

IN THE PAPER

TODAY

School suit: The assistant principal at Harrison High School, passed over for principal, has sued the Farmington district. /2A

OPINION

Write on! Letters . . . we get letters. See who's writing and about what. /6A

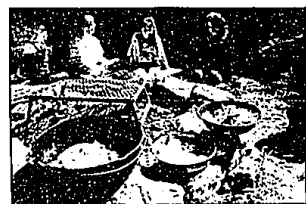
COUNTY NEWS

Questions, answers: Here's a Q&A story about the state Legislature's recent surprise move on school funding. /7A

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Summer reads: Columnist Linda Bachrack scouts out local bookstores for the most popular vacation-time reading — for all ages. /4B

TASTE



Outdoor cooking: Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts share tips for planning and cooking campfire meals. /1B

Recipe Makeover: Delicious no-bake cookie crumb cheesecake has 0 grams of fat per serving. /1B

SPORTS

Sandlot showdown: NFBI and the Trenton Travelers battled for the Connie Mack regular-season baseball championship Friday. /1C

Cage recruits: Oakland Community College has some fresh talent lined up to play on its men's basketball team next season. /1C

CABLE TV WEEKLY

Cable guide: See this week's cable TV listings.

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Aside remark creeps onto cable



Masha Silver, a longtime council watcher, says she was insulted by councilwoman Joanne Smith during the last meeting.

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

A sensitive microphone and an alleged insensitive comment have brought up questions of how the Farmington Hills City Council members view residents who speak before them.

An off-the-cuff remark by Farmington Hills councilwoman Joanne Smith has ruffled more than a few feathers and has offended council watchdog Masha Silver, who's demanding Smith's resignation.

During the July 19 council meeting, Smith covered her microphone and

made a remark to councilman Aldo Vignozzi, who sits to her left. Audience members, including Silver — a teacher who often attends meetings and speaks out on various issues — did not hear the comment.

But many people watching the proceedings live on cable TV did catch it. Silver, who had just finished addressing the council concerning a proposed development next to her condominium complex, was told Smith had called her a "creep" over the air.

Smith denies it

Silver addressed the council during

COUNCIL MEETING

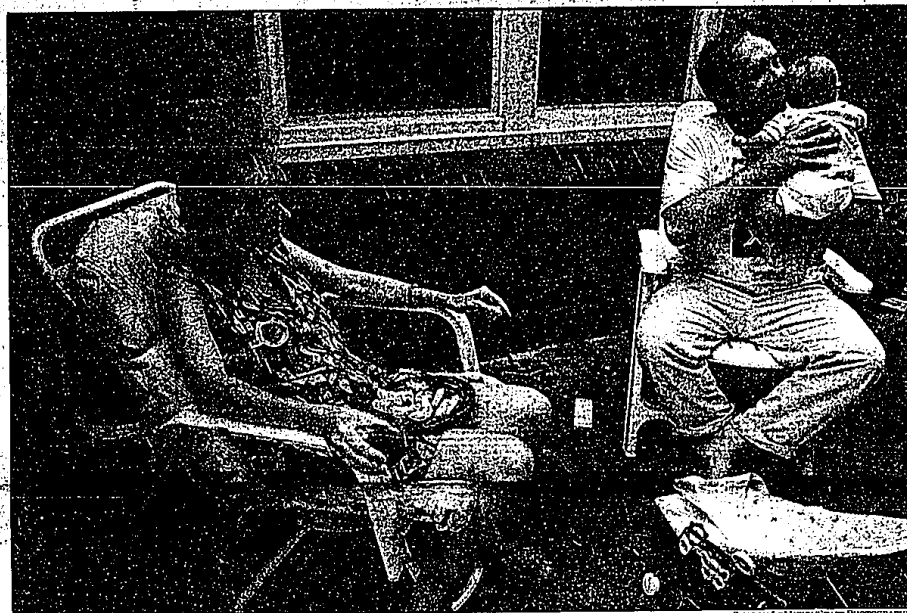
the public comments portion of the meeting and scolded Smith. But Smith denied she ever called Silver anything derogatory.

Although some said Smith seemed to be saying, "She's such a creep" on a recording of the broadcast, the city's audio tape was not clear.

Smith, who told Silver that her remark was misinterpreted, also wrote a letter of apology to Silver. But Silver

See REMARK, 6A

Dining on Brookdale



Taking the air: During good weather, the Pigeon family — Roberta, Steve and baby William — often eat dinner on the front porch of their Brookdale home.

Coyote tale makes some neighbors howl

Editor's note: Stories about Farmington-area neighborhoods will appear occasionally in the Observer.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A portrait of neighborhood serenity.

A couple eating dinner on the front porch . . . a young man on inline skates stick-handling a ball in

the driveway . . . children splashing about in a backyard plastic pool, and perhaps . . . a coyote lurking by the fence?

Norman Rockwell would be scratching his head over that one. For people on Brookdale Street in Farmington, home has become more like home on the range.

The placid tree-lined thoroughfare has become an observation

point for cavorting coyotes.

"We all saw it at the same time," said Dee Hinger, whose family has lived on Brookdale for seven years.

"Everyone was looking into the binoculars . . . and he finally came out. He started dancing and prancing."

Added Steven Pigeon, who lives a few houses down: "It's real. It exists."

There are skeptics, though.

"I haven't seen any coyote," said Scott Ramberg, who's lived on Brookdale since 1976.

So, the debate goes on.

Those who've seen the creature swear to its existence; others aren't so sure.

See BROOKDALE, 3A

Tax cut jolts Farmington school officials

Related story, 7A

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

It's not the crash of 1929, but the slash of 1993 has school officials jumping.

Farmington Public School District officials are fretting over the state legislature's decision to top \$5.5 billion in school funding from property taxes.

For Farmington, that's a loss of \$86.8 million — 95 percent of the district's source of revenue.

"How could you believe after 20 years of tinkering around that suddenly it would be the absolute most extreme ending," said Superintendent Michael Flanagan, "which is just the elimination of total school funding. . . It's almost laughable."

Flanagan and other officials weren't chuckling, however. If any-

thing, they were trying to search the wreckage for anything positive. They said this will definitely force the legislature to deal with the problem of school finance and property tax.

The schools can't shut down since the state constitution mandates that children be educated.

Said Flanagan: "So maybe it's a blessing in disguise."

Lawmakers have a few months to construct an entirely new system of

financing schools.

Increases in the sales tax and income tax seem problematic at this point, some say. Voters as recently as June 2, have turned down sales tax increases. Gov. John Engler said he won't raise the income tax.

"In short of putting \$400 a pack tax on cigarettes, I'm not sure what's left," Flanagan said.

See TAX CUT, 2A

Just call him Ace

Lucky fellow, that Darrell Datte. Or maybe it was his skill with an nine iron on the golf links.

Anyway, Farmington Hills resident Datte shot a hole in one July 13 at the par-3 No. 17 hole on Oakland University's Kalkreuth-Golf Course. He was playing in the annual OU Alumni Tournament.

Datte's golfing exploits earned him more than just a slap on the back or maybe a cold beer in the clubhouse. He won two free air tickets to any location in the United States.

Splash 'n splash

The Farmington Community Library has planned two special parties for youngsters who are

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Involved in the "Make a Splash, Read!" program this summer.

An ice cream social at the Farmington Hills branch on 12 Mile road will be held 2-4 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 4. Games, a magician and ice cream will be featured.

The Farmington branch's Splash Bash will take place 2-4 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 5, at the downtown library at State and Liberty. The "splashes" songs of Rita Kirsch will be an attraction. Crafts and refreshments will follow her performance.

For more details on the reading program, call Children's Services at 653-0300.

Memory Lane

From the July 23, 1993 edition of the Farmington Enterprise:

■ An editorial: "If the boys in the Kremlin would pull their noses out of the volumes of Marx and Lenin long enough to read a little history, they would find out in short order how useless it is to threaten freedom-loving men and women."

■ Harry McKittrick, basketball and football coach at Clarenceville High, resigned to accept a position in Dearborn.

■ Marcus Burrows, former Farmington resident and a nationally known architect, died at age 80 at his home in London, Ontario.

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