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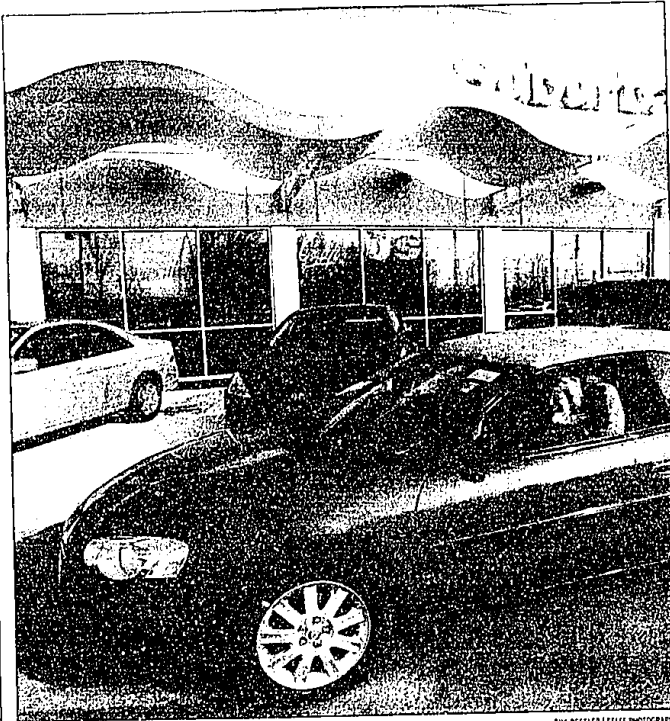
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OUT TOWNS

DIWE

The Detroit International Wine Experience, a benefit for the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center in Farmington Hills, will present approximately 400 wine entries from around the world to a prestigious panel of judges Saturday, March 29.

Wine specialists from many disciplines, including restaurateurs, sommeliers, retailers, chefs and journalists, will choose the medal winners in a blind judging, followed by an After Flow reception open to the public. The events will take place at Schoolcraft College in Livonia.



Paula Rohn is ready to drive away in her red Chrysler convertible.

BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Driving lessons

FHS math teacher wins Suburban's special award

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

After almost two hours of test driving cars at Suburban Honda in Farmington Hills, Farmington High School math teacher Paula Rohn made her selection — a 2004 red Chrysler Sebring convertible.

And driving that sporty new car for the next year won't cost her much more than the gas required to run it.

For the first time this year, car dealers from the Suburban Collection offered special recognition to selected Teachers of the Year in communities where they have dealerships by providing use of a car.

Call it a step above the proverbial apple for the teacher.

After the surprise announcement Tuesday at Farmington High School, Superintendent Bob Maxfield whisked the excited Rohn off in his car to Suburban Honda to select a car.

"It couldn't come at a better time," said Rohn, whose van has 170,000 miles on it.

The award came as a complete surprise; she didn't even realize she'd been nominated. Farmington Schools honors three teachers of the year, one at each level (elementary, middle and high school). Students said Rohn always comes to school wearing a smile, she's positive and they just adore her.

Coming to the Farmington school district was a lucky move for her, Rohn said. She remembered difficult years working as a young teacher in the Wayne

PLEASE SEE AWARD, A10

Cities say add-ons pay for systems

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

Farmington tacks on nearly 150 percent.

Farmington Hills throws on another 61 percent.

According to a recent media campaign, high water bills aren't just Detroit's fault.

After more than a year of published reports about poor management and complaints about increased costs and who should control its operations, the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department is apparently fighting back. A full-page informational ad Sunday asked, "What's the truth about your water bill?" and listed their basic rate to cities, as well as the charge cities tack on to the bill.

Local officials agree the numbers are right, but once the water is brought in from Detroit, it's each city's responsibility to maintain the water supply and sewers — and it's not cheap.

According to the list, Farmington is charged \$17.16 per 7,500 gallons of water and sewer

PLEASE SEE SYSTEMS, A5

Board approves shared-time plan

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Farmington school board members unanimously approved a controversial shared-time plan with Our Lady of Sorrows Tuesday.

The agreement would place public school teachers in the Catholic private school's classrooms to teach art, music and physical education. The teachers would be hired under contract terms set by the Farmington Education Association.

Shared-time would affect 930 students in grades 1-8.

Both OLS Monsignor Walter Hurley and OLS Principal Jim Watson attended the meeting. Neither spoke about the plan, and there was no comment from the public.

Hurley simply thanked the board after its vote.

Board member Cathy Webb made the motion to approve the plan, supported by Pam Christian. Board members Priscilla Breuille and Jack Inch, who voted against the conceptual plan last year, cast their votes in favor but offered no comments.

Frank Reid said it was an interesting process for him

because he is both an OLS parishioner and an FFS school board member.

"We've heard from people speaking passionately on both sides of this issue," Reid said. "Many of them are friends of mine. I understand all the various viewpoints expressed on this matter."

The one-year, renewable agreement can be ended if shared-time doesn't prove beneficial. "I believe this is in the best interests of children," Reid said.

Board Member Gary Sharp, an attorney, believes the plan addresses all aspects in the

separation of church and state issue. He has reviewed various legal cases and noted, "In addition, we've had case law reviewed by outside counsel."

The decision to pursue a shared-time agreement must be made by the parish and archdiocese and not by school parents alone, said board President Linda Enberg.

"Personally, I've seen sufficient support at the parish level for this plan," Enberg said.

She referenced a survey privately funded by parishioner

PLEASE SEE SHARED, A5

Maintenance facility for Hills parks opens

BY JONI HUBBARD
STAFF WRITER

It's not so much the decor that Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation maintenance staff enjoy about their new facility.

Now they've got some elbow room.

Located at the end of Interchange Drive just south of 11 Mile Road in Farmington Hills, the new building was constructed on what Special Services Director Dave Boyer called a "challenging" site. It's adjacent to the newly expanded San Marino Golf Course, on the 11 Pines property.

In fact, the facility sits on top of a

former landfill that comprised 23 acres of the 90-plus acre site at 11 Mile and Halsted Roads. In addition to a main office building, there are two large bays for equipment and vehicle storage and maintenance.

The city established a brownfield, so we were able to capture some of the cost with tax dollars," Boyer said. State law allows the capture of tax dollars to help pay for clean-up costs in contaminated areas designated as "brownfields" by local governments.

Boyer noted the city also took steps to protect a nearby wetland. The focus on environmental quality also extends to the building itself.

PLEASE SEE PARKS, A5



The Parks & Recreation Maintenance facility opened for business with a Feb. 24 ribbon cutting. Mayor Nancy Bates and Parks & Rec Commission chair Paul Jackson did the honors.

BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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LOOKING AHEAD

Schoolcraft's new digs
In Sunday's Taste section: The VistaTech Center at Schoolcraft College will be open for instruction soon for culinary arts students.



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