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Dear readers:

Inside today's Observer you have an opportunity to read about outstanding students - past and present.

On Page 12A, we take pleasure in reintroducing you to The Observer Newspaper's 1995 Academic All-Star Team.

Yes, it's been 10 years since the first group of scholars was selected to represent the area's best and brightest high school students. Today they are all successful adults who continue to impress their families, their colleagues and their communities.

Then turn to the Academic All-Star special section and look at the young men and women who are following in their footsteps. The Class of 1995 is the 11th All-Star Team we have fielded since we began this very important event 10 years ago.

This 1995 team of students is among the most academically oriented we've seen. Indeed, 11 of 12 say they'll go into either engineering, science or medicine.

Read about their accomplishments, the parents and teachers who have inspired them in their academic success and their hopes and dreams for the future.

Suzanne Reich
Managing Editor

IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Budget battle: Farmington Hills has changed little in the budget and will keep the increases below the Consumer Price Index. /3A

What a waste! Collection day for household hazardous wastes will be May 13 behind the Courthouse in Farmington. /5A

COMMUNITY LIFE

Fibrosis fight: A Farmington Hills mother was right, something was wrong: her daughter has cystic fibrosis. /13A

OPINION

All hall volunteers: Without numerous volunteers, a lot of important work just wouldn't get done in the Farmington area. /20A

CREATIVE LIVING

True to nature: Suzanne Lifton and Barry Lehsten of Farmington Hills arrange natural components in their Visionality Designs, three-dimensional collage works featured at the Westacres Artist Market in West Bloomfield this weekend. /1D

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School declines \$5 million offer



Developer Jay Kogan had a "moving" offer for Hillel Day School. Thanks a million, answered school officials, but we're staying put.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Hillel Day School officials heard a voice: Build it . . . and \$5 million will not come.

Despite an offer by Oakland County developer Jay Kogan, Hillel Day School will follow through on plans to expand at its current site on Middle-

belt and 14 Mile roads in Farmington Hills.

Kogan offered \$5 million if the school — which specializes in teaching conservative Judaism — would move to a more viable area. He is quoted in recent edition of The Jewish News as saying Middlebelt Road is too narrow.

Hillel officials formed a task force and spent several months considering the offer before turning it down. Parents — including some who live in the Farmington area — are pleased.

"I think it's the best thing they could have done," said Harriet Drissman, a Farmington Hills resident who's had four children attend Hillel.

"It's a whole ecumenical area," added Drissman, citing a Catholic monastery and many other churches and synagogues nearby. "It's (Middlebelt) an all-American street. As far as having Jews and Christians

mingling together, Middlebelt is the right place."

Said Hills resident and Hillel teacher Masha Silver: "I think the board really involved the parents. They worked hard and looked at all the factors. A lot of time and thought went into what was best for the children and the community."

"It was an extremely difficult decision to make. You don't easily turn down \$5 million."

Kogan reportedly wants a more prominent site for the day school

See HILLEL, 2A



Gene Rubin: Chadd Thorson, 9, of Farmington Hills nets a trout with the help of his dad Kenneth, at Saturday's fishing derby. Mom, Lenore, fished from the opposite shore.

City's 1st fish derby reels in a ton of fun

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

There was more flip-flopping than politicians at election time, twice as many lines thrown out as at a single bar, and more poles than at a Hamtramck polka festival.

Shiawassee Park's inaugural fishing derby: Some fish got away, but people are hooked.

Saturday's event brought out anglers of all sizes and ages. Kids fished for trout from 9-10:30 a.m. Adults took over the poles for the following hour and a half.

They tried to lure a few of the 200-member school of trout planted the previous night.

Some used sophisticated rod and reels and an airplane mechanized tool box of tackle. Others employed bamboo poles, hoochie sticks and broken branches.

Bait ranged from worms dug out from backyard gardens to micro-available corn taken from the freezer.

"I want fish instead of corn," said Danielle Roma, 6, bounding a tad impatient. "I hate corn."

Danielle was accompanied by brother Joshua Roma, 7, and her parents, Gene and Linda Roma of Farmington Hills. They didn't have the best angling spot, though.

The southern end of the Upper Rouge tributary provided a hot spot. Several young anglers caught the three-fish limit by 10:30 a.m.

Kris Gross, 8, gleefully ran with one speckled trout in his hand. He and his father, Greg Gross, fished for an hour and 10 minutes with no luck.

"I'm glad he got one," said Greg Gross, who lives in Farmington. "He was getting kind of sorry after awhile."

Chris Bruton of Farmington was happy her daughter, Meghan, 3, hooked a trout. She wasn't that thrilled, though.

"We threw it back," Bruton said. "I wasn't about to clean it."

See FISHING, 3A

Kids make most of Earth Day-fest

BY AIKEN WINGBLAD
STAFF WRITER

Hundreds of people from the Farmington area and surrounding communities turned out last weekend for the third annual Earth Week Festival at Heritage Park in Farmington Hills.

Festival-goers of all ages found plenty to see and do in and around the park's Spicer House — from arts and crafts, wildlife displays and a silent auction to raffles, stream cleanup and a craft sale by local Special Olympians.

Sponsored by Team Farmington, a sport/activity program for special needs individuals, in conjunction with the Farmington Hills Department of Special Services, the festival

not only marked the 25th anniversary of Earth Day, but also provided distinct opportunities for the Special Olympians who make up Team Farmington.

"This type of event promotes both our human resources — our Special Olympians — with our natural resources — our environment," explained Todd Lipa, head coach and coordinator for Team Farmington, who helped organize the festival.

"And it's an activity other than traditional sports or competition which they enjoy just as much. Everyone works as a team and gets involved with members of the community."

And that involvement demands interaction and communication which

are vital for the Special Olympians, according to Lipa. Such experiences lead to greater awareness, understanding, growth and development, Lipa added.

"In a lot of communities and the real world people don't interact with special folks. But the more exposure there is, the more that is learned — for everybody."

"In this type of setting (the festival) you can take a special needs person and give them the opportunity to communicate and be around others. It's tremendous for our special kids and for the rest of the people to interact with each other," Lipa said.

See EARTH DAY, 3A



String along: Alison Gillham, 9, made her own kite for Earth Day.

North teacher spearheads rally for School Code

BY TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

Keep a strong state School Code, teacher Michael Horner told the Senate Education Committee Monday, because the "free market" can't do the job.

The North Farmington High math

teacher ripped former General Motors President Lloyd Reuss' published remarks on the market system's ability to provide good schools.

"Cars today deliver only 1 percent of the pollution they did 20 years ago. We have seat belts for safety. We have CAFE (fuel economy) standards

set by the government," Horner said, although automakers had to be brought "kicking and screaming" to meet standards only government can set.

"If circumstances forced me to move, I'd like to know there are common standards statewide for teacher

certification, curriculum and assessment," Horner said to the delight of 100 people who packed the Senate panel's hearing in Farmington.

All but one or two in the audience felt the same way. It led Republican

See SCHOOL CODE, 2A