

IN THE PAPER TODAY

White House-bound: Jean Fox, former Farmington Hills councilwoman and a local historian, will help celebrate the 200th anniversary of a national landmark. /2A

Clear differences: Southfield Town Center Optimists and their guests listen up to the opposing views of county executive candidates. /7A

OPINION

Readers write: The Observer's opinion page contains letters on a variety of subjects. /8A

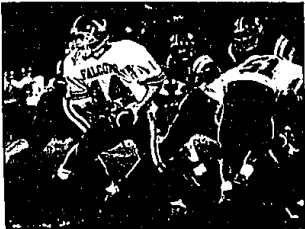
TRAVEL

Taking leaves: Beautiful fall colors accent the meandering Blue Ridge Parkway near Asheville, N.C. /9A

STREET SCENE

Judging the sounds: It could well be a case of judging a band by its dress. 3rd Nature says their sound is hard-edged alternative, but the group doesn't portray itself in the true sense of the cutting edge word. It seems alternative for them is not being in the mainstream of the musical awaves. /4B

SPORTS



Gridiron report: North Farmington tried to extend its football winning streak to four games, while Harrison and Farmington attempted to end losing skids. /1C

CABLE TV WEEKLY

Local access: "Viewpoint" will be presented on Channel 12. Check your cable guide for time and date.

INDEX

Classifieds . . .	B-D	Obituaries . . .	4A
Entertainment . . .	5-6B	Opinion . . .	8A
Auto	D	Police, fire calls . . .	6A
Index	7B	Sports	1C
Real estate	B,C	Street Scene	4B
Employment	C,D	Taste	1B
Crossword puzzle	7B	Travel	9A

OUR PHONE NUMBERS

Newsroom: 477-5450
 Newsroom Fax: 477-9722
 Sports: 953-2141
 Reader Comment Line: 953-2042
 Classified Advertising: 591-0800
 Display Advertising: 591-2300
 Home Delivery: 591-0500
 Cable/TV Weekly: 478-5160

Assessments rile homeowners



Municipal water and sewers are coming to the Ramble Hills subdivision in Farmington Hills. Some residents, however, are shocked at the cost.

By JOANNE MALISZEWSKI
STAFF WRITER

How would you pay a \$20,000 water and sewer assessment? Ted and Laura Schwartz are asking themselves that very question. "For us, this is a hardship. We may have to sell the house," said Ted, who

has lived in the Ramble Hills subdivision, west of Farmington Road and north of 11 Mile, for little more than a year. For the young couple who bought their house where they did because they liked the rural atmosphere, successful efforts to bring in water and

sewer were disconcerting. But even more upsetting is the \$20,000 tab — that is if it is paid in one shot. If they decide to pay the bill over the 15 years allowed by the city of Farmington Hills, which has put in the water and sewer, their bill will top \$40,000 with interest.

The total doesn't include hookup fees or plumbing expenses.

"It's like adding that much more to your monthly payment," said Lyncroft resident Mary Hurd, who figured that over 15 years residents would pay about \$234 a month —

which would be like a 51 percent tax increase. Assessments for water actually won't start until a moratorium on water hook ups is lifted by the state.

In addition to the costs, residents such as the Schwartz, Hurd and Dick Steiger, are irked because they didn't want water and sewer. In fact, in 1990 when a petition circulated around Ramble Hills, water and sewer was voted down.

They blame the situation they now find themselves in with gerrymander-

See ASSESSMENTS, 3A



SHARON LEMIEUX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Ring in Saturn: Karen Tibus: "When customers come in, they know what they are going to get."

Saturn dealership on way

By JOANNE MALISZEWSKI
STAFF WRITER

Karen Tibus began her automotive career as a switchboard operator at Don Messey Cadillac in Plymouth 15 years ago.

Today, she's president of Saturn of Plymouth, Saturn of Farmington Hills and Saturn of Okemos dealerships.

"If you're looking for the Farmington Hills Saturn dealership, however, it's not here yet. You've got to wait until mid-December when it's scheduled to open at Haggerty and Grand River, next door to Pace Warehouse.

"I have a lot of respect for all the posts in the store," said Tibus at her Saturn of Plymouth offices.

That's because she's done them all, including a stint as a car washer for the Cadillac dealership, as well as general office, service cashier, sales, assistant to the president and general manager.

The new 16,000 square foot dealership will be able to serve the Farmington, Novi and Lakes area. "I think Saturn fits a lot of family needs," Tibus said.

Saturn, which takes a market approach, allows dealers to pick a particular market area for their stores.

HILLS

Tibus took the Plymouth-Livonia, Farmington Hills-Novi and Lansing areas.

"That means no one else can build in that area," said Tibus, a Plymouth-Salem graduate.

Tibus likes Saturn's human approach to car sales. When a customer walks in, a receptionist provides a brochure and price sheet.

See SATURN, 2A

Trouble with alcohol hurts anti-drug war, expert says

By CASEY HANS
STAFF WRITER

Adults need to face their own attitudes about alcohol before they can deal with substance abuse in young people, an expert in that field told community leaders in Farmington Hills Thursday.

Penny Norton said because alcohol is legal, an accepted drug, and part of our everyday lives, it becomes easier for people to focus on the evils of cocaine and other substances. "I believe part of our failure . . . is that we're in trouble with alcohol,"

said Norton, coordinator of the Mid-State Substance Abuse Commission, a former high school teacher and a 14-year veteran in dealing with substance abuse problems. "We're a piece of it. These kids are watching us, and they don't miss a trick."

"They are simply looking at where we define the lines — and there are no lines," she added. "We're the ones who are supposed to make the rules."

Norton does not advocate a return to prohibition or an attitude of abstinence — something she called unrealistic — but wants to see communi-

ties manage what she called this country's "culture of alcohol abuse." The number of people addicted to alcohol dwarfs the number of those addicted to all other drugs combined, she added.

"The opportunity and challenge is to . . . manage the situation more effectively instead of trying to solve this thing — that's not going to happen," she added. "We set ourselves up to fail."

See ALCOHOL, 2A



Penny Norton

15 nabbed in gambling raid at Hills motel

By TOM BAER
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills police arrested 15 men and confiscated \$14,000 in a gambling raid Saturday at the Comfort Inn motel in the 12 Mile/Orchard Lake Road area.

"They were running a dice game and card game," said Police Chief William Dwyer.

The majority of those arrested were Farmington Hills and West Bloomfield Township residents, Dwyer said.

The suspects were issued tickets for "frequenting or attending a gambling place." They were fingerprinted and photographed at the Farming-

ton Hills police station and then released. They face an Oct. 26 arraignment in 47th District Court in Farmington.

The raid — which was conducted without incident or injury, according to police — was the result of "an ongoing investigation into illegal gambling at the Comfort Inn," Dwyer said.

When the police entered Room 334 at 1:30 a.m., they saw "a dice game and card playing with large sums of money on the table," Dwyer said.

Police first suspected gambling activity at the motel several weeks ago. Hills office Sandy Shankin, working the midnight shift, had no-

ticed a large number of men entering the Comfort Inn, Dwyer said.

Shankin was also a member of the raiding party.

"She's an alert officer and deserves a lot of credit," the chief said. "As a result of her report, our Crime Suppression Unit, headed by Sgt. Doug Anderson, initiated a surveillance. Last night (Saturday morning) they had probable cause and requested a search warrant."

The gambling raid was the third in the past several months in the city, Dwyer said.

"We're going to continue to work on any illegal gambling, as well as any narcotics or prostitution," he said.

Schools praise ruling

By CASEY HANS
STAFF WRITER

The top finance official for Farmington Public Schools said he is encouraged by last week's Michigan Supreme Court ruling which decries the

FINANCE

state's recapture policy and may have a "chilling effect" on future school funding issues at the state level.

"It makes my steps a little lighter at the end of the day knowing it happened," said assistant superintendent for finance Bruce Barrett. "We now have the highest court in the state saying recapture is wrong — it's unconstitutional."

Barrett said the Sept. 29 ruling offers a vote of confidence to out-of-formula school districts who sued the state in September 1990, contending that the state could not legally reduce the ratio of funding to school districts under the 1978 Headlee amendment. The suit also asked that the state continue to pay Social Security taxes for local districts as it had for years.

The case was originally thrown out by the appellate court in 1990, then appealed to the Supreme Court which ruled last week on a 4-3 vote that the state's handling of its recapture formula in 1990 was wrong. About 50 districts lost an unexpected \$72 million in that year's recapture plan.

But the high court ruling, in effect, dismissed the Social Security issue, saying it is a federal mandate and does not fall under the state's

See RULING, 2A