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**Lining up:** Some big names in the area lent support to Roosevelt's in the aftermath of hepatitis cases. /A9

**Protect:** The Farmington Hills Consumer Protection Committee offers its tips on knowing the laws that govern item pricing. /A11

### OPINION

**Woof:** An animal park sounds like a good idea. /A14

**Bad idea:** State legislation that would hinder home rule should be canned. /A14

### SPORTS

**Shamrocks prevail:** Catholic Central was a 14-10 winner in its annual gridiron bash Saturday with arch-rival Brother Rice. /C1

**Raiders relish win:** North Farmington achieved its first-ever victory over Livonia Churchill in boys soccer Monday. /C5

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## Home rule bill draws criticism

State Rep. Andrew Raczkowski appears to be backing off his stand on legislation the city council believes will damage local government.

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
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As he sat down, state Rep. Andrew Raczkowski heard Farmington Hills Mayor Pro Tem Nancy Bates asked him if he wore his flak jacket.

The state House floor leader faced a table of ornery Farmington Hills City Council members during a study session Monday. All are steadfast in opposition to a Raczkowski co-sponsored House bill, which council members say will decimate home rule.

On Wednesday, Sept. 22, Hills city council members will join other municipal leaders in a trip to Lansing to protest the proposed legislation.

Please see HOME, A4

## Dibert: Open TV forum

By TIM SMITH  
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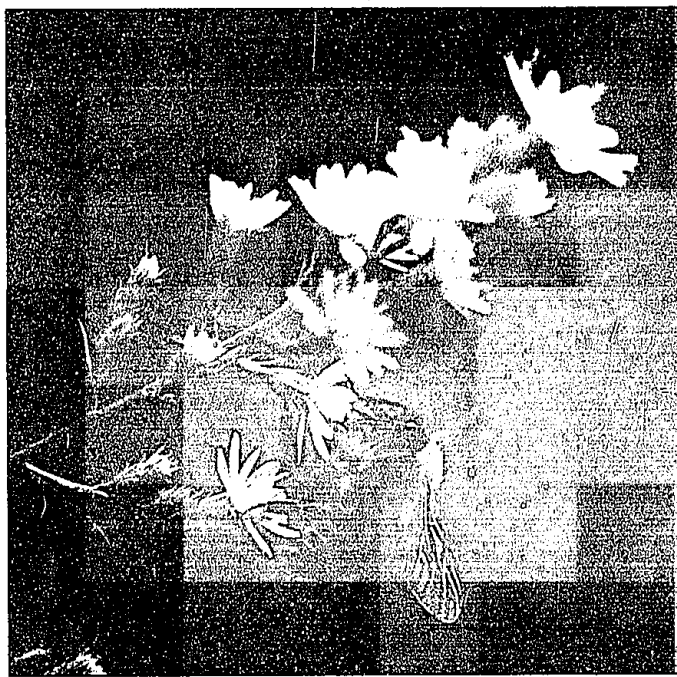
Stephen Dibert wasn't afraid to put on the gloves and mix it up with Andrew Raczkowski during two tries for the state Legislature. And now, it appears he'll take a similar approach in his campaign to be elected to the Farmington City Council.



Steve Dibert

On Monday, the Farmington resident sent a letter to Karen Collins, executive director of the Southwest Oakland Cable Commission, demanding that an

Please see DIBERT, A6



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL DRESLER

On wings and a prayer: Honeybees are busy on wildflowers in the Alameda Nature Scope, on 7.5 acres of Farmington Public Schools-owned property that provides kids hands-on learning.

## Nature nook

Visits teach kids about great outdoors

By TIM SMITH  
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When it comes to learning about living things, the kids who attend Alameda Early Childhood Center are a step ahead of the rest.

Literally. All they have to do is take a walk behind the playground and down a steep hill. Waiting for them is the Alameda Nature Scope, located on a 7.5-acre parcel of Farmington schools-owned property.

Science coordinator Terry Schneider is thrilled about the kind of hands-on learning Alameda youngsters now enjoy through visits to the scenic oasis. The nature scope is in its formative stages. The project will be completed in spring 2001.

"It just widens their horizons" from typical classroom fare, Schneider explained. "That's what we want them to be, little scientists. ..."

Please see NATURE, A5



On the hunt: Teacher Terry Schneider, Kate Harris and Diane Kuuttilla help the children find spiderwebs and other treasures in the piles of woodchips at the nature scope.

## Son charged in beating

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
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A Farmington Hills man, 47, has been charged with aggravated assault after police say he beat his 86-year-old mother Sunday.

Police say he waited nearly six hours to phone paramedics while his mother lay on the floor, unable to move with an injured hip. She was in stable condition at Botsford Hospital.

■ A pretrial hearing is set for 2 p.m. Friday, Sept. 24.

On Tuesday, Kevin Darwin pleaded not guilty to aggravated assault before 47th District Court Magistrate Joann Dudley. The magistrate set bail at \$100,000 cash, and ordered Darwin not to have contact with his mother.

A pretrial hearing is set for 2 p.m. Friday, Sept. 24. The victim told police her son elbowed her, knocking her onto the ground where she injured her hip.

According to police reports, he refused to help her up and kicked her in the head and neck. He also refused to help her when she needed go to the bathroom.

Please see SON, A1

## Years on planning commission taught him when to listen

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
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If Barry Brickner has culled one bit of wisdom during three years on the Farmington Hills Planning Commission, it's when to listen.

For the chatty attorney, auditory skills are likely acquired. Like other planning commissioners, he's loaded down with consultants' opinions, facts and figures of developments. Too often, what's missing is a resident's perspective.

Brickner is one of five candidates running for three seats on Farmington Hills City Council. The election is Nov. 2.

"Sometimes I think I've made up my mind beforehand. 'OK, this is what the consultant says and so on,'" Brickner said. "Then you sit down and listen to the proponent and then you hear from the residents and you get a different spin on everything."

Example: Botsford Hospital's controversial parking lot

addition, which encroached into a nearby neighborhood.

Brickner and his colleagues listened to city staff and proponent assessments. When public comment came around, a woman approached the microphone.

Her tone disturbed Brickner, a 16-year Farmington Hills resident.

"I said the way you talk you assume we've made up our minds," said Brickner, recalling the meeting. "She said, 'I assumed it was a rubber stamp deal.'"

"I said, 'The only thing you haven't told us is whether you object to this project,'" and she said, 'Oh no. I don't

Please see BRICKNER, A6



Candidate Barry Brickner

## Grocery not likely to fill store vacancy

By TIM SMITH  
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Another grocery store probably won't replace the long-vacant Farmer Jack in the Downtown Farmington Center.

But, said Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff, center landlord Kimco Realty Corp. is making significant progress in finding a tenant for the Farmer Jack space, and intends to eventually bring in a smaller food store for a different location in the center.

"They (Kimco) are currently working on a tenant to take the entire (Farmer Jack) facility," Lauhoff said Tuesday. "It's all we can say at this time. But we need to move this along. It's been over a year."

Kimco and the city met last week. Lauhoff said some kind of a decision could be made as soon as the beginning of October.

According to Lauhoff, "It doesn't appear like it's going to be a grocery store replacing it. But now, a store full is going to be more of an advantage"

Please see STORE, A6



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