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THURSDAY
December 12, 2002
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FARMINGTON Observer

Bored no more
Local events like story-telling by 'Miz Rosie' at the DIA provide plenty of activities during the holidays. B1

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Chief waits for word on federal funds

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

Now that Congress has passed the Homeland Security Act in Washington, local police are waiting to see how the \$1 billion earmarked for the new national public safety edict works its way down to the local level.

Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer said federal support is vital to local police.

So far, he said, there's no word whether these federal dollars will work their way to support local public safety.

"Those grants are needed in assisting us," Dwyer said. "The federal government has a

responsibility that part of the \$1 billion goes to local cities. We deserve our fair share."

During President Clinton's administration, COPS grants offered communities across the country an incentive to put more officers on the street by paying up to \$75,000 over three years per officer.

Many communities took advantage of the grants that were routinely renewed.

Sub-grants under the same name helped pay for cadets and police equipment, Dwyer said. But COPS grants are no more under President Bush's administration.

In Farmington Hills, two

grants — \$150,000 for two officers for three years and \$50,000 for another two cadets for two years — expire this year, Dwyer said.

He has no choice but to wait and see how the new order in Washington fits into the local picture, he said.

PLEASE SEE FUNDS, A5

Our Towns



LETTERS TO Santa
If boys and girls, naughty or nice, know Santa Claus will soon be checking his Christmas List — and checking it twice that means Farmington youngsters need to get their letters to the Jolly Old Elf written and on their way to the North Pole.

Once again, the Farmington Observer is asking youngsters to send us their letter to Santa along with a school picture to appear in the Observer before Christmas Day. To make sure we have time to forward the letters to the North Pole, get the letters to us by no later than Monday, Dec. 16. Individually post-marked letters should be sent to Santa, care of the Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington, MI 48335.



Holiday glow

Yutaro Yasuda looks up at a candle while caroling and waiting for Santa's arrival. The Jaycees sponsored the annual ceremony at Warner Mansion. Please see more photos on Page A3.

Judge pulls wheels off trucking suit

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A federal judge has dismissed a class-action lawsuit filed by transport companies that tried to strip local communities' ability to collect fines for overweight or unsafe trucks.

Farmington Hills has had its own enforcement program in place for several years. City attorney Steve Joppich said while the exact amount of the potential loss wasn't clear, the figure would have been "substantial."

"It was hard to determine, and that was one of the issues in the case," he said. "The plaintiffs wanted to recover all the fines collected by all the cities involved."

With truck traffic generated by I-696, I-275 and I-96, Farmington Hills collects thousands of dollars annually in fines. From a low in 1997-98 of

PLEASE SEE TRUCKING, A4

Officials split on manager candidates

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

When it came to the point of decision-making regarding a new city manager, members of the Farmington City Council were split Dec. 7.

Would it be number 47 or number 217?

Though candidates were interviewed publicly Dec. 7, the council referred to their choices only by the numbers assigned to each resume.

The candidates were Darrell A. Fecho, a Farmington Hills resident, who is the director of professional operations for McKenna & Associates in Northville, a planning consultant firm; Southgate City Administrator Debbie Manns, a Southgate resident; Caro Village Manager David M. Murphy, a Caro resident, and Vincent D. Pastus, administrative controller for Isabella County Government, a Clare resident.

Using context clues, some members of the audience were able to identify the two finalists.

"These two are very different in terms of their strengths and their manners," said Frank Gerstenecker, the Michigan Municipal League consultant handling the city manager search. "Each one of you has equal say here," Gerstenecker told city officials. "You

PLEASE SEE MANAGER, A6

Charter disqualifies former councilman

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

The thought kept Frank Gerstenecker up at night.

Gerstenecker, a Michigan Municipal League search consultant, wondered whether a specific provision for eligibility for appointment to a municipal employee position was in the Farmington city charter. The rule would keep applicant and

former city councilman Bill Hartsock from being considered for city manager.

"It bothered me," said Gerstenecker, a former Troy city manager for 25 years. "As I was concluding the work on interview examinations for the city council on Thursday, Dec. 5, I spoke to Mayor (Jim) Mitchell about mid-day about one question under consideration and the nagging question in my mind about a similar charter provision for Farmington."

The mayor suggested that Gerstenecker call city attorney Tom Schultz and discuss the question. Schultz said he would study the charter question.

"Tom called me late Thursday and advised that he found a similar charter provision in an unexpected place — not in sections which address and prescribe the requirements for the city manager and the city council," Gerstenecker said.

PLEASE SEE HARTSOCK, A5

Elderly pedestrian killed on Middlebelt

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

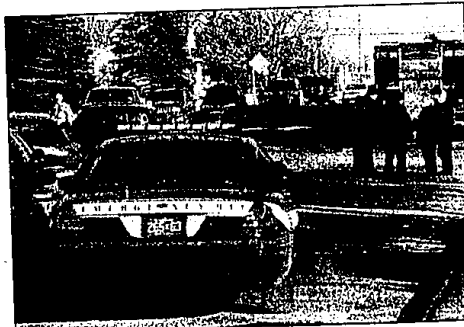
Farmington Hills police are investigating the pedestrian traffic death of an 86-year-old Farmington Hills man who attempted to cross Middlebelt, south of Northwestern Highway, around 6:50 a.m. Tuesday.

The man, who was not using a crosswalk, was struck by a vehicle driven by a 41-year-old Novi man, Farmington Hills Assistant Police Chief Martin Bledsoe said. The 86-year-old was dead at the scene.

The driver was not injured in the accident, and Bledsoe said so far no charges are expected against him.

"At that time of day, the light is poor and it was not easy for (the victim) to be seen," Bledsoe said. "Witnesses said he was hurrying across the road and one vehicle avoided

PLEASE SEE PEDESTRIAN, A5



At 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, Farmington Hills Police were still investigating a car-pedestrian accident on Middlebelt north of 13 Mile. The accident resulted in the death of an elderly man.

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LOOKING AHEAD
Time for tea
In Sunday's Taste section: Visit local tea houses, mind your tea manners, and make some tasty accompaniments to high or low tea.

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