

# Farmington Observer

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## Performance



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREZLER

On stage: Mercy High School presents "Meet Me In St. Louis" at 2 p.m. today at the school, 11 Mile and Middlebelt roads. The Smith family reacts to Mr. Smith's (Matt Kelly) announcement that the family will move to New York City on the eve of the opening of the 1904 World's Fair in their hometown of St. Louis.

## THREE WEEKS AHEAD TUESDAY

Meet: You're invited to the Council of Homeowners Associations of Farmington Hills' general membership meeting at 7 p.m. in the lower level meeting room at the Farmington Community Library on 12 Mile. Guest speaker will be Steve Brock, Hills city manager.

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## Schools chief calls for one-year halt on MEAP

BY TIM SMITH  
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With results called "kind of worthless," because too few students took it, Farmington Public Schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield called for a one-year, statewide moratorium on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program High School test.

Maxfield, during a press conference last week at the Lewis Schulman Administration Building, said the moratorium would enable a panel of experts to examine the pros and cons of the beleaguered high school MEAP test, which last spring was only taken by 16 percent of eligible students at Farmington, Harrison and North high schools.

Because as few took the exam, the results that were released last week by

the Michigan Department of Education don't represent an honest snapshot of performance. At least 65 percent of students need to take the test in order for there to be a measuring stick worth looking at, said Barbara Cherem, director of evaluation, assessment and special projects.

"I'm always hesitant to say the results are irrelevant, but they are," Maxfield said. "It would be naive to say that we just count on it being better this year. The concerns that caused parents and students not to take it haven't been alleviated."

Because of the low participation, the following 1998 scores (in percentages) were deemed of little or no value by Maxfield:

■ Level 1 (exceeds state standards, endorsed): math, 30.6; reading, 20.9;

Please see MEAP, A8

## Sever's colleagues don't see conflict of interest with post

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
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Though a few of his colleagues may wince, most see nothing wrong with Terry Sever working as a consultant for a developer during his post-council years.

The developer, Steven Schafer of Hills-based Phoenix Land Developer, is expected to submit a proposal on the city-owned Eleven Pines project along with a handful of other builders. Sever is consulting with Schafer on the pro-

See related story, Page A7

ject.

Sever is expected to resign from Farmington Hills City Council Monday. He made the announcement after winning the 19th District Oakland County Commission seat Nov. 3.

"I don't see any conflict of interest," said Cheryl Oliveira, Hills councilwoman. "Nothing on the Eleven Pines golf course has come before us. I don't see any problem with it."

Please see SEVER, A6



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREZLER

Waiting: Jan Turney offers encouragement to Norman the Jersey steer. It was for all naught. Poor Norman failed to deliver for the fund-raising crowds.

## Plop plot Norm didn't deliver

BY TIM SMITH  
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Norman tried but couldn't deliver the goods during last Sunday's second annual Operation Cow Plop at Harrison High School's Buller Field.

But not to worry. The crowd-pleasing Jersey steer, owned and provided by Mark and Beth Harries of Windstar Farm in Oxford,

Please see PLOP, A7



Oh, come on: Crystal Brahm waits for action at the annual Cow Plop.

## On the road



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREZLER

Continuing: Construction continues at the M-5, Halstead/Grand River exit. Traffic at that intersection is still slowed by construction barrels that squeeze east-bound Grand River down to one lane.

## Couple safe after break-in

BY TIM SMITH  
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The Farmington Public Safety Department is seeking a charge against a 40-year-old Detroit man in connection with an early morning home invasion in which an elderly couple was victimized by someone who had previously lived with them.

## FARMINGTON

Robert Jackson of Detroit was arraigned on two counts of armed robbery and one count of first-degree home invasion in 47th District Court Friday. He pleaded not guilty on the charges. A \$200,000 cash bond was set for him. An exam is scheduled on the charges at 8:30 a.m. Nov. 16.

Apparently, said Michael Wiggins, deputy public safety director, the man left the home about two weeks before — and returned about 3:30 a.m. Thursday, taking an undetermined amount of cash and forcing the couple to be confined in the basement.

It was not disclosed where the incident took place.

"He had resided in the home for a period

Please see BREAK-IN, A8

## Response close for Farmer Jack fate

BY TIM SMITH  
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The answer might be near to the longtime mystery of what will become of the vacated Farmer Jack in downtown Farmington.

Sometime during the next two to three weeks, either a new tenant will be unveiled, or the city of Farmington will file a civil lawsuit in Oakland County Circuit Court against Farmer Jack's parent company, the Greater Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company.

"At this point," said Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff on Thursday, "we'd anticipate A&P would approve or

accept the tenant (center landlord) Kinco is offering. It's good for the downtown, it's good for the citizens and it does not present head-to-head competition with their Nine Mile store."

The Downtown Farmington Center Farmer Jack closed in late June.

Lauhoff said Kinco Realty Corp. currently is negotiating with Farmer Jack/A&P and the potential tenant, which he described as a specialty grocery store. That store would take up about half of the 20,000-square-foot facility.

But, if the prospective newcomer is

Please see JACK, A7

## Talks focus on saving Hills neighborhoods

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
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When it comes to neighborhoods, character matters.

Just ask Betty Cook, who lives in Olde Town in the southeast end of Farmington Hills. A developer there is attempting to build five homes on them.

"It's just a few lots, but it made a big difference in the neighborhood," Cook said.

Farmington Hills City Council and Planning Commission members agree and talked about ways to avert radical

residential face-lifts at a joint meeting Thursday. To address the character issue, the city is going to consider a zoning ordinance that maintains a common theme among adjoining subdivisions and possibly rezoning existing parcels.

City council and planning commission members talked about development standards, policies and open space issues at the meeting.

Downzoning some existing parcels to lower density is a possible solution to prevent a mish-mash of housing, a planning consultant said.

Please see NEIGHBORHOODS, A7



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