

Born last century,  
they look to next, 3A



Observer  
Relays, 1C

Mudd Puppies, Feelies  
and other sounds, 3D

# Farmington Observer

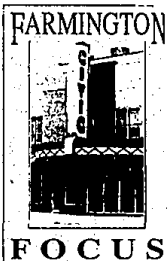
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Farmington, Michigan

46 Pages

Fifty Cents



## Frustrated shop owner closes doors

By Casey Hens  
staff writer

For Gary Larcinese, happiness is seeing the city of Farmington in his rear view mirror. Larcinese finally closed his Accidental Auto Body shop last week after nearly a year of operating under federal bankruptcy court rules — and living with what he said were a myriad of problems doing business in the city. After filing for protection under Chapter 11, which allowed him to operate the business while reorganizing his debt, he said everything went downhill. "It reads like a big sob story, I know," said Larcinese, a Milford resident who operated the

auto body shop on Nine Mile east of Farmington Road where their lighthearted slogan was "we meet by accident." "I'm not crying over spilled milk," he added. "But I am so glad to be gone. They just didn't care."

SINCE THE operating bankruptcy was filed last June, Larcinese had one bad break after another, including a three-day shutdown in the middle of the company's busy season because of a landlord-tenant dispute. The shut-down caused the building's alarm system to be deactivated and a subsequent break-in and loss of \$30,000 in equipment occurred, he said.

**'I'm not crying over spilled milk. But I am so glad to be gone. They just didn't care.'**

— Gary Larcinese  
body shop owner

Three days after the closing, he obtained an order from Oakland County Circuit Judge Fred Mester to reopen the business. But local police were not notified of the order and arrived on the scene, guns drawn, thinking Larcinese and his people were trying to break into the building.

Recent city sewer construction which Larcinese said blocked his driveway and diverted needed business was the final nail in his coffin, he said.

Larcinese was in the news last week when he locked the doors for the last time, after being unable to reach several customers who had left their cars at the shop for repair. Wondering where their cars had been taken, a few people contacted city hall and the police department, and one called a local television station which aired her complaint.

AS IT TURNED out, Larcinese had moved

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## Hills to form ethics panel

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Residents — chosen by the city council — will serve as the nucleus of a new Farmington Hill ethics committee.

"We're trying to get the public to have confidence on this," councilwoman Jean Fox said.

Joining seven residents — each council member will nominate one — will be ex-officio members city attorney John Donohue, city manager William Costick, Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi and councilman Jonathan Grant.

The committee's primary job will be to review the city's ethics code drafted in 1989 by council members. The committee is also expected to determine whether campaign finances for local elections can be regulated.

Ethical issues, including conduct in and out of meetings, financial disclosure forms and campaign finances and how, if possible, council members should be reprimanded for misconduct were spotlighted at a special meeting a week ago.

The meeting was prompted by a 16-page report on rules for council members' conduct drafted by councilman Larry Lichtman, as requested by the city council in January.

NO DECISIONS were made at the special meeting. But council members began paving a course. Grant will check deeper into meeting procedures. Donohue will provide a report on members' conduct, punitive action against members, short of removal from office, and abstentions from voting.

Trying to find some kind of consensus among council members dominated the evening.

Common sense is what Ben Marks believes should govern Farmington Hills elected officials' conduct at public meetings.

"That's something that's given, for

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SHARON LeMIEUX/staff photographer

## An all-school hug

Shannon Harney (left) and Katie Whorf, third graders at Wood Creek Elementary in the Farmington District, join schoolmates in a big hug around the building to celebrate the school's 20th birthday in April. Students sang the school theme song and also did a "wave" clockwise around the building as part of the

Hug-A-School project. Poetry, pictures and other projects were also done in honor of the school's special day. The entire Wood Creek community celebrated with a family dinner April 25.

## Hills votes on parks tax

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

It's election time again. Farmington Hills voters can cast their ballots on the half-mill, eight-year parks and recreation tax from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday.

Turnout for the special election is expected to be average though plenty of absentee ballots — more than 5,000 — have been mailed to senior adults and voters who are unable to get to the polls.

"Voters can bring them in on election day during the same time the polls are open," deputy clerk Sue Rose said. "You must bring them to city hall."

The number of absentee ballots could be more because the city clerk office was open Saturday for anyone who wanted to vote absentee.

Voters faced with an emergency can still vote absentee today at the city clerk's office. But voters must cast the ballot right then and there, Rose said.

The city has 42,426 registered voters. At the last election, November 1990, which was the governor's election and the type that tends to draw out more voters, 25,373 voters or 55.06 percent cast ballots. Absentee ballots in that election totaled 6,678.

CITY OFFICIALS don't expect the turnout for the parks and recreation tax to be quite that high. "Though our average for voting is greater than anywhere else in the state," Rose said.

Voters can determine at which precinct they should

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## MEMORY LANE

From the May 10, 1951 Farmington Enterprise.

• Bumpy Grand River Avenue, downtown Farmington's main street, was to be resurfaced from Eight Mile to Farmington road.

• Edgar West was elected president of the Farmington Jaycees for the coming year. An installation dinner was planned for June.

• Frank Labadie was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Farmington Township School District board of Education. He replaced Rolf Smith who resigned.

Items for Farmington forum may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336, or dropped off at the newspaper office.

## Candidates give schools high grades

By Casey Hens  
staff writer

The Farmington School District received good grades last week on an impromptu report card from three school board candidates.

During a public forum last Wednesday, former school board member Michael Shpilec asked the candidates to grade the school board, administration, teachers and the district overall.

Challengers Richard DeVries and Laura Myers and incumbent Susan Rennels doled out mostly A's

## '91 SCHOOL BOARD RACE

and B's, but all said there was room for improvement in the district.

The three are vying for one 4-year term on the board in the June



Susan Rennels



Richard DeVries



Laura Myers

10 school election.

DeVries gave an "A" to teachers who he called "the most important people in the entire school district," and "B's" to the administration and to the overall district. He offered an "incomplete" grade to school board members, saying "I don't

think they've been as accountable as they should be." He said, if elected, he would "make sure this district gets an A-plus with extra credit."

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