

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Harrison honors: Harrison High School announced its honor roll for the first marking period./9A

County help: Oakland County workers will help Farmington by running the city's new pumping and retention facility./4A

Store expansion: A Kroger store in Farmington Hills is expanding, but it won't force out other mall tenants./7A

COUNTY NEWS

Protest in pictures: Some of Oakland University's black students rallied last week to show their concern that racism is growing on the Oakland County campus./5A.

TASTE



Festival of Lights: Jewish families prepare to celebrate Hannukah at sundown Dec. 19. Learn how to make holiday sugar cookies, latkes, (potato pancakes) and other holiday treats./1B

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Bagging it: Is the once-utilitarian shopping bag destined to become a collector's item?/9B

STREET SCENE

New tunes: The folks at Liberty University may not have appreciated Blake Miller's music, but many others like the sounds he and his band, 22 Belows, are churning out./10B

SPORTS

Basketball clash: Farmington hosted Redford Union in a non-league boys basketball game./1C

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Hills cops fight insurance fraud



Insurance costs insurance companies millions of dollars each year — a cost passed on to consumers. Farmington Hills Police, U.S. Postal Inspectors and National Insurance Crime Bureau agents have joined forces in the case.

BY MARY LOU SONG
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills police arrested a Detroit woman on charges of insurance fraud Dec. 8 after she took a \$1,260 settlement check for a slip and fall claim, Hills police said.

— Dionne Leslie Weathers, 25, was arrested at the Sentry Insurance Co.

on 13 Mile after an investigation by Hills police, U.S. Postal Inspectors and the National Insurance Crime Bureau in Detroit.

According to Paul Wade, an NIBC special investigator, Weathers filed a claim for lost wages after she said she slipped and fell Aug. 4 at a store in Taylor.

NIBC, which investigates insurance claims, suspected the claim was "not quite true" after Weathers said she worked for a carpentry company owned by her grandmother, Wade said. Wade said that the company did not exist and that Weathers could not have worked for the company.

NIBC contacted Hills police and asked that they be present when Weathers picked up the check at Sentry Insurance. Detective David Lee of the Hills police said the claim was not fraud until Weathers picked up the check.

"Insurance fraud hurts all of us,"

Lee said. "In the past, fraud occurred but nothing was done because we didn't have the funds. But with all the resources of NIBC and the assistance from postal inspectors, they're becoming easier to pursue."

Weathers was held overnight and arraigned Dec. 9 at the 47th District Court. She stood mute to the charges and a not-guilty plea was entered on her behalf. Bond was set at \$5,000 and a preliminary hearing was set for Dec. 18.

The false pretense charge is a felony that carries a 10-year sentence and/or a \$5,000 fine.

Mr. Knollenberg goes to Washington

BY JUDITH DONER BERNE
STAFF WRITER

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Joe Knollenberg makes no bones about it. He is overwhelmed.

"One of the things about winning — no one tells you it's not over," said Knollenberg, coffee cup in hand, poised for another day of the orientation process that will take him from congressman-elect to congressman from the 11th District.

"Nobody can tell you what it's like," he said of his first days in Washington. "It's like having a child."

The Republican from Bloomfield Township is in the midst of two weeks of classes on both administrative and policy matters. Among issues covered this first week are the use of the franking privilege ("I like it, it's gotten tighter") to the mechanics of setting up Washington and local district offices to "Congressional office automation and correspondence management."

These must be juggled with the necessities of hiring a staff, finding a place to live and meeting and creating ties with an entirely new group of people.

Even with putting in 7 a.m. to midnight days, "I'm running out of time," he says. "I don't remember sitting back for five minutes."

See KNOLLENBERG, 2A

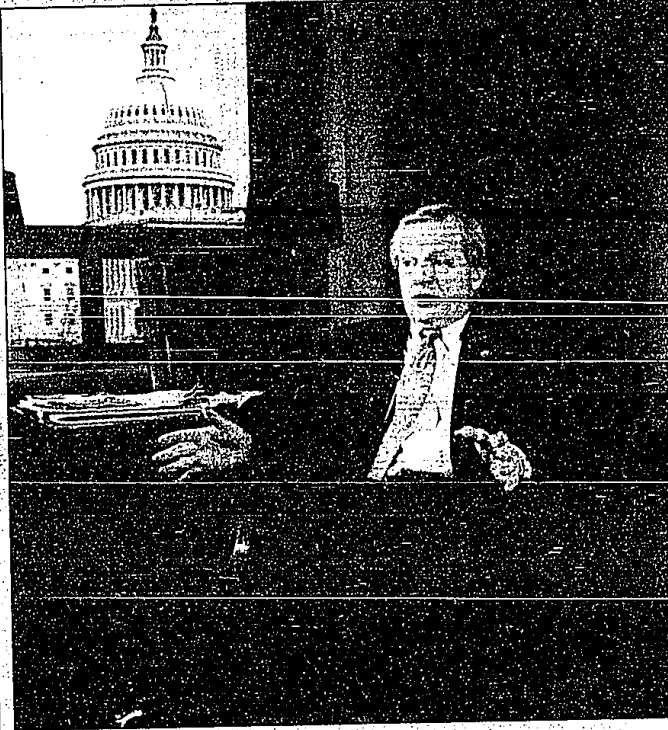


PHOTO BY PHOTO PRESS INTERNATIONAL

A freshman again: Remember your first days at college? That's the experience that Joe Knollenberg says is most like learning the ropes as a freshman Congressman. Left: He starts the day with a "Congressional cup" of coffee.

School tax debate is Wednesday

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Citizens for Quality Schools, a ballot issue committee, is hosting a debate Wednesday to discuss the February school tax renewal proposal.

However, no school administrators have been invited, according to Pam O'Leary, a school communications liaison. But school board members have.

The program will be cablecast live at 7 p.m. on Channel 8 from the Farmington Hills City Council Chambers, 31555 11 Mile.

On Jan. 19, the Farmington school district will cablecast its own informational program about the election

scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 2, which consolidates 1993-95 operating renewals in a single ballot. The Jan. 19 cablecast is on Channel 10.

But Richard DeVries, the group treasurer, said the holiday season might preclude invitees' attendance. As of Friday, received no affirmative RSVPs.

"The reason we are having it early is so we can stimulate some discussion," DeVries said. "It will also allow the meeting to be recallcast."

As for attendance, DeVries said all that was needed were two people — a proponent and an opponent of the tax. He added that as elected officials board members have a responsibility

to defend their position.

The CQS group was formed by Richard DeVries in December 1990 to oppose a school tax election in early 1991. CQS endorsed DeVries in the 1991 board race, but Robert Ranney, CQS president, said in May that he did not believe it would be fair to host a candidates night and endorse DeVries this year.

DeVries, has twice run unsuccessfully for a school board seat. The outspoken DeVries frequently criticizes school spending and has ruffled school officials.

Ranney was a school board candidate in 1989 and 1991. This year he chose not to run but put his support

behind DeVries.

The group scheduled a candidates forum May 14 at which time Ranney said that the group could host a non-biased forum despite DeVries' involvement. DeVries termed his involvement in the then 18 month old group "minimal" and added that many other groups of which candidates are members host similar forums.

Both Helen Prutow; a four-term incumbent and now school board member Joseph Svoke declined to attend the May forum.

The Dec. 16 program consists of:

See TAXES, 2A

Yuletide meals

The Salvation Army will provide toys and food baskets to the needy over the holidays in Farmington Hills.

In fact, about 6,000 homeless and needy people in the Detroit area will enjoy a traditional Christmas dinner at various Salvation Army locations in the area.

In Farmington Hills, the Corps Community Center, at 27500 Shlawasse, will be a distribution site for toys and food baskets Dec. 21-23.

Food baskets will be given to those who can make dinner, but prepared meals will be served to those who can not make dinners, at several locations.

For more information, call the Salvation Army at 477-1153.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

In addition, Congregation Shaarey Zedek and other Jewish institutions have teamed up with the Salvation Army to feed 1,000 needy and homebound people in north central Detroit on Christmas Day. For more information on volunteering to prepare or serve the meals, call Dr. Mark Diem, Shining Light chairman, at 548-8399.

Albom signs books

Mitch Albom, author, sports columnist for the Detroit Free Press and radio sports reporter, will be signing his third book Friday at the Little Professor Book Center in Farmington.

Albom will be signing his third book, "Live Alone & Don't Die," 7-8 p.m. at the store, in the Grand River/Halsted Shopping Center.

Post offices extend hours

The Farmington Hills post offices at 32455 West 12 Mile and 33200 Secum St. is offering extended holiday hours for customer convenience:

Dec. 14 — 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
 Dec. 18 — 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
 Dec. 19 — 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 Dec. 21 — 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21899 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336, or dropped off at the newspaper office.