

Farmington Observer

HomeTown
Putting you in touch
with your world

Thursday
August 26, 1999

Serving Farmington and Farmington Hills for 111 years

VOLUME 112 NUMBER 96

FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 82 PAGES • <http://observer.eccentric.com>

SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

© 1999 HomeTown Communications Network, Inc.

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Back home: A Farmington Hills teenager took her bicycle on a trek across the United States. /A10

Benevolent golf outing: Annual benefit links event is scheduled for tomorrow. /A14

OPINION

Open door policy: Big decisions involving development should not be made without input from citizens. /A12

SPORTS

City champs: Farmington High was a double winner Monday in boys golf, taking the varsity and JV titles in the annual city tournament. /C1

Suit dropped: A former Farmington High baseball player who was injured in a practice mishap said he would drop his lawsuit against the school district. /C1

INDEX

Opinion	A12-13
Obituaries	A5
Crossword	G9
Classified Index	G6
Autos	J5
Home & Service	J4
Jobs	H3
Rentals	H1
Community Life	B1
Sports	C1
Entertainment	E1
Real Estate	F1

Police, schools ready for night football

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER

Farmington's move into night home football games is expected to go smoothly, according to local police and school officials.

See related story in Sports, page C1

Opening home games are scheduled at Farmington, Harrison and North Farmington at 7:30 p.m. Friday. Parking is expected to create some problems because of ongoing school renovations. At the school district's request, six police officers from Farmington will be on duty at Farmington High's game and six Farmington Hills officers each will be working at North Farmington and Harrison High.

Gary Goss, Farmington Public Safety director, said because this is the first night home game, there will be some playing the situation by ear. Police from both Farmington and the Farmington Hills departments have met with district officials about the first night games.

"There will be a great deal of (police) presence there," Goss said. "We expect a

Please see NIGHT, A3

Choices abound for Hills voters



Eight candidates met Tuesday's filing deadline for the Nov. 2 election. Six will vie for council, while Nancy Bates and George Sarkisian plan to square off for the vacant mayoral spot.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER
loconnor@oe.hometown.com

Farmington Hills voters can count on having a new mayor and at least two new city council members, possibly even another Oliverio.

Ron Oliverio, ex-husband of current Hills city council member Cheryl Oliverio, has submitted a petition to run for

council. Filing deadline was Tuesday afternoon. Election is Nov. 2.

As expected, Hills Councilwoman Nancy Bates will run for the vacant mayoral spot, which is a two-year term. She'll oppose challenger George Sarkisian, who is chairman of the city's Committee to Increase Voter Participation.

Bates said she's surprised that the mayor's race features only two candi-

dates. At least five nominating petitions were taken out.

A two-person race has its positives, she said. "I think it's a wonderful way to get out the discussion of the issues," said Bates, who cited redevelopment, traffic and state legislation affecting local control as key.

Sarkisian is taking a page from current Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi by going door-to-door. Since June, the power train warranty analyst for Ford Motor Co. said he's visited 1,100 homes.

"I find that's the best way to introduce yourself," said Sarkisian, who ran for city council in 1989.

The city council race features a six-

candidate field.

Incumbent Vicki Barnett will vie with five challengers; planning commissioner Barry Brickner, Andrew Halli, Ron Oliverio, Chris McRae and Paul Molin for three council seats. All three carry four-year terms.

However, as of late Wednesday afternoon, it was determined that Halli did not have enough valid signatures to run, according to the city clerk's office. He could not be reached for comment.

Motivated by service

Public service is inspiring Ron Oliverio. Please see ELECTION, A5

Tour shows schools safe, far from completed



BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER

Barring any last-minute delays or a no-go from the fire marshal, Farmington Public Schools are still scheduled to open Monday, district officials said while giving a building tour Tuesday.

Problems do persist, however: ■ Farmington High School won't have any lockers until two weeks after school starts because of a delivery problem that required reordering.

■ Warner Middle School won't have operational lockers right away.

■ Farmington High has a pool under construction, pushed behind schedule because of a tile workers' strike, and the technology wing is still protected from entry by fences. Several rooms lack carpet, ceiling tiles and cabinets.

The construction and renovation are part of a four-year, \$93 million bond project approved by voters in September 1997. Work is expected to be completed by late next year.

"Cosmetically, the schools may not look the greatest," said Cathy Webby, Farmington school board president. "Ideally we would love to see it all absolutely done. But the scope of the project is just enormous."

After touring Farmington and North Farmington High, Warner and Dunckel Middle and Wooddale Elementary, she said she was confident the buildings would be safe enough for students.

Bill McCarthy, project manager with McS/EV, a consultant and construction management firm in Redford, told a group of school administrators, a

Please see TOUR, A3

On tour: James Jackson of Datacom Solutions strings network cable in the halls of Farmington High School as the building tour group passes by. Work continues around the clock.

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BARKLER

SEMCOG: Hills intersection listed among worst in county



BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER
loconnor@oe.hometown.com

Motorists traveling through the Orchard Lake-12 Mile intersection can expect some relief, Road Commission for Oakland County officials said.

As far as the intersection being ranked one of the most dangerous, that's up for debate.

A Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments report ranked Orchard Lake-12 Mile as No. 8 with an average of 76 accidents during a five-year span. In 1998, 81 accidents were reported there.

Orchard Lake-12 Mile charting on the traffic hit parade is not new, though. In 1997, the same intersection was No. 10 in a similar SEMCOG report.

"In our opinion, that top-10 list doesn't mean they are the most dangerous," said Craig Bryson, Oakland County road commission spokesman. "The raw numbers are a little misleading."

Such analysis doesn't take into account ratio of accidents compared to traffic volumes or crash severity, Bryson said.

Orchard Lake, between 12 and 13 mile roads, had 52,172 vehicles traveling in both directions during one 24-hour period in 1997, Bryson said.

"It's mostly fender-benders," said Lt. Dennis Green of the Farmington Hills police Traffic Bureau. "I can't remember a fatality there in the last five years."

"You have so many people there and you have people merging over from the freeway, they're not getting over 10 miles an hour."

To alleviate congestion, the road commission plans adding a right-turn lane from eastbound 12 Mile that leads to Orchard Lake. That would provide two through lanes and two dedicated right-turn lanes.

At present, there is an eastbound lane that serves for both right turns and through traffic.

"That should help the congestion there," said Tom Biasoli, Farmington Hills Public Service

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BARKLER

On the list: The Orchard Lake-12 Mile intersection is ranked among Oakland County's busiest.

Please see CORNER, A5

Gallagher named to lead Observer chain

Hugh Gallagher is the new managing editor for the Observer newspaper chain.



As managing editor, Gallagher will coordinate newspaper operations in three offices (Livonia, Farmington and Plymouth) and supervise the seven community editors in Canton, Farmington, Garden City, Livonia, Plymouth, Redford and Westland.

A graduate of Wayne State University, Gallagher has more than 25 years of newspaper experience. At the Observer, he has been an assistant managing editor for 13 years, supervising copy desk activities for nine years and the feature sections for the last four years. Those feature sections include Taste, Arts & Leisure, Entertainment, At Home and Real Estate.

Rosiek said Gallagher's "passion for community journalism, his keen intellect along with his many years of newspaper experience and strong work ethic will serve him well in the months and years to come."

"Hugh has been part of the Observer

Please see GALLAGHER, A10



6 53174 10005 4