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# Farmington Observer

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## Farmington FOCUS

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**TRUSTEE** Jack Cotton of the Farmington Board of Education said the Reagan-Gorbachev summit wasn't the only historic meeting taking place Tuesday.

At the start of a joint meeting between the Farmington Board of Education and the Farmington Hills City Council Tuesday night, Cotton passed out yellow roses — "a conciliatory symbol of what we have going tonight," he said.

Later, after finishing his presentation, city manager William Costick handed his pointer to superintendent Graham Lewis. "See, they're starting to share already," quipped Mayor Ben Marks, instrumental in organizing the meeting to counter perceptions that the two governing boards are adversaries.

**MERCHANTS** on the north side of Grand River oppose plans to eliminate several parking spaces as part of the first phase of \$1.4 million in Downtown Development Authority-initiated civic improvements.

DDA members Greg Hohler and Ron Oglesby, who own businesses in that area, will meet with the city planner to express their concerns. "The consensus is that there be no parking loss," Hohler said. "It's just too important, too critical."

**FOOTNOTES:** One year ago this week — No layoffs are planned following a fire that caused at least \$1 million in damage to Forge Die & Tool Corp., a Farmington Hills machine shop, Dec. 3 (1986), company officers said.

## Fate of park's Spicer House is still in limbo

By Joanne Mallazewski  
staff writer

What not to do with the more than 62-year-old Eleanor Spicer estate house in Heritage Park is a question that's still without an answer.

The one-hoped-for plan of converting the estate house into offices for the city's special services department, including parks and recreation, has been cast aside. So, too, have plans for using the house as a community center.

That leaves using the house for the park as perhaps a visitors' center, said Dennis Fitzgerald, parks and recreation commission chairman.

"This location is here. It's in the park. It should service the park," Fitzgerald said.

What purpose the house would serve, however, is unknown. "We don't have an answer for that yet. We don't think a nature center is appropriate. I think our consensus is gravitating toward a visitors' center, reception-center for the park, the city," Fitzgerald told the city council.

*"We don't think a nature center is appropriate. I think our consensus is gravitating toward a visitors' center, reception center for the park, the city."*

— Dennis Fitzgerald  
commission chairman

Monday at a special joint meeting with parks and recreation commissioners that perhaps the house should only be stabilized until a final decision can be made about its use.

**COSTS INVOLVING** the house can be divided between stabilization and renovation, Fitzgerald said. "We have nothing to renovate. We don't know what we're going to do with it. We're not recommending that we bulldoze, renovate, knock it down . . ."

Fitzgerald said. Councilwoman Jan Dolan reminded the council and commission that a motion was made last year not to

## 'A historic meeting'



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Farmington Hills Mayor Ben Marks spoke at an O.E. Dunckel Middle School Career Day this week. Farmington Hills and Farmington Public Schools are making an effort to

only work together more, but also develop an understanding between the two governmental units.

## Laying groundwork Hills, schools stress cooperation

By Casey Hans  
staff writer

**WHILE U.S.** and Soviet leaders spent this week focusing on world peace and nuclear disarmament, officials from Farmington Hills and Farmington Public Schools did some peace-making of their own.

In a joint meeting Tuesday, the Hills city council, Farmington school board and administrators from both groups met to discuss mutual concerns, and to lay the groundwork for future discussions and cooperative efforts.

Hills Mayor Ben Marks, who chaired the meeting, called the first-time event "a historic meeting" and encouraged an open line of communication between the two government bodies, which geographically cover much of the same area.

*'I don't ever think there has been an adversarial situation (between the city council and the school board), but there has been an aura of that. I want to put that to rest once and for all.'*

— Ben Marks  
Hills mayor

They brought global issues to a local level.

"This has been a dream of mine for a couple of years," Marks said. "I don't ever think there has been an adversarial situation (between the council and board), but there has been an aura of that. I want to

put that to rest once and for all." Marks suggested that a similar meeting be held in three months.

**AFTER INFORMATIONAL** presentations from city and school administrators, elected officials discussed the financial future of the schools, bilingual education and the culturally diverse community, the safety of children and residents, personal and professional employee development and training, and growth in the city's southwest corner.

They highlighted numerous ways the city and schools already work together, plus discussed other ways to cooperate in future ventures. Most involve "quality of life" issues for either residents, or employees.

Hills council member Aldo Vagnozzi called for community in-

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## Farmington High student injured in mailbox explosion

By Bob Sklar  
staff writer

Oxygen was probably the most dangerous component of the homemade bomb that blew up prematurely in a roadside mailbox and seriously injured a Farmington High student Saturday night in southwest Farmington Hills.

"The oxygen gave a rapid push to the explosion," said Deputy Fire

Chief Peter Baldwin of Farmington Hills.

Oxygen supports combustion. "It intensifies the explosive and burning effect of other combustibles, in this case acetylene," Baldwin said.

James Thomas Landsfeld, 17, received facial, head and chest injuries when the volatile mixture of oxygen and acetylene exploded before

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## Holiday Shopping Guide



SPECIAL SECTION  
IN TODAY'S ISSUE

## 'Extended family'

### Many parents embrace home day care

By Casey Hans  
staff writer

Some embrace home day care providers, calling them a child's "extended family."

Others say they're simply businesspeople working in residential areas.

Regardless of the viewpoint, caring for children in a home setting is one of the most popular forms of day care today. For parents with young infants, it could be the only type of care available, say child care agency officials.

"It's sometimes the only viable option for people with infants and toddlers," said Paulette Chaplin, coordinator for the Oakland County Community Coordinated Child Care Agency, or 4-C, a non-profit education and referral agency. "They're (infants) not accepted in commercial centers."

There are many successful home day care stories. One Farmington Hills mother works close to her provider and can continue to breast-feed her baby. A father's mother of a 4-month-old boy finds her home day care provider to be convenient and caring, "like a second mother."

Home day care providers handle the largest number of children in the system. According to national census statistics, 40 percent of preschool

children of working mothers spend their days in some type of home-based day care. Seventy-five percent of this care is given by non-relatives.

Despite its popularity, home-based day care can be difficult to find.

An example of this shortage can be seen in Oakland County, where there are 7,000 full-time slots in licensed commercial day care centers and 4,500 slots in licensed home day care — "not nearly enough" providers for the 34,000 children who need day care, Chaplin said.

"It's a tremendous problem," she added. "I'm seeing the awareness level coming up somewhat. It gets more and more frustrating — where are these kids today?"

**MANY ARE** in unlicensed home day care settings, according to statistics. For every licensed in-home setting, there are nine that are not licensed, said Renee Cuchetti, president of the Oakland County Child Care Association, a support group for licensed home day care providers.

Both Oakland and Wayne 4-C agencies maintain lists of licensed day care providers throughout the county. And they only refer callers to licensed facilities.

For home day care, the state Department of Social Services licenses "family day care homes" for up to 6

### the Child Care Puzzle



Monday  
How corporations and legislators view child care.

Thursday, Dec. 17  
Professional day care centers and education respond to demand.

Monday, Dec. 21  
Choosing home over care; and the effects of non-parental care on children.

Thursday, Dec. 21  
Some suggestions on how to resolve the child care puzzle.

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Laura Clouse works with the Smith family of Farmington Hills as a nanny for 8-month-old Cathy. For more on this child care option, turn to Page 3A.