School won't be open for classes until Sept. 15, and that several other buildings won't be anywhere near ready before the scheduled Aug. 30 opening of the 1999-2000 school year.

Physical evidence seems to support those rumors, but district officials remain steadfast that school won't be delayed and that students will walk into a safe environment.

"We're starting on August 30th, we're opening (that day) for students," Debbie McCracken, executive assistant for

**'We're starting on August 30th, we're opening (that day) for students. Which I've been confirming with staff people and parents.'**

**Debbie McCracken**  
—Superintendent's executive assistant

Please see **OPEN**, A8

## Kids will face inconvenience

BY TIM SMITH  
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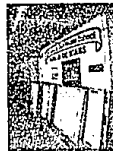
Several construction sites in Farmington Public Schools remain a mess. But never fear, said James Myers, the district's executive director for student services.

Schools might not be "at their prettiest when kids come in," Myers said Tuesday. But they will be safe and functional enough for the 1999-2000 school year to begin on time, with a half-day of classes on Monday, Aug. 30.

"Some students will be walking on the concrete floor" instead of tile or carpet, for example, Myers said. Asked whether construction crews were behind schedule as September draws near, he admitted "we're really coming close (to a timing crisis) on a couple of them."

But he stressed there are "varying degrees of ready." "It will not be perfect. None of the buildings will be perfect on that first day," Myers said. "Some of the things will be ongoing."

One of the projects, if the weather holds up, is the completion of a driveway in front of Farmington High. If it isn't,



**Exposed:** The open ceiling is visible in the main hall at East Middle School.

there could be a problem with the flow of school buses and other traffic, he explained.

As was the case at some buildings during 1998-99, parts of schools still under construction will be partitioned off to ensure student safety. Last year at FHS students turned a temporary wall into a colorful hallway mural, while work on the new music wing proceeded.

"Everywhere where we don't want kids to be will be blocked off," Myers said.

With more work yet to be done, portable classrooms will stay in place at the high schools.

And, he continued, the creative scheduling of faculty planning time will help maximize space. In other words, a teacher will

Please see **PRETTY**, A5



**On guard:** Signs are posted warning people to stay out of buildings during construction.

## How do you shoo away the geese?

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
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Geese are a product of natural settings, but the by-products they leave behind don't make them welcomed by all park goers.

Farmington Hills city officials are looking for ways to shoo the birds from part of its most scenic park.

Geese like to congregate — and munch — on freshly mowed grass around a pond at Heritage Park.

Anywhere from 30-50 of the winged creatures gather at the 210-acre park on Farmington Road. In the fall, a city naturalist predicts numbers could swell to 200 as other geese flock from the north.

With increased numbers comes a deluge of cigar-sized droppings, which end up on the underside of shoes, not to mention in the pond as runoff.

"It's just a mess," City Manager Steve Brock said.

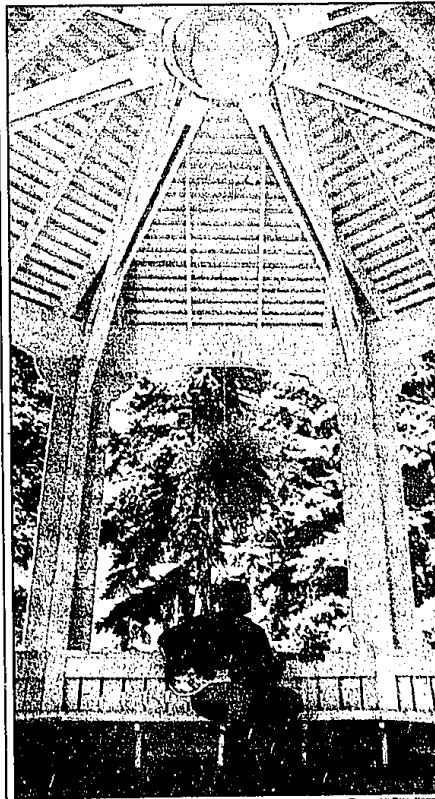
"They're nasty," added City Councilwoman Jody Soronen.

Special Services Department officials proposed planting native grass and wild flowers in an attempt to re-naturalize the area around the pond. Savvy geese avoid tall grass where natural predators tend to lurk, naturalists say. However, the Hills Parks and Recreation Commission is against letting grass grow.

A parks and rec advisory committee wanted the area to remain mowed and well-maintained. As a result, workers cut the grass.

Taller grass is only part of the solution, said Special Services Director Dave Boyer. He talked with Hills city

Please see **GEESE**, A4



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DASLER

**On stage:** Rufus Harris will perform at the Gov. Warner Mansion Saturday, Aug. 28, in the gazebo.

## Musician opens doors at mansion

BY TIM SMITH  
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The upcoming concert at the Gov. Warner Mansion ... Home of Farmington History, featuring contemporary Christian recording artist Rufus Harris, is considered a good initial foray into efforts to increase public use and awareness of the historical facility, said Bill Richards, assistant Farmington city manager.

See related story page B1

Harris will perform 6-9 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 28, at the gazebo located outside the former home of Gov. Fred Warner.

"I think this is the first try, other than the gazebo being used for pictures, to expand the facilities for use by the general public," Richards said. "I think it's the right kind of event, one that matches well with the intended use of the facility ... It's a good initial step."

Harris, who lives in Farmington Hills, this month is releasing his self-titled album on Bridge Records. At his concert, he will sing and play an electric guitar to a taped musical backing.

Over the past year or so, the issue of the Warner Mansion's long-term viability prompted a comprehensive study by a newly formed museum development committee.

Two of the main objectives is to increase knowledge of the mansion by the general public and expand the kind of things that can be hosted there, Richards said.

For the concert, to alleviate disruption on the surrounding neighborhood, Harris said speakers will be pointed toward Grand River. Approximately 150 are expected to attend. In the event of rain, Harris will move his show to the Warner porch area.

Dick Carvell, chairman of the Gov. Warner Mansion Committee and a member of the Farmington Historical Commission, said he doesn't think the early evening concert will pose any problems.

"(With) the type of music it is, I don't think he'll have the volume turned way up," Carvell said.

Carvell had some initial reluctance when Harris approached him about holding an album-launch party at the mansion. But "then he changed it over to a community project that is open to everybody."

The event is being dubbed as a free, concert and

Please see **MANSION**, A8

## Witnesses tell court about videotaping

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
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With no physical evidence, a prosecutor asked witnesses to focus their memories on what they saw in a case involving a Farmington Hills man charged with secretly videotaping teenage girls getting undressed.

Two friends of Robert Charles Mickam, 19, recalled seeing a tape of three girls changing clothes during preliminary exam testimony in 47th District Court Wednesday.

Judge Fred Harris adjourned the exam until 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 1, in order for another witness — one of the victims — to testify.

Mickam is charged with three counts of eavesdropping and installing an illegal recording device. He also faces an eavesdropping charge in West Bloomfield.

Authorities searched the family's Farmington Hills home and cottage in Ottawa County but haven't found the video.

A friend of Mickam's testified he and others were stunned after seeing the black and white tape of three teenage girls — whom they knew — undressing in a guest bedroom at defendant's northwestern Farmington Hills home.

Please see **VIDEO**, A5

