

# Farmington Observer

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## IN THE PAPER

## TODAY

**Out of the ground:** Ten years ago some Gill Elementary students buried some symbols of the day in a time capsule. It was unearthed recently. /3A

**Career winner:** A Farmington Hills woman's successful career change is one reason why she was named Career Woman of the Year. /4A

**New man in blue:** Damian Woodmore is Farmington Hills' first black police officer and the first in some time to be hired from another department. /5A

**Learning time:** Harrison High students will have a few more hours of sleep while teachers devise new ways to wake their minds. /6A

**Going up!** The new year will bring another increase in the cost of postage stamps. Advice from local postal officials: Buy them early. /8A

## TASTE

**New Year's Eve:** A strong friendship and good food make the end of each year special for two local couples. /1B

**Festive drinks:** Toast the New Year with fruity, flavorful, alcohol-free drinks. /1B

## MALLS & MAINSTREETS



**Born to sell:** Meet a salesperson from Parisian Department Store who really loves her work. /6A

**Efforts rewarded:** Both Wonderland and Westland malls are honored for community service by the International Council of Shopping Centers. /6A

## SPORTS

**Woe is North:** North Farmington High School is off to a slow basketball start with recent losses to Novi and Northville. /1C

**College cage:** The women's Schoolcraft College basketball team fell to Highland Park Community College. /1C

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## LTU to study avenue for



BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Farmington's Grand River corridor will turn into a class act if some college students have their way.

A project involving the Farmington Beautification Commission and Southfield's Lawrence Technological University's College of Architecture

Grand River Avenue — and all that's on it — will become the subject of a study by Lawrence Technological University architecture students in January.

and Design will examine ways to improve things aesthetically from Drake to Orchard Lake roads on the historic avenue.

Students will start in January and report their findings in May. Storefronts, signs, parking and landscaping are some of the areas they'll focus on.

"It's a pretty big deal for them," said beautification member Maria Miller, who helped arrange the cooperative venture.

Miller got the idea from a similar project she heard about in Grosse Pointe Woods, which she said went over well with businesses there.

She suggested it last year during a beautification committee goals and planning session with Farmington City Council.

Councilman Richard Tupper suggested the commission contact LTU professor of architecture and Farmington resident James Abernethy.

The former Farmington school board member put her in touch with LTU professor Will Allen.

Allen's classes have been involved in similar projects in Franklin Village, Brighton and Ann Arbor.

"The students are in the position to really say what they mean," said Abernethy, who also served on the Farmington Planning Commission. "They know they're not getting paid by the city. They're not getting paid by the DDA (Downtown Development Authority). They're not getting paid

See LTU, 2A

## He's a natural 'King'



AND HUNTER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Fools rush in: Joe Derek, Farmington Hills city naturalist, took the stage at the holiday party at the Farmington Hills Activities Center for senior citizens Dec. 15. He portrayed Elvis Presley and sang to 325 seniors as part of the entertainment.

## Hills plan: Stabilize old stable

It's historic and with a little luck, it will continue to stand the test of time.

Although the Farmington Hills City Council added the stable along with the caretaker's house and the barn at Heritage Park to the city's Historic District Nov. 21, the struggle to keep that history alive is far from over.

Based on architectural reports dating back to 1986, city officials believe that if the stable is to stay standing, some major restoration work will be needed — and soon.

"We'd want this to be done in the next construction season — the spring and summer of next year," said Special Services Director Dan Potter.

Potter said the city had renovated the visitors' center and sheep barn and would not concentrate on the stable. But because of the deterioration and the type of foundation upon which the building sits, the restoration would cover two phases and could cost more than \$200,000.

But for \$100,000, the city could restore the building's foundation (phase one) and then work on the remaining problems over time.

To that end, the city is applying for a Michigan Equity Grant of \$50,000. The city would pay the other \$50,000 and the building could be saved.

Potter said the state program does not restrict grants to historic building preservation. The Detroit Public Library has successfully applied for money through the same program, he said.

In 1986, architect Mike Kirk found the building to be in "fair to poor condition." In 1992, the Ad Hoc Farm Committee recommended the city try to save the stable and make it usable. But it won't be easy, Potter said.

On one side, the structure has only a "rat wall," an 18-inch wall going into the ground that was supposed to stop the rodents from getting into the stable.

But it provided little stability. In addition, the piers holding up the floor are not secured by footings.

"The building would have to be lifted up and footings put in," Potter said.

See STABLE, 2A



C. Robert Maxfield

## Maxfield's report card drawn up

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Farmington School Board members are making their list and checking it twice.

They are going to find out if their superintendent performance was more than a roll of the dice.

The board outlined a list of 10 goals and objectives on which Superintendent C. Robert Maxfield will be judged in his first year. His evaluation is expected to be finished in February.

Such evaluations take place annually. However, board members are taking an objective approach in assessing their new chief this year.

## FARMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"This is a board-superintendent process," said Trustee David York. "We went with an objective method opposed to a checklist or rating system because it gives a chance to talk . . . and to work better as a team."

Maxfield started in March after serving as superintendent of Berkeley schools.

A special committee — that includes trustees R. Jack Inch, Roberto Feldman and York, along with Maxfield — is still considering how the superintendent can show his accomplishments.

One includes having Maxfield present a portfolio with — as York termed it — "evidence."

Areas board members will look at include: orientation to the district, board relations, articulation of superintendent's vision based on board's mandate or expectations, administrative reorganization, strategic planning process, collaborative initiatives, consistency in curriculum and academic achievement, facility planning, community.

See REPORT, 2A

## District hopes 3rd time's charm for bond issue

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

It could be "three strikes, you're out" for the Wallied Lake Consolidated School District if the Saturday, Feb. 4, bond issue goes down in flames the way two others did.

It's a grim prospect even acknowledged by more optimistic officials such as school board president David Flammer.

"I don't foresee us coming back in June," Flammer said, if voters reject the February propo-

## WALLED LAKE SCHOOLS

al — a split-ballot totaling \$116 million, the same amount as the failed Sept. 27 attempt. "I think it'd be a while."

The upcoming ballot will contain two bond propositions — one for \$90.55 million, to address "the school" such as new classrooms, school buildings and districtwide technology. Part 2 will be for \$25.45 million, with the so-called "like-to-have" items.

Citizens will be able to OK both, reject both, or vote for either.

"The biggest thing people said," since the September defeat, "was 'We want you to split the issue into academic and other stuff' and I think we've done that," Flammer said.

He discussed the controversial subject after a special meeting at which, despite opposition from some, the board unanimously approved calling the

See BOND, 8A