

**DAYLIGHT!**  
**SAVING TIME**  
Did You Remember?  
Daylight Saving started today at 2 a.m.

**THE WEEK**  
**AHEAD**

**INSIDE**

**You can do it:**  
You don't have to be apprehensive about working around the home. Today's special home improvement section shows how to handle a variety of projects.

**MONDAY**

**Farmington Hills City Council:** On Monday night's agenda will be the final approval of an agreement with the Farmington Players Barn for cultural activities, a request for liquor license transfer to Tirami Su of Farmington Hills and a six-year Capital Improvements Plan. The meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. in council chambers at City Hall, 11 Mile and Orchard Lake Roads, and is broadcast on Cable Channel 8.

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## Districts differ in how they test their students

By **SUE BUCK**  
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School districts give kids plenty of tests, but how do educators know whether those tests accurately measure what students are learning?

**Jerry Fouchey**, director of curriculum for the Farmington Public Schools District, says they

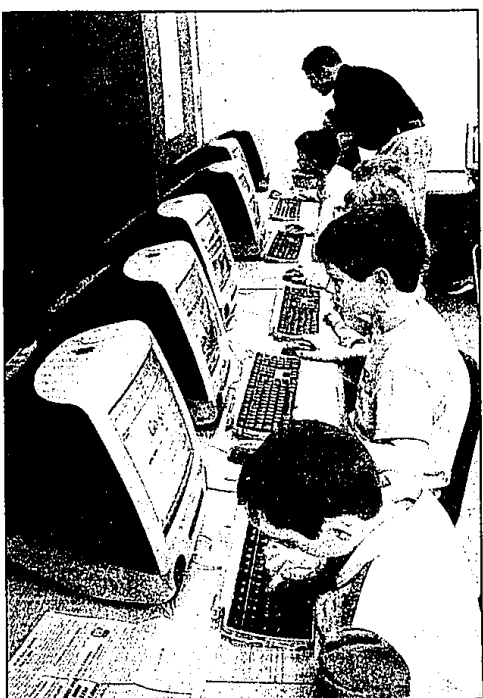
look at four major issues: "What's going to be measured?" "It's obviously the curriculum," Fouchey said.

Consider the Michigan Educational Assessment Program, a state mandated, standardized test. Some districts have struggled with MEAP tests, because what students learned in the classroom didn't align with the state tests.

"Even though they were teaching a good curriculum, they weren't teaching the same curriculum which was getting measured," Fouchey said.

How can you best get an appropriate sampling of a student's

Please see **TEST, A4**



STAFF PHOTO BY JIM JACOBSON

**Wired:** At Botsford Elementary in Clarenceville School District, 4th graders Emanuel Ion and Russell Yerge along with others from their class work on new iMacs, which were installed in computer labs this year. Students also have computers available in their classrooms.

## State sets high bar for students

By **HUGH GALLAGHER**  
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Tom Watkins calls American public education the true "Statue of Liberty."

Michigan's state superintendent of public instruction says it is public schools that represent the freedom and shelter of Emma Lazarus' famous inscription on the statue: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free."

Watkins said he wants to challenge people to support public education and not to bash it.

"That has got to stop. It dehumanizes," he said.

Public education has been criticized for not providing a vigorous curriculum, for not having enough discipline in the classrooms and for not involving parents in decisions critical to their children's future.

Watkins, who was appointed state superintendent by the state Board of Education in February 2001, has been speaking across the state and writing newspaper columns defending the quality of public education.

The Michigan Constitution places supervision of public education in the

hands of the eight-member state Board of Education. But school curricula are not mandated by the state board. Instead the Department of Education creates standards for each subject area to assist school districts in creating their curriculum.

The state also tests students at different class levels through the Michigan Educational Assessment Program, which was originally designed to evaluate how well school districts were meeting state standards. The tests are administered by the state Treasury Department.

Please see **STANDARDS, A8**

## Court rules on sewer lawsuits

■ A state Supreme Court ruling that now requires residents to prove cities are at fault in cases of sewer back-ups also 'grandfathers' existing lawsuits, which is good news for Hills residents who filed suit for damages due to basement flooding in 1998.

By **PAUL R. PACE**  
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After nearly four years of battling with the city of Farmington Hills to be reimbursed for sewer damage to her home, Jeanne Jones finally feels victorious.

"I felt like I won the lottery," said Jones, who is the lead plaintiff in a class action lawsuit against the city for sewage backup damage that occurred in 1998.

The state Supreme Court ruled this week that a new standard will be followed when it comes to residents seeking damages from a municipality when overloaded sewers cause basement flooding.

In cases filed after April 2, residents must prove that the municipality failed to operate the sewage system properly in order to receive damages.

While that's good news for cities in the future, Jones said the ruling also grandfathered a law for her and her co-plaintiffs' case against the city. Typically, Supreme Court rulings favor the residents' rights to such claims, she said.

Jones finally sold the home for \$50,000 under its market value because of the damage that she says ran up to \$100,000. She now lives in White Lake Township.

Jones said she expects the city to settle with the plaintiffs as opposed to fighting the case again in Oakland County Circuit Court.

"If they would have just paid us for the damages, they'd be ahead (financially)," she said.

Hills City Manager Steve Brock said the Supreme Court ruling is favorable for the city in the end.

"We've contended we didn't do anything to create the heavy rain," he said

Please see **SEWER, A6**

## Longacre auctions bachelors, barbecue and Babe

By **JONI HUBRED**  
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What do a sculpted bust of Babe Ruth, a custom-made barbecue dinner, three handsome, single men and a work of art that depicts 150 events of the last two centuries have in common?

They're all up for sale April 14, at the Longacre House's annual Some Enchanting Evening fundraiser.

Well... the bachelors are more "up for rent."

A successful bid on Farmington Hills firefighters Jeremy Dougherty and Jason Jolazewski will fund Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce Events

Director Arn Toupouzian will allow the donor an evening on the town with her gentleman of choice.

And Acting Executive Director Terry Deichert hopes there will be many successful bids.

"This is our biggest fund-raiser," she said, noting the house really needs this financial shot in the arm to keep going. "Since Sept. 11, our funds are way down."

Deichert, event co-chairs Bernice Brandon and Denise Droste and acquisitions volunteer Marianne Nedrosnik have rustled up an intriguing array of other items for the live and silent auction.

"We want to express our thanks to local merchants," said Brandon.

Please see **LONGACRE, A8**



STAFF PHOTO BY ELIZABETH CARNEGIE

**SOLD!** Bernice Brandon, Terry Deichert and Marianne Nedrosnik all hope the community rallies to support the Longacre House through Some Enchanting Evening, an April 14 fund-raiser. Terry is holding a sculpted bust of Babe Ruth, to be auctioned

## Downey proposes moving city's DDA office

By **SUE BUCK**  
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Having a visible location on Grand River - Farmington's Main Street - would go a long way to promote both the Farmington Downtown Development Authority and the City of Farmington.

"We need to be more visible," said Judy Downey, Farmington DDA director.

Moving the DDA office will be discussed in Downey's executive director's report presented at the 8 a.m. April 9 DDA meeting held in Farmington City Hall.

The DDA is currently located in a lower level office on Grand River east of the Farmington Municipal Complex.

"The DDA plans to again apply for the National Main Street program this year; it provides technical assistance to help develop central business districts. Farmington officials are hopeful they'll be more successful this year in obtaining the grant."

If that happens, Downey said the DDA will need to hire a part-time assistant and could benefit from a larger office.

Downey is also retiring at the end of the year. She recently wrote a letter to Farmwell Properties

asking that the DDA be released from its office lease as of June 30. The two-year lease for the office, which is located on Grand River west of Farmington Road, would end in December.

### Main Street readiness

"The office move in June would permit a readiness at the proposed new location on Grand River in order to spend as much time as needed on the National Main Street grant application," Downey said. "I also believe the DDA office should be in as visible a location as possible. The Oglesby building has a 240

Please see **DDA, A6**