

IN THE PAPER TODAY



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRZESKI
Hooked: Colin Belanger shows off a fine catch.

Trout Derby: On Saturday, hundreds of parents and kids lined the banks of the Rouge River in Shiawassee Park in search of the perfect catch. Learn more about the Trout Derby, hosted by the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills, from Hills naturalist Joe Derek. /A3

American Legion seeks essay contest entries

American Legion Post 346 invites students to submit, in 500 words or less, an essay on "The Voice of Democracy: Freedom is not Free."

The contest is open to students in all Farmington area public and private schools, elementary through high school.

Cash prizes will be awarded and the winners will be honored at the Memorial Day parade.

Essays must be submitted by May 16 to Uncle Jack Curd, 23050 Frederick, Farmington MI 48336. For more information, call 478-4694.

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Baubles and bangles: Joanne McShane admires jewelry in the silent auction.



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL BRZESKI
Film at 11: Channel 50 newsman Harry Hairston emceed the evening's festivities.



Bidders' paradise: The silent auction drew Elizabeth Martin, Mark DiPonio and Carolyn Dinsler to place bids.

Arts benefit on 'Starry Night'

Celebrating a rich history of giving voice to the arts, the Farmington Community Arts Council kicked off this week's "Festival of the Arts" with a Saturday night gala at the Costick Activities Center in Farmington Hills. The "Starry Night" preview transformed the center's Dublin Gym with elegantly decorated tables and billowy sheets of star-studded gauze hung from the ceiling. The evening also provided the almost 200 people who attended with a preview of exhibits, which included entries in the Farmington Artist Club competition and a display devoted to the work of Artist in Residence Junebug Clark, a photographer whose father, Joe, was the Farmington Area Arts Commission's first Artist in Residence. Organizers say a silent auction — which featured a number of framed artworks and posters, theater and sports ticket packages and even a "private showing" night at the Civic Theater in Farmington — raised more than \$4,000 to benefit local arts programs. More than 200 entries in two and three-dimensional art were judged earlier as part of the Farmington Artist Club's annual competition.



The All-Stars: Front row, from left, are Michael Anderson, Shigong Zhang and Amanda Patton. Second row, from left, are Sean McCann, Betsy Ratke and Audrey Brayman. Third row, from left, are Brian Doughty, Cynthia Rich, Kimberly Weaver and Anne Bresler. Back row, from left, are Christopher Gansen, Kevin Pilkiewitz, Eric Konopka and Yibo Ling. Not shown are Margaret Wright and Jason Gehan.

Observer honors All-Stars

Inside this issue of the Observer, you'll find a special section we're very proud of: The Observer Academic All-Stars.

This is our 16th year of recognizing outstanding academic achievement on the part of high school students in Canton, Plymouth, Livonia, Westland, Garden City, Redford, Farmington and Farmington Hills.

These outstanding students deserve special recognition. The Observer regularly recognizes athletic achievement, and we feel that academic achievement deserves the same recognition," said Observer Managing Editor Hugh Gallagher. "The Academic All-Stars is a

Hills talks water quality

BY TIM SMITH
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Monday's Farmington Hills City Council study session kicked off what promises to be a year-long discussion about water quality issues.

But residents can expect to be given ample opportunity to have input in mapping out long-range goals and objectives to ensure water supplies remain clean and usable.

There will be a public information meeting from 7-9 p.m. Tuesday, May 15, at Farmington Hills City Council chambers. The facility is at 31555 11 Mile Road.

Council members Monday night talked about management plans for three Rouge River sub watershed advisory groups and storm water pollution prevention initiatives.

"It's a huge task and the city council is genuinely concerned that we have good water quality," said Thomas Binsell, director of Farmington Hills Public Services, "and to work with everybody else" to make sure that happens.

Both short- and long-term goals must be crystallized over the coming months, and be presented by the end of 2001 to the city council for formal action, Binsell said.

"When you talk about the goals, they're pretty general," Binsell noted. "But the first priority is public health."

A public information meeting about water quality issues will be held at Farmington Hills City Hall on May 15, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Areas to be examined are sanitary sewer holding tanks, excessive river flow, soil erosion, aesthetics and restoring habitat for the ecosystem.

Much of Monday's discussion was about future commitment to the cause, which Binsell said could come in the form of finances, city codes or even public education.

How to deal with the 2,000 septic tanks located in Farmington Hills was another topic at the session.

"Nobody looks at those," Binsell said. "The sanitary sewers are taken care of by the city. Nobody fixes the septic systems, and when nobody fixes them that adds to pollution."

Meanwhile, as part of the permit process, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality will be coming up with a program to have septic tanks inspected before the sale of properties where they are located, he said.

Leads sought in theft of stamps

BY SUE BUCK
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Farmington Police are asking for leads to solve a \$1,900 stamp theft that occurred about 6 p.m. March 8 at the U.S. Post Office retail store in downtown Farmington.

A teen-aged suspect took the contents of three racks of books and may attempt to sell them to party stores, according to Detective Aaron Malewski. Photos obtained from post office video cameras were just recently released to the press.

A school liaison officer from Farmington High School studied the photo and didn't recognize the teen, Malewski said.

The postal video photographed a white man about age 18, 5 feet 8 inches to 5 feet

9 inches in height, who wore a dark-colored, hooded sweatshirt. He was videotaped sometime between 4:40-4:50 p.m.

Malewski said the teen took the books of stamps from a rack.

For the convenience of customers, the postal store is set up with the same ease of shopping found in supermarkets, said Debra Redmond, a customer service representative. Customers select items and then pay for them.

The store, which has been open for four years, focuses on being customer friendly, she commented.

A store employee had stocked the stamps about 15 minutes prior to the teen's arrival. Police say the teen attempted to conceal the

stamps under a large envelope before leaving the store. An employee chased after him, according to a police report.

Malewski said he hadn't heard about any problems at the location prior to these incidents.

A similar incident occurred last week when a woman tore the plastic wrap off stamps and used a priority envelope to conceal them, Redmond said. Clerks had watched her twice before; the third time, the police were called. The woman was ticketed, Redmond said.

Over the three occasions, Redmond estimated the woman attempted to steal \$1,000 worth of stamps.

"Theft happens," Redmond said. "It can be a problem in a retail store."