

Hair stylist sets fashion trends, 1C



Softball outlook, 1B

Mercy yearbook wins top awards, 11A



Farmington Observer

Volume 103 Number 51

Thursday, March 26, 1992

Farmington, Michigan

92 Pages

Fifty Cents

Ex-postmaster settles his case



Ken Harris

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Ousted Farmington postmaster Ken Harris will go to work in the Grand Rapids postal district in an as yet undetermined position, under a settlement reached with the U.S. Postal Service this month.

"He and his wife are extremely pleased," said Harris' attorney, John DiFalco, commenting on the case this week. "We could have fought this battle for the next two years."

"I really feel as if I've helped some poor East German escape over the wall," Harris told local officials in the Farmington area he will be working in Lansing, but postal officials there are mum about settlement details. When asked this week when Harris might begin work, a personnel clerk at the Lansing Post Office told the Observer: "There's no story regarding

that. That's all I've been told to say. Goodbye."

Also, officials at the Royal Oak Regional Postal Center, which oversees the Farmington operation, did not return calls to comment.

DiFalco said Harris is taking a brief respite and will likely begin work — what he termed "a new career, of sorts" — by the end of March.

Harris had little to say about the settlement, except that he was happy.

THE 54-YEAR-OLD Harris, who had been postmaster since 1975, was on a stress-related medical leave from his job and was formally terminated in December.

The postal service had charged Harris with 24 infractions which involved mostly record-keeping and accounting procedures. Harris maintained he was being punished for his whistleblowing activities.

His case was scheduled to come before the Mer-

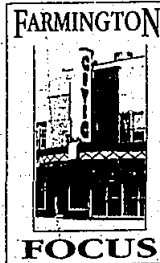
it System Protection Board in U.S. District Court in Detroit on April 2, but a settlement in the case was reportedly reached March 12.

The settlement includes no money, but simply a transfer out of the Detroit division, DiFalco said.

The settlement will allow Harris to retire voluntarily at age 55, if he so wishes, and also sidestepped the Merit System Protection Board which rules in favor of the federal government 80 percent of the time, he added.

"It's a typical settlement in which neither party can claim a victory," the attorney said. "He basically preserved his retirement and got out of the Detroit division."

DiFalco is an attorney based in Colorado. He was retained individually by Harris but is sponsored by the National League of Postmasters, which fights similar stress-related situations throughout the country.



PEOPLE IN THE world are starving... but people in the Farmington area and West Bloomfield are doing something to help.

The seventh-annual Crop Walk Against Hunger will begin and end at the First United Methodist Church, 33112 Grand River, Farmington, Sunday, April 5. The fund-raiser will take place rain or shine.

Registration begins at 1:15 p.m. with the walk starting at 2 p.m. The 10-kilometer route winds through the streets of Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Some 25 percent of the money raised by the walk will go to the Farmington Salvation Army, Farmington Headstart Food Bank and the Oakland County Food Bank, said Jean Poirier, co-chairwoman.

The remainder will be distributed through Church World Services for Hunger Relief, which includes many religious denominations and delivers aid to more than 70 countries.

Last year, 350 participants from 16 area churches walked and \$19,215 was raised, said Poirier, who represents Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in West Bloomfield.

"Each year the Crop Walk grows — and more hungry people are fed," she said.

For more information, call Poirier (661-5070), Judy Houser (661-5139) or Cheryl Carter (477-1153).

ATTENTION, Farmington-area business people: A Continental breakfast will be hosted by the Farmington Community Library and Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, April 7, at the library, 32737 W. 12 Mile Road. Library staff will demonstrate special business reference sources. Make reservations my calling 353-0300.

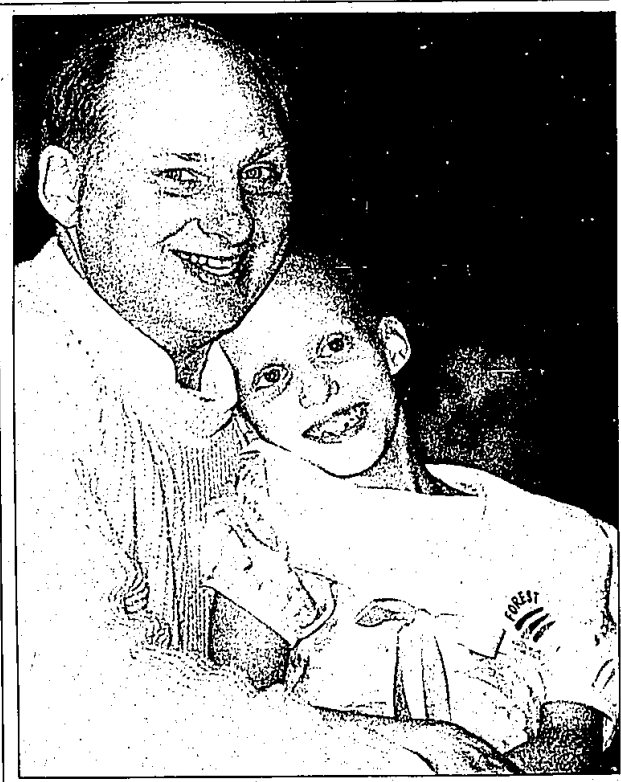
HISTORIC gardeners take note: A workshop — "Antique Gardens: American Home Landscapes, 1840-1940" — will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday, April 26, at the Spicer House in Farmington Hills' Heritage Park on the west side of Farmington Road between 10 and 11 Mile roads.

The workshop is for owners of historic property who are interested in preserving and enhancing the original appearance of their home or business. Scott Rust, a professor of Landscape History at Eastern Michigan University, will speak.

Admission at the door is \$3 per family. The event is sponsored by the Farmington Hills Historic District Commission.

MEMORY LANE — From the April 3, 1992, edition of the Farmington Enterprise: Around the Block Item: "Coming down is the old building behind Hatten's Hardware. Wreckers are removing the landmark at the request of the state Fire Marshal. Clearing the area behind the stores will allow space for either new storage or badly needed parking areas."

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48338, or dropped off at the newspaper office.



GHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

Special smiles

Doug Campbell of Wixom holds his eight-year-old daughter Carissa during a Ron Coden/Josh White, Jr. concert at North Farmington High School last Thursday, sponsored by Forest Elementary School in Farmington Hills. The Campbells were invited to the concert because of a special link to

the school. They received a donation from Forest Elementary through The Rainbow Connection, a group which helps sick children. The family plans to use the money toward a trip to Disney World for Carissa. For a story and more photos, please see page 3A.

Wise planning key to growth, chairman says

By Susan Buck
staff writer

Faced with an aging population as well as a decline in growth, Farmington Hills will need to plan wisely to maintain its tax base and revenues as a new century rolls around, said Robert McConnell, chairman of the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) in Farmington Hills.

Land is filling up. The city's population is expected to grow from more than 74,000 now to 78,000 by the year 2000.

The city currently enjoys an office occupancy rate of 82 percent, McConnell said.

"Right now it's pretty good," McConnell said. "But we need to know how the brokers and realtors are viewing us."

There's no time to rest on past laurels, though. McConnell wants to insure the occupancy rate.

McConnell, a native of Ireland, was Farmington Township's last su-

pervisor before cityhood in 1972. The former Ford Motor Company engineer has been the EDC board chairman for the last 12 years.

It was McConnell who in '72 drove to Lansing with Farmington Township's petition to become incorporated as a city.

McCONNELL, WHO holds a master's degree in administration and organization, was elected Oakland County commissioner for the 25th district. He resigned his commissioner's seat for business reasons in the middle of his second term.

The EDC is charged with assisting and retaining local industries and commercial businesses, alleviating conditions of unemployment and strengthening and revitalizing the economy of Farmington Hills.

The EDC also provides means and methods for businesses to locate, purchase, construct, reconstruct.

Please turn to Page 4

Redistricting plan pits incumbents

See related story, Page 7A.

By Judith Doner Berne and Susan DeMaggio
staff writers

It won't be politics as usual in Oakland County races for the U.S. House this primary season.

In addition to the rumblings of a voter anti-incumbent movement, you have incumbents taking on incumbents if the redistricting plan released earlier this week by a three-judge federal panel holds up as expected.

• If you live in Birmingham, the Bloomfields, Southfield, the Farmingtons, or Southfield Township you

get to decide a battle which could draw national attention in the newly formed 11th Congressional District.

There 36-year-old state Sen. David Honigman, R-West Bloomfield, said he will run "a campaign for change" against the longest-serving Republican in Congress, U.S. Rep. William Broomfield, D, Bloomfield, shooting for his 19th term, has been in the Congress for as long as Honigman has been on earth.

The veteran congressman, who is the ranking Republican on the prestigious House Foreign Affairs Committee, will base his campaign on his "clean record, support from past constituents and 36-year record of

Please turn to Page 2

what's inside

- Building Scene 9C
 - Business 10B
 - Cable Connection 12A
 - Classifieds Secs. D-G
 - Index 3E
 - Auto Secs. F,G
 - Real estate Secs. E,F
 - Employment Sec. F
 - Creative living 1D
 - Crossword puzzle 4E
 - Entertainment 7-9B
 - Obituaries 6A
 - Opinion 14A
 - Police, fire calls 9F
- CLASSIFIEDS . . . 591-0900
CIRCULATION . . . 591-0500
NEWS LINE . . . 477-5450
SPORTS LINE . . . 953-2139

SPRING FERVOR

In Today's Issue

School officials cautiously examine funding of projects

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Eagle Elementary School will get additional building improvements, while projects will be pared at North Farmington High School and Power Middle School, as Farmington school officials juggle \$4.1 million in capital projects.

Meanwhile, officials are looking cautiously at the future of all capital projects in the district and how, or if, they can be funded.

The Farmington school board voted recently to increase the Eagle project from \$900,000 to \$1.4 million; to decrease projects at North Farmington from \$1.4 million to \$1.1 million; and to decrease projects at Power from \$923,000 to \$716,000. New storage cabinet projects at seven elementary schools remain budgeted at

\$876,500.

A total of \$4.1 million for four capital projects was approved last December by the board, but budgets for each individual project were revised in early March when architects discovered additional work was needed at Eagle.

SOME DETAILS of the revised projects include:

- At Eagle, an integrated technology system for the school is proposed, as well as an office area expansion, an addition of 3,200 square feet for a cafeteria and multi-purpose room plus kitchen and mechanical space. A number of other improvements are planned including electrical, window, floor and wall upgrades and replacement of existing casework in the building.

Please turn to Page 2