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from recent grads, 2A



# Farmington Observer

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Fifty Cents

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## FOCUS

**ATTENTION** voters here come the candidates.

You can meet the hopefuls for the open seat on the Farmington Board of Education in person at City Hall, or sit back and watch them field questions on Metrovision's Channel 18.

The Farmington Democratic Club will host the candidate forum at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 1, in the council chamber of the Farmington Hills City Hall.

Each candidate will make an introductory statement and then respond to questions from the audience.

School board incumbent Susan Rennels faces challenges from Laura Myers and Richard DeVries in the district, which includes all of Farmington and most of Farmington Hills.

Voters will pick the winner Monday, June 10.

**STROLL INTO** Springtime with the merchants of the Uptown Farmington Center.

The second-annual Springtime Stroll, set for May 3-18 at the shopping center on Grand River, will feature Uptown Bucks, coupons and a drawing May 20 for prizes.

Grand prize will be an airplane ride, courtesy of Ken Barthelette of Yankee Consignments, a store in the center. Each of the 18 stores will offer a prize.

**ATTENTION**, teenagers who are looking for a summer job... mark Thursday, May 9, on your calendars.

Roberta Floyd of Southfield Employment and Travel will be at the Farmington branch of the Farmington Community Library at 7 p.m. that evening with tips on how to find summer employment. For free reservations, call 474-7770.

**WHAT'S THE** occasion? Why, it's the retirement of longtime Farmington High School Principal Gerald Potter, and the public is invited to attend a reception in his honor.

The get-together, hosted by the Parent Advisory and Booster Club, will be held 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 22, in the Mediated Classroom of Farmington High School on Shawwassee Road.

**MEMORY LANE** — From the April 26, 1991, Farmington Enterprise:

From the Around the Block column: "Once again we notice the approach of another season of fender-bending. In a few more weeks and a couple of rays of sunshine, it'll be here in full as the Sunday drivers stretch out and try to get away from all the other Sunday drivers. The winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the speeders appear on the highway; the time of shrieking breaks is here, and the voice of the siren is heard in our land. The quiet Sunday afternoons are no longer — which means if you take the family bus out of the garage come a weekend, better make sure it gets back there. And not in a bushel basket, either."

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21598 Farmington Road, Farmington 48335, or dropped off at the newspaper office.



SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

## Waiting for the results

It was a long wait for North Farmington High School student Tricia Barnes as she watched the judge put ribbons on the winning entries in the Student Art Awards competition. For details and pictures of the winners, see Page 1C.

More than 200 students entered the annual spring event, which is sponsored by Farmington Area Arts Commission. For details and pictures of the winners, see Page 1C.

## Soldier visits Wood Creek pen-pals

By Aileen Wingblad  
special writer

A group of fifth graders from Farmington's Wood Creek Elementary School learned an unexpected lesson about the postal delivery system when one of their Operation Desert Storm pen-pals, Army 2nd Lt. Michael Bindon, visited their classroom Monday.

The students found that, unfortunately, none of the letters they had sent during their two-month writing assignment ever made it to Saudi Arabia. Not a one.

"I'm as heartbroken about it as you are... if the letters ever turn up, like in December or January, I'll let you know," Bindon told the youngsters and their teacher, Lanny Swanson.

Nonetheless, the students were bubbling with excitement and ready with a host of questions about the rigors of war, life in the Persian Gulf and military service in general when Bindon, dressed in camouflage fatigues, spoke with the class.

AND WHILE they were somewhat disappointed that their letters have yet to reach Bindon, one of

four servicemen they wrote to, most of the students agreed with Swanson that the assignment was one that was fun and well-intentioned.

"Of course, we're sorry he didn't get the letters," said Swanson, who added that the students still learned plenty from the weekly writing project earlier this year.

"It gave them a closer association with what was going on with the Middle East crisis and brought the situation a little nearer to home, especially since each of our pen pals had in some way

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## 'Park-watchers' support tax plan

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Farmington Hills' "park-watchers" — Joe Derek, Roy Lindhardt and Kurt Yockey — are counting on the city's commitment to limiting development of the more than 70-acre Peltz-MDOT land.

And with that, the three say they plan to support passage of the city's proposed half-mill tax request for eight years for parks and recreation. But they also promise to keep an eye on the parks if voters approve the tax on Tuesday, May 7.

"I'm going to back it. The city came a long way with the resolution than it would have six months ago," Derek said. "I think if we squeaky wheels hadn't come out of the woodwork, this wouldn't have happened."

Derek, Lindhardt and Yockey had long ques-

tioned city officials, the tax proposal and accompanying project plan. In particular, however, they were concerned over the fate of the city-owned Peltz land and property immediately adjacent and owned by the Michigan Department of Transportation, just south of I-696, west of Farmington road. The acreage is north of Quaker Valley subdivision.

CITY COUNCIL passage of a resolution April 8 reaffirming its commitment to limit development of the wooded land to "access roads, limited parking, nature trails and small picnic areas and related uses" — not ball and soccer fields — went a long way in securing support from the three residents.

"I was pleased with the way it was worded and that it was adopted," said Yockey, pres-

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## Bid for flower stand sprouts controversy

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

It wasn't one-sided. West Bloomfield resident Raymond Hesano's bid for a temporary-use permit for a flower stand on Northwestern Highway in Farmington Hills was both opposed and supported with petitions.

Many residents in the area near Langan's Bowling Center, 32905 Northwestern Highway, where Hesano runs his plant-and-flower stand, support him.

But others, particularly florists and similar businesses in Farmington Hills, oppose him.

On behalf of those business owners, Bob

Heinrich, president of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, asked the Farmington Hills City Council Monday to review the ordinance that allows temporary-use permits for such businesses.

Hesano was unavailable for comment Tuesday.

"Obviously, we're very pro business... but it seems (the temporary-use ordinance) is being administered in a manner that's far afield from its original intent," Heinrich said. "We ought not to be supporting something that

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## School, city officials wary of state tax plans

By Casey Hans  
staff writer

Local officials were at first relieved by the state Legislature's action to defer a property tax assessment freeze until 1992.

But a sharp knife is waiting around the corner to whittle — and in some cases, gash — at the budgets of local cities and school districts in 1992, as state legislators try to come to grips with ways to offer residents property tax relief.

Farmington schools face upwards of \$20 million in cuts starting in 1992 if voters approve an assessment cap, and cities also face multi-million dollar budget cuts, as inflation

continues to boost costs but budgets are frozen along with with assessment rates, which determine local property taxes.

The majority of local budgets, including cities and schools, come from local property taxes.

"It's the same consequence — it's just a year later," said Farmington's superintendent of schools, Michael Flanagan. "On one hand, I'm elated it got delayed a year. It's still devastating to us."

"Everyone who showed up and stared them in the eye, it made a big difference," he added, referring to a group of Oakland County super-

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## Bridal Accents

Special Section in today's issue



## French fun

Kindergartners at Alameda Early Childhood Center in Farmington Hills got a French lesson recently from visiting Mercy High School students. At right, John Schmid (far left), Brian Dool and Colt Mason use balloons to learn how to count in French. For a story and more photos, please see Page 3A.



SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer