

One more push for
endurance, 1B



O&E golf
tournament, 1D

Partisan foot soldiers
march for parties, 3A

Farmington Observer

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farmington FOCUS

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ROAD work. Resurfacing of 14 Mile, between Orchard Lake and Farmington roads, will start about Sept. 1 and be completed about Oct. 15.

Last week, the Farmington Hills City Council awarded the road rehabilitation project to Madison Heights-based Ajax Paving Industries at a cost of \$279,260.

DOWN south in New Orleans.

Four Farmington Hills residents are among Michigan's 77 delegates to the Republican National Convention this week.

Marlene Elwell supports Pat Robertson for president. Suzanne Miller, Paul Welday and Donn Wolf are all Jack Kemp supporters.

RESOLVED.

A lawsuit involving a house on Herndonwood gutted by fire Jan. 16 is settled. The house was demolished to the first level; the remainder is secured.

The owner is talking with architects about rebuilding. Farmington Hills city attorney Paul Bibeau said.

Quote of the week

“When we got there, it looked like something out of a movie. There was a house burning, but it was quiet otherwise. Nobody was outside or doing anything.”

— Joe Fryer, recounting what he saw when he found the source of flames in Farmington Hills early Monday (see story this page).

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**AUTUMN
CHIC**

**SPECIAL SECTION
IN TODAY'S ISSUE**

Marks retains seat despite opposition

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By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Ben Marks has no intention of giving up his seat on the Farmington Hills City Council despite charges from at least one resident that he broke public trust by bouncing a \$17,000 check to the city while mayor in early 1987.

Stockton resident Rosa Flum cast aside previous recall threats in favor of Marks' resignation Monday. She was joined by councilwoman Jean Fox, who said, "If I thought there were four votes for it, I should call for the resignation of the offending party."

But Marks, who was ill and absent Monday, is holding fast to his decision not to resign. "I don't feel I've done anything wrong. A mistake was made. When I did what I did, I was informed (by his financial institution) I would have my funds."

Farmington Hills resident Delores Forge childed Marks for his absence Monday. "He owed it to us to be here tonight to explain what he did," his

'The biggest thing you have to understand is there was no malice. At no time was there an indication or action of coverup.'

— Ben Marks
councilman

absence, Forge said, added "insult to injury."

Marks, a local builder, said he will probably provide a public explanation of what happened with his debt to the city at the next meeting Monday, Aug. 22.

On Aug. 12, Marks obtained long-awaited mortgage financing for his office building on the northwest corner of 11 Mile and Orchard Lake Road, across from the city hall. On Friday, he paid the \$17,000 past-due sewer tap-in fee and full accrued interest and late charges totaling \$22,528.

MAYOR JODY Soronen Tuesday said she assumes the issue is concluded now that Marks has paid his overdue sewer tap-in fees. Soronen said she doesn't believe Marks "pur-

posely put the city council in a poor light" and doesn't expect to ask for Marks' resignation.

Fox and councilman Aldo Vagnozzi viewed Marks' dealings with the city more harshly. Both were critical that council members were not told long ago about the overdue debt.

Vagnozzi suggested drafting a code of ethics. When first suggested by former councilwoman Joan Dudley, Vagnozzi opposed a code. "In the last few days, I started to rethink my position," he said.

Fox referred to the city's need to enforce its ordinances impartially. "Is there any doubt in anyone's mind what course this city would have taken if 18 months ago, John Q. Public had written a \$17,000 sewer tap check which bounced — twice," Fox said.

Even though Marks paid his debt, Flum still was angry. "Mr. Marks with his actions violated his oath of office, disregarded his and your credibility, broke public trust and perpetrated the myth that all politicians are crooked."

"THE PERCEPTION of corruption has long been at city hall. It is not fair that the few continue to taint the majority of elected officials and

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RANDY BOST/ing photo

Farmington Hills councilman Ben Marks said he will publicly comment on his controversial business dealing with the city at next week's city council meeting.

Workers see fire, aid family to safety

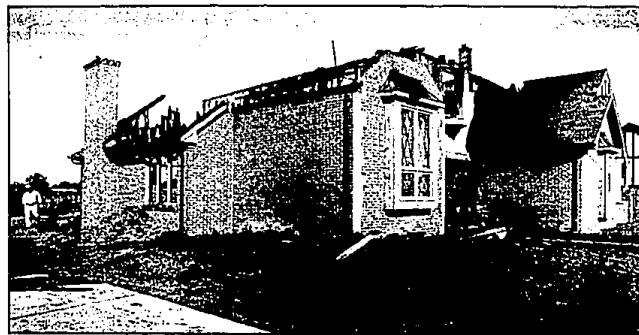
By Bob Sklar
staff writer

By just doing what he thought was right, Joe Fryer feels he prevented a fire in a model home from spreading and even turning deadly.

"I think I saved somebody today," said Fryer, 38, who was on the way to work early Monday when he and companion Mike Wilkie, 16, saw flames to the east of the Hagerty-Nine Mile area shortly past 4 a.m.

Damage to the Meadowbrook park model home, built by Italo American Builders, was estimated at more than \$200,000. Firefighters contained the fire and had it under control within 30 minutes.

Lightning is being ruled the likely cause, said investigator Kevin Bersche of the Farmington Hills Fire Department. The house sits higher than nearby homes, Bersche



RANDY BOST/staff photographer

Lightning was determined to be the cause of a fire that heavily damaged this house in Meadowbrook Park subdivision early Monday.

said, which may be a reason it attracted lightning.

Fryer and Wilkie, both Livonia residents, were heading toward Filter Systems, 23800 Hagerty, Farmington Hills, where work starts at 4:30 a.m. In order to beat the summer heat, Fryer is a fitter; Wilkie is a helper.

Deciding to check out what was

burning during the windy pre-dawn hours, they found a two-story house at 22275 Heatheridge in flames.

"When we got there, it looked like something out of a movie," Fryer said. "There was a house burning, but it was quiet otherwise. Nobody was outside or doing anything."

The men decided to ring the bell and knock on the door of the house next door, where two cars were

parked in the drive. "We figured somebody was home there," Fryer said. "You never know how long they would've slept until noticing the fire."

THE NEIGHBORS, Sandy and Walt Guth, called the fire department, got three children outside in

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Schools seeking millage publicity

By Casey Hans
staff writer

With just a month left to inform voters, Farmington school officials will approach community groups and use newsletters to plead their case for a proposed \$27.25 million bond issue.

The 16-year, \$8-mill bond proposal will be decided by voters in the Farmington school district in a special election Monday, Sept. 19. It is the first debt millage proposed by the district in more than 20 years for building a new school.

The tax increase is proposed to finance three things:

• A new elementary school for a 12-acre, district-owned parcel on 11 Mile just east of Halsted. The parcel is wooded and has a rolling terrain, which school officials say could be used for an interesting building design.

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Colleges threatened by state money chief if tuition hikes stick

By Peggy Audino
staff writer

The state's chief financial officer lashed out at state universities for raising tuitions and threatened state cutbacks in funding if the practice continued.

State treasurer Robert Bowman made his remarks Tuesday while on the media circuit to promote the Michigan Education Trust, a program to aid students in paying college tuition costs.

He referred specifically to Oakland University's decision the night before to rescind a 9.8-percent increase. Even so, the Rochester University's tuition will increase by nearly 10 percent this year.

"There's going to be three or four

more that roll back," Bowman said during a two-hour interview with Observer & Eccentric reporters and editors. "They all will roll back or we'll be recommending to the governor that their budgets be vetoed to remind them that they can take this autonomy too far. We're all part of the same system here."

Bowman also said that the popularity of the Michigan Education Trust (MET), evidenced by over \$1,000 applications in one week earlier this month, will help pressure colleges to keep a lid on tuition increases.

He also said that many critics of Michigan's prepaid college tuition plan are financial planners who don't understand the program and who fear the loss of potential business.



Robert Bowman
state treasurer

THE EDUCATION trust fund, dubbed as a pay-now, study-later plan, works like this: Parents, or any Michigan resident interested in sending a child to college, pays the state a specified amount depending on the

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Dad offers reward in daughter's injury

By Casey Hans and
Joanne Maliszewski
staff writers

Oakland County sheriff's detectives are without solid leads in a weekend rock-throwing incident at Pine Knob Music Theatre that left an 18-year-old Farmington Hills woman with severe facial injuries.

But their investigation continues, and rewards of up to \$5,000 are being offered in the case.

Janet Cowen, 18, a 1988 North Farmington High School graduate, remains at Pontiac Osteopathic Hospital. She's in stable condition. She was moved from intensive care Tuesday, and Wednesday was beginning to drink liquids with a syringe, said her father Robert Cowen. "She's gotten a lot of encouragement from her friends," he added.

The Cowen family hopes Janet will be released from the hospital this weekend.



Janet Cowen
North Farmington graduate

A reward to catch the culprit is being offered by the victim's father, his employer, and through the Oakland County Chamber of Commerce. Sheriff Winters pro-

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