

New season spawns features for our readers

SUMMER IS A good time for rejuvenation, and we at the Farmington Observer have done just that.

While you've been spending time perfecting that tan and getting that golf game into top shape, we've been planning for a brand new season of providing information for you.

Sure, sitting down with the newspaper next to a sizzling fireplace may be the furthest thing from your mind — now. But wait — just wait — until the old white stuff hits the ground and you're hemmed in for the winter.

That dreadful season is closer than you think — remember last year?

Well, we're bound and determined to make this cold season a little more interesting this time around.

In the last few weeks, you may have noticed some

new features in the Farmington Observer. We hope to bring you some more.

ONE OF our newest highlights is bringing you a look into Farmington's past. We realize that many residents new to the area and are unaware of the fine heritage which is Farmington.

Throughout the winter season, we will be reaching far back into our historical files to tell you about the way we were.

Already readers have shown a great interest in this new feature. But we don't want it to stop there. If you've got a historical tidbit you think would interest your friends and neighbors, let us know, and we'll try to get it into the paper.

ANOTHER FEATURE we've recently introduced into your hometown publication is the science and health page, which will appear monthly.

More than ever before, readers are interested in what makes them and the world around them tick. We hope to provide you with some insight into those areas through the eyes of persons in this community.

A profusion of professionals live and work in this area, and we are seeking them out to tell their stories.

If you know of any persons who you believe would make an interesting story who is involved in science or medicine, let us know.

A third feature is a statistical compilation of crime in the Farmington/Farmington Hills area, which will be provided by our two law enforcement agencies.

We realize that criminal statistics provided by the FBI or Michigan State Police are rather meaningless to your neighborhood. But thanks to our lo-

cal police departments, we are going to get the complete crime story on the home front.

Another of what we feel is one of the most exciting features to be introduced in the last couple of years will begin next week.

The Farmington Observer will field a question of local interest each week, and readers will be able to phone in to a special number to respond.

We will compile the results and print a sampling of the responses. This is an extra-special feature because it depends on you for its success.

The first question will be printed in the Sept. 9 issue.

We've got some other special plan in the works, but we're always open to suggestions.

So if you've got a new idea, drop us a note or give us a call. We're always interested in knowing what you've got to say.



Tim Richard

Education: good news — and bad

THERE ARE fun stories and dismal stories to write. In this business, you have to take the bad with the good.

Last week's fun story was about the new robotics technology program at Oakland Community College's Auburn Hills campus. Provost Marion Rice was positively exultant as she reported that 11 sections of 37 students have signed up for the first course.

Although Japan has a strong reputation for its work in electronics, Rice pointed out that most of Japan's robotics equipment is capable of performing only a single function and can't be reprogrammed.

The U.S. is more deeply into reprogrammable robotics. And OCC students will learn how to perform that reprogramming.

While it's a bit early to tell exactly how many persons will land in the two-year robotics tech program, OCC officials guess that as many as 1,500 will sign up by spring. That would be 6 percent of the community college's total enrollment. Robotics would be the single most successful new program the college has ever introduced.

IF MICHIGAN is to diversify its economy and produce jobs for those who want to work, it will no longer be able to rely entirely on the automobile industry.

Gov. Milliken's task force has identified high technology as the direction in which this depressed state must move. Bob Law, Milliken's staff man who worked with the High Technology Task Force, tells me that Michigan has identified a half-dozen areas within the high-tech field where there is room for this area to become a world leader.

Chief among those high-tech areas are robotics and molecular biology.

A task force study shows that Michigan has two of the most important ingredients for success in automated systems: major industries (autos, appliance and machine tool) which use robots, and highly skilled workers capable of developing the control systems needed to automate production.

It's good news to know that a local institution such as OCC is moving aggressively into this field. More than 14 major manufacturers of robots already are located in this state.

THE BAD NEWS is that state colleges and universities are getting it in the neck because of the economic recession — or depression, as many put it.

At this writing, the details aren't all available, but Gov. Milliken says he has to cut the state budget for the fourth time in a single fiscal year, this time by \$150 million.

Colleges and universities figure they will have to absorb about \$35 million of that cut.

Oakland University President Joseph Champagne last week issued a gloomy report saying OU is losing something like 22 percent of its state funding.

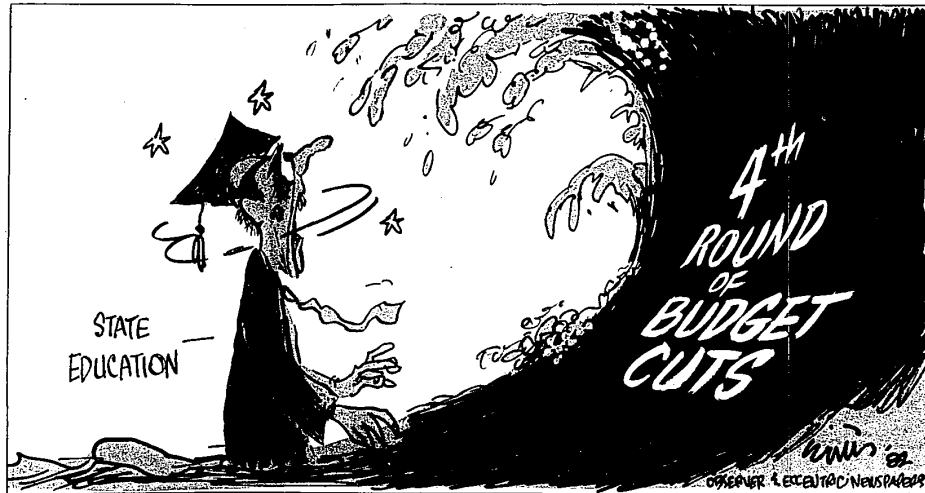
University of Michigan President Harold Shapiro called the new budget cut a "disaster." U-M has adopted a slogan of "smaller but better" for the 1980s, but Shapiro is now saying that the new cuts, if they stand, will cut into U-M's "better," too.

Ironically, the first page of Milliken's high-tech task force report closes with this message:

"Michigan must provide long-term support to its colleges and universities at a level comparable to that of other renowned scientific educational institutions. We must renew our commitment to providing this level of support in the coming decade."

There is a bit of folk wisdom which says, "It takes money to make money." If this state wants to produce jobs, cutting spending and laying off "bureaucrats" aren't the answers.

We are going to have to pump some more public money into higher education.



Suburbs key to gubernatorial race

THIS YEAR's state gubernatorial race is being battled to a large extent on suburban Detroit turf.

The clearest indication is that both candidates are from Detroit suburbs — Democratic candidate James Blanchard from Pleasant Ridge and Republican candidate Richard Headlee from Farmington Hills.

Besides that, consider the following:

- Both candidates announced their choices for lieutenant governor at press conferences in Southfield's Michigan Inn. Headlee tapped former Supreme Court Justice Thomas Brennan while Blanchard surprised many last week by naming former Congresswoman Martha Griffiths.

- The headquarters for the Headlee for Governor campaign is at Nordland Towers in Southfield.

- Martha Griffiths' old U.S. House of Representatives district (the 17th) includes Southfield, Farmington and Redford Township.

- Headlee asked Oakland County Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson to run on his ticket as the candidate for attorney general. Patterson accepted.

- SUBURBAN DETROIT is playing an increasingly important role in state politics.

Three of the last four Democratic nominees for governor have come from southern Oakland County. Southfield has become the most popular site for offices for politicians seeking statewide positions.

In addition, perhaps the most influential political public relations firms have strong suburban ties.



Nick Sharkey

McMaster and Associates of Troy has worked on several important campaigns including part of Headlee's this year and U.S. Rep. William Broomfield's (R-Birmingham). Farmington Hills' Jack Casey is a top political consultant and worked recently on Livonia's Ed McNamara's unsuccessful campaign for Wayne County executive.

Democrats tapped a pair of suburbanites for educational posts: Carroll Hutton of Highland Township, an Oakland University administrator, for the State Board of Education, and John Bruff of Fraser for the Michigan State University Board. Republicans are putting up Bloomfield Township residents Ellen Tampion and Rockwell Gust for the University of Michigan board.

The importance of the votes in suburban Detroit was demonstrated in last month's Republican governor primary election. Going into the election, James Brickley was the overwhelming favorite to defeat opponents Patterson and Headlee. With his background in Detroit politics, Brickley was ex-

pected to run well in the Detroit suburbs. He failed.

In Oakland County, he ran a poor third behind Patterson and Headlee (in that order). In the Wayne County suburbs, Brickley ran second, despite heavy endorsements from local GOP legislators.

Brickley's poor showing in the Detroit suburbs, combined with Headlee's expected strength outstate, added up to a Headlee upset.

ONE KEY ISSUE in the governor's race will have a strong suburban appeal. Martha Griffiths admitted last week that she had "at least one more (political) fight" because of her opposition to Headlee's positions. Specifically, she mentioned Headlee's criticisms of the Equal Rights Amendment and of Detroit.

Unfortunately, Headlee's "hate Detroit" stance may be attractive to some suburbanites. Some myopic suburbanites believe that divorcing the state from the problems of Detroit will solve the state's difficulties. Griffiths will attempt to convince suburbanites that is not so. How that argument is resolved may play a key role in determining the gubernatorial election.

So, in the next few weeks, important statewide candidates will be trying to woo your vote. You may bump into candidates for governor at your town hall, recreation center or even at the neighborhood shopping mall.

Don't be surprised. Candidates prospecting for votes have found out that there's gold in them thar suburbs.

Buckle-up makes good sense for family

When it comes to a family's safety, the conservative rallying cry of "less government is better" rings a very flat note.

Just ask the survivors of the 17 persons killed on Michigan highways this past July 4th holiday weekend. Plan on asking the survivors of those who will be killed this coming Labor Day weekend.

And while you're at it, keep in mind that all 17 of those killed during the Fourth of July holiday weren't wearing a safety belt.

The grim truth is that the overwhelming majority of mothers and fathers in this state lack the common sense to put on a seatbelt — either on themselves or their children. Only about ten percent of passengers or drivers in this state take advantage of their safety belt protection.

It's stupid, just plain stupid. It also should be a crime. Yet, as of today, a bill which would make safety belt use mandatory languishes in the state Legislature.

NOW DON'T just sit back and blame the politicians. Why should they go against the grain of 90 percent of the state's citizenry?

But the present legislation — House Bill 5567 — could stand a little public support. It's a simple bill, really. If it's enacted, passing not wearing safety belts will be fined \$25. No points tagged onto a driving record — just a \$25 fine.



crackerbarrel debate
Steve Barnaby



That's pretty cheap life insurance when you examine the statistics of the countries which have mandatory safety belt laws. At present, 25 countries have such laws, so it's not like we'd be the Lone Ranger.

Ontario has had a law since 1976. Seat belt use has risen from 10 to 50 percent and highway deaths have decreased 17 percent.

An even more interesting set of statistics crops up in Sweden.

OF 28,000 traffic accidents studied in 1979, no fatalities were recorded among those using safety belts in cars going less than 60 miles an hour. When seat belts weren't used, fatalities occurred at speeds as low as 12 miles an hour.

Apparently, Swedes take a little more stock in

saving their own necks. At least 85 percent of the population uses safety belts.

Death, while certainly final, isn't necessarily the worst thing that can happen to you. Think of those who are maimed for life, prisoners of wheelchairs and beds because they didn't want to mess up their clothes or coiffures.

Better yet, think of the children in that condition whose parents allowed them to go unprotected.

AT LEAST we do have Public Act 117, which requires that infants be placed in infant seats while riding in automobiles. A lot of folks are more than a little miffed because those seats cost \$45. But recently one of the irritated wrote a letter to an up-state newspaper illustrating how his attitude had changed.

"I would like to tell your readers how mad I was when I was forced to go out and pay \$45 for an infant seat," he said. But then his wife and child were in an accident.

"The back of the child car seat was facing the windshield. That seat broke off the ash tray, cracked the dashboard and chipped the windshield. Our baby didn't have a scratch on her. I would like to thank God and whoever else is responsible for passing that stupid law."

Now, if we only can get HB 5567 passed into law, maybe we can hear a few more good news stories.