

Blind dating can be  
fun or frightening, 1D



Falcons  
on roll, 1C

Attitude is Demers'  
success secret, 3A

# Farmington Observer

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## Farmington FOCUS

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**H**ELPING break the  
ice.  
Emotions ran high  
at the Farmington  
school board's study session.  
Tuesday night, when trustees  
received public feedback to a  
seven-member citizens  
planning panel attendance  
boundaries/district facilities  
report.  
When the three-hour public  
forum in Farmington High's  
auditorium ended, trustee  
Janice Reinick, used to just a  
handful of onlookers at school  
board meetings, quipped about  
the near-capacity turnout: "It's  
really fun having an audience.  
We get very lonely!"

**POSTER** wins again.  
Christina Smith's poster,  
which won first place in state  
competition of the Smokey  
Bear and Woody Owl  
Environmental Contest, is also  
a winner in the seven-state  
central division.  
The contest is sponsored by  
the National Council of State  
Garden Clubs in cooperation  
with the U.S. Forest Service.  
Christina, a fifth grader at  
Forest Elementary School in  
Farmington Hills, was  
sponsored by the Farmington  
Garden Club.  
Her poster is on its way to  
another round of judging.

**FOOTNOTES:** One year  
ago this week — Forces are  
organizing to oppose an  
expected mid-February  
recommendation to the  
Farmington school board  
calling for moving  
kindergartens from elementary  
schools to centralized early  
childhood centers.

## Schools doing the job — board chief



By Casey Hans  
staff writer

Many Michigan school districts already have measures to improve education similar to those proposed by Gov. James Blanchard last week.  
Staff development and basic core classes for students have been addressed by districts in the past five years, according to Farmington Board of Education president Helen Ditzhazy.

"I think they've been in the works for a long time," said Ditzhazy, who is also deputy superintendent with the Jackson school district. "Almost all of us have that core (curriculum) anyway. It's nothing new."  
"It's the kind of move that most of us made after a 'Nation at Risk.'"

Helen Ditzhazy, president of the Farmington Board of Education, says Gov. James Blanchard's proposals for education are nothing new.

**'Almost all of us have that core (curriculum) anyway. It's nothing new. It's the kind of move that most of us made after a 'Nation at Risk.'**

— Helen Ditzhazy

He wanted to improve the state's public schools through adoption of a tough core curriculum, competency testing for teachers and minimum performance standards for pupils in reading, math and science.

Ditzhazy called the governor's attention to the issues important, but added that many districts are well ahead in planning for excellence. She believes the governor gave extra attention to these areas because of improved communication between his office and the state Department of Education.

BLANCHARD CALLED his proposed \$250 million plan the Education Excellence Challenge. It would be financed by closing tax loopholes, he said. And as part of his plan, he has placed the "at risk" pre-school program high on his wish list.

He issued a strong warning about his top educational priority Wednesday.

tions bill that does not contain it," he told legislators.

The Legislature rejected Blanchard's funding request for such a program last year.

Ditzhazy agreed early childhood emphasis is important, but not at the expense of other programs. The Michigan Association of School Boards has gone on record supporting the pre-school programs, but only if other programs are not harmed, she said.

"I do believe the place we need to impact learning is in the early years," she said. "But I'm not one to push academics on pre-schoolers." Ditzhazy said she is not opposed to such a state mandate, "as long as they don't try to structure the program at that level." Details should be left to local districts, she said.

She believes a developmental approach, such as the one used by Farmington, is the way to proceed.

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## Orchard Lake improvements being planned

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

One day, Farmington Hills motorists may not drive Orchard Lake Road in frustration and conflict.

One day, the barren concrete jungle of convoluted parking lots may boast rolling grassy berms, plentiful trees and blossoming flowers.

Motorists can take heart. The seeds of improvement for the commercial and retail strip, which many consider Farmington Hills' downtown, are being planted.

"The purpose of this study was to look at basically two major items — the traffic concerns and the aesthetic concerns," said Richard Lampi, Hills community development coordinator.

"Over the past few years, we've had a lot of development out there, a lot of congestion, and felt that this would be the proper time to address that and try to improve it in any way that we could," Lampi told members

of the city council, planning and beautification commissions and Economic Development Corporation last week.

The plan, which does not address how improvements will be done or financed, is designed to improve traffic flow and safety, as well as to improve the barren appearance of the thoroughfare between 12 and 14 Mile roads.

**CITY MANAGER** William Costick said the beautification and planning commissions, as well as the EDC, will be involved in the traffic and aesthetics plan, which will eventually be presented to property owners on Orchard Lake Road.

"To accomplish a program like this is going to take a lot of cooperation, a lot of private money as well as public money. We're just the beginning," Costick said.

A major emphasis of the plan is to

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## Helping hand



Capl. Dan Arbitter (left) has his air bottle changed by fellow firefighter Mark Borman before reattacking a house fire on Herndonwood Drive in northeast Farmington Hills Jan. 18. Air packs are a vital part of a firefighter's gear whenever a fire is fought inside a structure. Forty-eight firefighters were called to the three-story house to extinguish the mid-afternoon blaze. Damage to the structure and contents was estimated at more than \$200,000, fire investigators said.

side a structure. Forty-eight firefighters were called to the three-story house to extinguish the mid-afternoon blaze. Damage to the structure and contents was estimated at more than \$200,000, fire investigators said.

BOB SKLAR/staff photographer

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## Drop in cocaine use disputed by chief

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer believes the worst is yet to come. The use of cocaine, particularly crack, the more potent rock form, will continue to increase and become an epidemic in 1988.

Dwyer's opinion, however, flies in the face of a recently released, federally sponsored study showing that the senior class of 1987 considerably curtailed its use of cocaine.

The study was conducted by the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research for

the federal Department of Health and Human Services.

"You've got to be kidding me. It's just emerging. I would have to be based on my experience in narcotics enforcement and also in what I've observed in Oakland County, challenge that survey," said Dwyer, former commander of the Detroit Police Department's narcotics division.

"In my opinion, it's just the opposite. The 1986 epidemic is not leveling off. It's escalating. I get information daily that crack is here and will be a problem in 1988," he continued.

**DWYER BELIEVES** the use of crack is increasing in Farmington Hills, especially among the 13- to 23-year-old age group. A parallel can be drawn between an increase in cocaine use and property crimes, committed to help pay for cocaine.

"We've seen within the last two weeks, an increase in breaking and entering," Dwyer said.

Farmington Department of Public Safety Director Frank Laubhoff declined comment on the study, which he read about in The Detroit News. "The article in the paper didn't explain enough. I can't interject my opinion on their

study," Laubhoff said.

Though Dwyer challenged the study, he admitted he didn't know how it was conducted. A spokeswoman at the U of M Institute of Social Research said interviewers go to high schools and provide seniors with questionnaires.

No personal interviews were conducted. For the study, the country is divided into four regions. High school students in both rural areas and cities are included, she said.

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## He helps kids work out their problems

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Kids and Bill Hamilton just seem to go hand-in-hand.

"I enjoy talking with the kids and working with them. They are our future," said Hamilton, the new caseworker for Farmington Youth Assistance.

His experience and interest in kids doesn't stop with his professional career. He has volunteered as a basketball referee and a baseball umpire and has worked for the Big Brothers-Big Sisters organization.

"I was always interested in working with kids," he said.

But he didn't necessarily go to college with the thought of studying and graduating in something that would enable him to profes-

## people

sionally work with kids and teens.

He took classes and studied what interested him. That was criminal justice, though Hamilton didn't necessarily want to become a police officer. He also studied juvenile justice and psychology.

"Once I got involved, it became very interesting working with kids. My approach tends to be pretty reality based and humanistic. I am not a psychoanalyst or a psychologist."

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Caseworker Bill Hamilton is at work in Farmington Youth Assistance's Farmington Hills offices.

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

homes to fit your  
**Lifestyle**  
**CREATIVE  
LIVING**  
REAL ESTATE GUIDE  
NOW IN EVERY MONDAY  
AND THURSDAY ISSUE