

TODAY'S TECHNOLOGY

Can't go a day without your PDA? Does it seem like a cell phone is surgically attached to your ear? Do you have TiVo? The Farmington Observer is looking for tech-savvy residents to document how the microchip revolution has changed their ways. We'd like a volunteer to keep a week-long diary of high-tech habits for a story on the local impact of the Internet and other technology on daily life. If you're interested in participating, e-mail Joni Hubred, Farmington Observer community editor, at: jhubred@oe.homecomm.net

For brides: Get ready for "The time of your life." See the Bridal Showcase inside today's paper for help planning your wedding.

THE WEEK AHEAD

TUESDAY

Ambassadors: The Farmington / Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce is planning an Ambassadors Committee Meeting: 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 12 at the Chamber office.

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Filing: Librarian Tina Theeke browses through the Cook collection catalog. It has recently been reorganized into binders. Only a portion of the historical collection is shelved due to lack of space.

Residents' help vital to preserving local history

BY PAUL H. PACE
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If the people of Farmington / Farmington Hills aren't going to collect, record and fight for their communities' history who will?

That's the question posed by senior librarian Tina Theeke at the Farmington Community Library on 12 Mile Road, who says the two communities served by the library won't have to worry about it any time soon.

The Farmington area has about 200 residents who are active in keeping the two cities' history alive and secure for future generations to enjoy.

Brian Golden, vice president of the



Farmington Historical Society, noted the Farmington area has the most active historical society and genealogy groups around.

Consider this fact: there are five groups devoted to the subject and each has an important role in preserving the area's history, which includes everything from its historic homes and sites to promoting and archiving the cities' pasts.

Golden said the local groups include the Farmington Historical Society and the three historical commissions of Farmington, Farmington Hills and the Hills Historic District. Then there's the Farmington Genealogical Society.

"This is one of the oldest areas in Oakland County," said Golden. "It

Please see HISTORY, A6

Ready to roll

Workshop teaches kids about living with disabilities

Helping hand: Chelsea Gale uses a white cane to find her way at Longacre. Julia Genna helps.



BY SUE BUCK
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To the able-bodied, the row of wheelchairs along the wall at Longacre Elementary's gym looked like a cinch to maneuver.

Then the students jumped in and started to roll.

The first challenge for Sarah Fredericks, a fourth grader, was trying to get in and out of the room.

"Can you hold the door?" she asked.

"No," said parent Pam Hoely, who like many parent volunteers was instructed on how to run the various activities. "Open the door and get around the sides," Hoely said. "Use your hand to pull through."

Hoely wasn't being mean; she

had simply been instructed to help the children face real-life challenges encountered daily by people with disabilities. Fredericks did better at the drinking fountain, where she learned pulling up sideways next to the fountain was the easiest way to get a drink if she had trouble moving her body.

A mile in their shoes

Longacre Elementary fourth and fifth graders took turns role-playing at number of disability stations during the Feb. 6 Disability Awareness Workshop.

"It is designed to help children become more aware of the challenges that people with disabilities face every day," said Sharon MacKay, a resource room teacher who coordinated the program for several elementary schools—Lon-

gacre, Beechview, Forest, William Grace, Kenbrook, Lanigan, Woodcreek and Flinders.

The program includes several hours of activities centered on developing empathetic understanding of physical, speech, hearing, vision and learning impairments.

"We want the students to remember that people should be respected, no matter how they may look, act, walk or talk," MacKay said.

Carolyn Das, whose son Stephen has cerebral palsy and attends William Grace Elementary, spoke from her experience when she told children about wheelchairs, braces and splints.

"We're helping kids understand

Please see DISABILITIES, A3

Officials prepare for Farmington Road II

BY SUE BUCK
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Phase II of the Oakland County Road Commission's Farmington Road project will have motorists dodging traffic cones again soon, and officials are offering information to help them cope.

A public meeting is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. Feb. 13 in Farmington City Council Chambers.

Crews will widen and reconstruct Farmington Road from south of Nine Mile Road to Grand River in the City of Farmington. Last year, the stretch from Eight Mile to Nine Mile Roads was improved, so officials have a track record by which to judge potential problems.

"It will take three to four weeks for

people to adjust to it," said Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff. "It's not as problematic as everyone might think."

Widening will be from south of Nine Mile north to Slocum. Farmington Road will be widened to five lanes. North of Slocum, the road will be reconstructed, not widened.

Reconstruction will involve the removal of the existing road surface and construction of a new concrete road.

Work is expected to start on the project in mid-March. The section between Slocum and Grand River is expected to be completed by July 15. The entire project will be completed by Sept. 30.

During the work, access will be maintained to those businesses that

only have driveways on Farmington Road. Business with access via side streets should encourage their customers to use those entrances. Some side streets will be closed at times at Farmington Road, officials said.

Beginning about mid-April, Farmington Road north of Nine Mile will be closed to southbound traffic. While traffic will be able to travel north on this section of Farmington Road, motorists should expect delays due to the construction.

Southbound traffic will be detoured from Grand River to Drake Road to Nine Mile Road and east to Farmington Road.

Northbound motorists can also use

Please see ROADS, A3

