

# Farmington Observer

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## IN THE PAPER TODAY

OPINION

**Good job: The Harrison and Farmington marching bands are to be congratulated for their hard work in the past marching season. They're champs! /A14**

## COMMUNITY LIFE

**Safety: A former firefighter presents "Fire Safety," a new video. /B1**

## SPORTS

**State champs: Farmington Hills Mercy captured the Class A championship in girls' swimming and diving Saturday - its first in 26 years. /C1**

**State final: Farmington Harrison will attempt to defend its Class A football championship Friday against Hudsonville. /C1**

## AT HOME

**Holiday walks: It's time for the annual holiday home tours, including the tour to benefit Greenmead. /D6**

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## Time Warner says costs are going up

**BY LARRY O'CONNOR**  
lcoconnor@ec.homecomm.net

If cable subscribers were surfers, they'd be face first on the beach and picking sand from their teeth.

They remain buoyant despite the wave of rate increases that keep crashing ashore in monthly cable bills. The latest is a recently announced 4.6 percent raise starting Jan. 1.

For average subscribers that means \$1.42 more a month.

Cable rates have crested 40 percent since 1990 and show no signs of letting up.

"It's just like any other business: Your costs go up year to year," said Tom Bjorklund, Time Warner regional vice president. "Our programming costs continue to go up well beyond the rate of inflation."

While not confirming or denying the 40 percent figure, which was calculated by Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission, Bjorklund contends the company has made many improvements during the past eight years.

Those include:

- Adding 15 to 20 new channels, including

Please see CABLE, A3

## Crack addiction linked to robbery

**A 56-year-old man faces charges in connection with an armed robbery of a Total gas station on 12 Mile and Halsted. He was arrested following a police chase.**

**BY LARRY O'CONNOR**  
lcoconnor@ec.homecomm.net

He defies the stereotypical image of a crack user. Farmington Hills police believe the robbery for drug money case involving a 56-year-old man depicts the depth and desperation too often associated with the addictive narcotic.

"It's a sad scenario," said police Chief

Bill Dwyer.

James Newton Ellis, 56, of Harrison Township is charged with one count of armed robbery and fleeing and eluding in connection with a holdup at a Total gas station on 12 Mile and Halsted Sunday night.

Police arrested the man after a chase in which officers pinned the suspect's station wagon on M-5.

The man, who is widowed with four

children and worked as an electrician for 30 years, is a suspect in at least three other gas station robberies. He has no prior criminal history, police said.

He confessed to a Sterling Heights robbery Nov. 19, which prompted a two-day crack binge, police said. He also tried to hold up a Clinton Township gas station.

"We believe he may have been involved in more," said Assistant Chief Chuck Nehus, "especially if he is supporting a \$100-a-day crack habit and living out of his car."

At 9:15 p.m. Sunday, the man entered the Total station. The 24-year-

Please see ROBBERY, A4

## Kids cook up 'gourmet feast'

STORY BY DIANE GALE ANDRESSI  
PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER



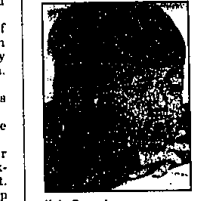
Take out: Katie Blumberg avoids the hassles of cooking her own turkey and orders out.



Michelle Rubin



Candice McKenzie



Kylie Parent



Joy Peterangelo

first-grade culinary experts at Kenbrook Elementary School stirred up a few gastronomic punches to the traditional Thanksgiving Day meal.

One Martha Stewart would-be, Kelsey Wilcox, would serve turkey.

"I would cook it up in the oven on 30 for half an hour," Wilcox said.

Koji Yamamoto, 6, plans to have mashed potatoes and "mashed" takes on a whole new meaning.

"I would get potatoes and smash them in a pot with a hammer and cook it and get it out and eat it," Yamamoto said.

Nicholas Woods' idea of a perfect Thanksgiving meal features spaghetti. His preparation plans include putting a pot on the stove, getting bowls out and voila, there's dinner.

If Chelsea Hoedl were hosting the holiday dinner, her main course would be turkey with side dishes of mash potatoes and salad. Pumpkin pie is her choice for dessert.

Mark Torres would also serve turkey-baked for 130 hours. The other courses, he said, would include salad, soup and milk.

"You're making me hungry," Torres said to classmates in Debby Smith's room of 18 students.

Samantha Barash would bake her turkey for 100 hours and she would also serve an interesting variation to the traditional mash potatoes recipe.

" Mash the potatoes with milk and dough and put them in the oven," Barash explained.

Katy Rand wants to serve turkey.

"I would put salt on it and cook it six minutes with a little lemon juice and carrots," Alex Tobor would "cut a hole in the turkey" for the stuffing.

"I'd put a little pepper and salt on for my dad and cook it for five minutes," Tobor added.

Chicken is the main course for Andrew Neandl.

"You take raw chicken and put barbecue sauce on it and put it on the barbecue-- flip it

over, then I'd take it out and put it on a plate and warm it up."

His specialty, though, is mashed potatoes.

"Take some potatoes and cut them up in boxes and cook them in a pot and melt them and make them squishy," Non-ah said.

Joy Peterangelo would bake turkey in the oven for 50 minutes. She would also serve stuffing, mashed potatoes and pumpkin pie.

Sean Gardner has a different technique: "Put it in the oven for 15 minutes and put the stuffing in the mouth," he added.

Appealing to all children everywhere, Tom Gojcaj would serve vanilla and chocolate ice cream. Nutritional value aside, the preparation time can't be beat.

"Put it in the refrigerator and take it out," he said.

Kyle Millman approaches cooking as if it were a math problem.

"Put it in the freezer and cook it in two halves or three halves and add a little barbecue sauce," Millman said.

Michelle Ruben ascribes to the same culinary methods. She would serve turkey seasoned with barbecue sauce and baked for six hours.

Kylie Parent would make turkey, mash potatoes with gravy and butter; and for dessert he would serve ice cream moose tracks.

Jason Lenz, 6, wants chicken and turkey with "my grandma."

Candice McKenzie would serve turkey.

"I'd put it in the oven, like, for 20 minutes and then I'd eat rice that my mom buys," McKenzie said.

While everyone else is worried about recipes and cooking time, Katie Blumberg would take a fool proof approach.

"I'd go buy it already done," Blumberg explained.

Who all these ideas circulating in the classroom, Wilcox added: "It's going to be one terrific Thanksgiving."



Tom Gojcaj



Kylie Millner



Jason Lenz



Sean Gardner

## ALS He's the lifesaver

**BY LARRY O'CONNOR**  
lcoconnor@ec.homecomm.net

Before Farmington Hills Fire Department could start its Advanced Life Support system, it needed a lifesaver.

Kevin Bersche was 911 on the phone list.

"I know I wouldn't have been able to do it," Fire Chief Rich Marinucci said.

Bersche, 39, who is the department's firefighter of the year, was working in the private sector when Marinucci phoned him more than a year ago.

## FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR

The city's public safety millage passed, which allowed the department to add Advanced Life Support to its repertoire. The chief needed someone to put the pieces in place.

"It gave me a chance to finish something I had been pushing for many years," said Bersche, who was honored diener Nov. 20. "I used to say to Rich all the time, 'Let's go ALS.'"

Lives have been saved. Since March 1997, the fire department has provided the service to residents.

Simply put, Advanced Life Support is

Please see FIREFIGHTER, A6

## Teen's family gives thanks

**BY TIM SMITH**  
tsmith@ec.homecomm.net

One thrust of an attacker's butterfly knife into the chest of 16-year-old Jacob Dillard left him critically injured and nearly tore apart his Farmington Hills family.

But this Thanksgiving, Jacob - stabbed by a stranger near Nine Mile-Farmington roads on Saturday, Nov. 7 - and his family have a lot to give thanks for.

First and foremost, Jacob healed well enough from the puncture wounds to his heart and lung to finally leave Botsford Hospital on Monday, Nov. 16, and return home. Since then, he has continued recuperating while at the Jerry and Ruth and three siblings.

"A lot of them (Thanksgivings) come around where it's 'Oh, it's Thanksgiving,'" said Ruth Dillard earlier this week. "This is definitely one we feel we have a lot to be thankful for. Even he (Jacob) said so himself."

Monday, however, Jacob did not want to be interviewed. His mom said he still is very sore and "gets really tired."

Her son survived what obviously could have been a fatal injury. The Dillards haven't forgotten about that in the days since Jacob left the hospital.

"It's made a big difference in just renewing that emotional bond that you have with a child," Ruth Dillard said. "As they get older, the gap (between parent and child) grows."

"But when something like this happens, you just grab hold of all the feelings you had when they were younger and dependent on you. You can see that come out on both sides, too. It's definitely brought us closer."

Please see STABBING, A7

