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IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Watch the language: The Farmington Hills City Council put the finishing touches on the ballot language for the ice arena question that voters will decide on Aug. 2. /3A

Troubled Center: The Farmington/Farmington Hills Community Center is the victim of changing times and a growing community. /3A

Founders for real: Skies were clear and the sun was shining for the dedication of Founders Sports Park in Farmington Hills. /13A

OPINION

What it's come to: It's a wonder that anyone gets elected to office the first time given the state of electioneering these days. /20A

Bert the Cop: Sgt. Bert Cook lost a battle with cancer, but he left behind a legacy of goodwill and respect in an era when police are sometimes viewed with a cynical eye. /21A

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Softball victory: Harrison High knocked off Livonia Churchill and replaced the Chargers as the No. 1 team in Observerland. /1B

Baseball decision: Farmington High's Nick Latra pitched another fine game Monday as the Falcons defeated North Farmington. /1B

SUBURBAN LIFE

Cash to burn: A woman tells a frightening story of money problems that led to starting Michigan's first Debtors Anonymous Group. /1C

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Landscape redefined: Denny Moers' photographic monoprints turn landscapes into dreamlike images. They are exhibited at the Pierce Street Gallery in Birmingham. /1D

Royal celebration: Antiques by Pamela in Rochester is planning a celebration in honor of Queen Victoria's 175th birthday. /1D

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Candidates not on way to forum



BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

They haven't resorted to holding placards saying, "Will debate for food."

Some candidates for the Farmington

Many voters get to know political hopefuls through traditional candidate forums sponsored by civic groups. None are planned for the candidates for the Farmington Board of Education, however.

ton Board of Education are starting to wonder, though, if there will be any forums to put their issues on the table.

So far, none are scheduled. The election is Monday, June 13.

"I haven't heard anything," said Cathleen Webb, who is seeking a second four-year term on the board. "I hope they give us some kind of notice."

The League of Women Voters, the Farmington Area Republican Club and Farmington Area Democratic Club are the big three in terms of hosting candidate forums.

Shelley Paros of the Oakland County League of Women Voters said she's planning one for the end of the

month. No date had been finalized as of Tuesday.

The league is going through a transition at the local level, Paros said, explaining the delay.

"We're pulling it together," Paros said. "It (delay) is unfortunate, but we're strapped."

That's also the case with the Farmington Area Republican Club, said president Dulane Whinnery. The Re-

See FORUM, 6A

That's science at North Farmington



SHARON LEWIS/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

All about Freon: North Farmington sophomore Monica Balash gets a close up look at the atomic arrangement that symbolizes Freon.

Science fair fuses fission, fun

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Here are some totals: 50 mouse traps, 48 plastic golf balls and one minor explosion.

A driving range ruined by mice? No, just a few figures from your usual high school chemistry fair.

North Farmington High chemistry students and Oppenheimer wannabes put on a show May 11,

one so dazzling that an overheated infrared lamp shattered. No one was hurt in the mishap.

Any ill effects were more likely to be felt with the 50 mouse traps and 48 plastic golf balls, which were part of an exhibit to demonstrate the chain reaction of fission.

Sophomores Brian Rajdl, Jay Randa, Jason Speer and Phil Zald concocted the exhibit. They got the

idea from an old science show.

One would set the mouse traps inside a case, carefully placing the plastic golf balls on top of them.

A pingpong ball then entered the equation, sending off a fury of snapping traps.

The hardest part was keeping the contraptions from going off pre-

See SCIENCE, 6A

Webb on schools: We need to brag

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

If the glow from Cathleen Webb's view of Farmington Public Schools was any brighter, Raddy Kilowatt would need sunglasses.

Webb campaigned for the Farmington Board of Education four years ago on a positive attitude. Looking back, she admits it sounded rather simplistic.

"I always tell the story (of) when I was sworn in at the East Middle School cafeteria," said Webb, 42, who was the highest vote-getter in 1990. "Then superintendent Mike Flanagan said, 'Raise your right hand' and

he swore me in and then sat me down and said, 'We just lost \$7 million to (state) sequestration.'"

"That was my first meeting . . ."

Webb, who is asking voters for a second term on the board in the June 13 election, would have her rays from positive outlook blunted by other obstacles.

Controversy visited the board in the form of a new driveway at Wooddale and main-road busing. Throw in a failed bond issue and a millage, and the consumption of aspirin would equal the amount of breath mints downed at an onion eating contest.

Webb continued to smile, but

didn't duck.

Things didn't change when Webb became board president this year. Along with the topsy-turvy situation with school funding, Flanagan left as superintendent.

Webb led the board through an exhaustive search for a new chief, conducting the entire process themselves. The board picked C. Robert Maxfield, a selection that has gone over well with both the schools and the community.

Four years wiser, Webb wants another shot. Two incumbents and one

See WEBB, 5A

Albanian parents unhappy

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A spokesman for a group of Farmington-area Albanian families claims their children are not receiving the proper attention they need in school.

Doda Lucaj of the Albanian American Community in Farmington/

EDUCATION

Farmington Hills complained to the Farmington Board of Education Tuesday.

Lucaj said there are 200 Albanian students in the district, including his son, who is a junior at Harrison High. However, he added, there are no Albanian-speaking administrators, teachers or secretaries.

As a result, he said Albanian students feel left out. More so, he added, it's affecting their classroom performance.

"Our kids are being raised in an environment where they feel inferior," said Lucaj, reading a prepared statement to the board.

Superintendent C. Robert Maxfield agreed to meet with Lucaj's group.

Maxfield also has asked assistant superintendent for Curriculum and

■ 'Our kids are being raised in an environment where they feel inferior.'

Doda Lucaj

Staff Development Judy White and Bilingual Program director Haroune Alameddine to look into the concerns. "We're always here to help," Alameddine said Wednesday.

The main concern is the lack of certified teachers who are of Albanian descent, Lucaj said. One could serve as a role model for students and act as a intermediary for parents and the school.

The district does employ six full-time paraprofessionals to work with Albanian students, Alameddine said. More than 50 Albanian students use services provided by the Bilingual Program.

Not all bilingual students use the program, especially if they are proficient in English.

The district had an opening earlier this year for a bilingual teacher, who could be fluent in one of 17 languages other than English — including Albanian. Only two people applied, Alameddine said, and neither spoke Albanian.

"If we had an Albanian person, who was qualified, there would be no problem," Alameddine said.

Lucaj said Wednesday he's encouraged by the district's response.

"They told me they want to meet," he said. "They want to solve the problem now."



Cathleen Webb