

## IN THE PAPER TODAY



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRADLER  
Sharon DeVore, Laura Stirett and Linda St. Denis

**Howdy neighbor!** Welcome Wagon has a new approach for a new century. See how families are greeted today. Home Town Life / C5

**Gill Year-Round:** Parents are making one last try to save their children's school program. / A5

**The glue:** Without the people who volunteer, much of what's accomplished by the city of Farmington might not get done. / A12

## OPINION

**Volunteer:** Five "excuse-busters" for people reluctant to share their time and talents. / A10

## ARTS & LEISURE

**St. Patrick's Day:** The Irish Fest Saturday at the Hellenic Cultural Center in Westland is a celebration of Irish music, song and dance. / B1

**Dining:** Local Irish pubs are getting ready for one of the busiest days of the year. / B8

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# Festival exec balances interests



BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
tsmith@oe.hometown.net

It's almost karmic, this brand new marriage of Suzanne Lichtman and the Farmington Founders Festival.

"While we want to respect and honor the traditions of the festival, there needs to be a recognition there are various demographics in the communities combined and we need to make sure the festival is addressing the needs of many different areas of interest."

**Suzanne Lichtman**  
—Founders Festival Administrator

Here you have a community tradition (the festival) slipping off the tried-and-true path because of change and apparent resistance to it. Now comes a dedicated community member and business woman (Lichtman) who strives for bal-

ance in her life more than anything else.

"In the last few years," said Lichtman, "I decided I wanted to strike more of a balance in my life. And balance to me is to continue working (with husband Gary at their Lichtman & Associates firm), have time for my family and now, to have time to be involved in the community."

"It just so happens that my business lends itself nicely to things like the Cornucopia Ball and like the Founders Festival. ... It's a good fit."

But Lichtman — recently named festival administrator following Bruce Lilley's abrupt resignation — is likely to

discover there's a much different definition of balance when it comes to the festival itself.

### Juggling act

Already everywhere in town carrying her cabinet-sized accordion folder, Lichtman will juggle a potpourri of aspects such as: celebrating the rich history of Farmington; making sure many different demographic groups find something of interest to them; enabling nonprofit groups to participate without costly fees; and yet, turning enough of a profit for the 40-something extravaganza to sustain itself for

Please see **FESTIVAL, A2**

## If this wall could talk



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRADLER

Wall of art: Pat O'Connor has re-created Claude Monet's "Water Lilies" as a mural for the media center at Highmeadow Common Campus. Her acrylic mural is designed to bring a colorful element to the room and can be seen from anywhere.

# Mural transforms Highmeadow library

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
tsmith@oe.hometown.net

Visitors to Friday's "Literature Extravaganza" at Highmeadow Common Campus will quickly find out that the school's media center could double as a high-quality art gallery.

It won't be easy to miss Highmeadow parent Pat O'Connor's jaw-dropping acrylic mural, her virtually perfect rendition of Claude Monet's "Water Lilies."

O'Connor, a professional artist whose son Matias Morel, 10, is a fifth grader at Highmeadow, was recruited to turn the cinder-block wall above a handicapped access ramp into a warm and colorful conversation piece.

"This is a new media center and we needed to bring a little life to these

white walls," said Highmeadow media center specialist Sue Kalisky, who coordinated the innovative March is Reading Month PTA-sponsored program with parents Geri Pensley and Cathy Roshak. (Friday's program is from 6-to-8:30 p.m.)

Another reason for wanting a mural was to eliminate any urge for youngsters to dash up the ramp.

"Putting a mural up solved those

problems," Kalisky said. "You can see it from anywhere. It warms the space and reduces the desire to run on the ramps. ... They don't have to go right up there in order to see it."

### Artistic challenge

Of course, the first step of the process was to determine which painting

Please see **MURAL, A3**

## TV-10 annual telethon hits the airwaves

BY RALPH R. ECHTINAW  
STAFF WRITER  
rechtinaw@oe.hometown.net

The second annual 24-hour TV-10 telethon gets under way 3 p.m. Friday as more than 300 volunteers attempt to raise more than \$10,000 for after-school activities for middle school students.

Last year's telethon raised about \$10,000, and organizers hope to go higher this year. Student volunteers from all three high schools will take pledges over the phone while other students perform. All but one of the 52 acts are musical. Some include

Please see **TELETHON, A3**

**Tune in to TV-10 at 3 p.m. on Friday, March 16 for 24 hours of entertainment by talented local students.**

## Teens heed call to action at summit

BY JONI HUBRED  
STAFF WRITER  
jhubred@oe.hometown.net

Three years ago, when community agencies in Farmington and Farmington Hills joined in a unified "Call to Action," one of their first goals was to include area youth in discussions about how to make the communities a better, safer place to live.

Now that kids have been involved for three years, they're getting tired of all the talk and they want some action. That process began Tuesday, with an all-day summit at the Farmington Training Center.

"They said, 'We are sick and tired of adults calling us together to dialogue. We want to get down to business,'" said Estrinnee Michelon, executive director of the coalition. "Today is about business."

Students started out hearing from motivational speaker Ron Bachman, who imbued the day with a sense of energy and optimism. Bachman, whose legs were amputated because of a congenital condition, showed students by his example that they could accomplish whatever they set their minds to.

"He lives his life 10 times happier."

Please see **SUMMIT, A3**



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRADLER

Idea exchange: Farmington students Mark Rutledge and Ava Jackson were among 85 teens who participated in the summit.

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