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IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Ring in the new: Comet Burgers, a 1950s-style diner, is helping approximately 40 youngsters from St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center in Farmington Hills ring in the new year in style. /3A

Busy woman: The 1995 Farmington Observer's Carrier of the Year holds down no less than three jobs, including her 28-customer paper route in Warner Farms subdivision. /5A

Sale away: The Farmington Hills City Council stuck with the recommendations of the planning commission to sell 4.8 acres of property for residential development. /8A

Stung in the sting: Farmington Hills police cited three establishments for violating state liquor laws by serving alcohol to an under-age customer. /8A

OPINION

Growth all over: Cheerful holiday news comes to the suburbs of metro Detroit packaged by the job and population forecasters of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments. /10A

Winds of change: The winds of change are blowing — howling! — through Michigan. But will change be improvement for the metro Detroit suburbs in metro Detroit? /10A

Write on! Once again, Farmington Observer readers are not shy about sharing their opinions in letters to the editor. /10A

COMMUNITY LIFE

Staff wishes: As another year passes, Farmington Observer staff members look ahead to what they hope 1996 will bring. /13A

What freedom?: Government, says Kenneth Kemp of Farmington Hills, is the main hindrance to young people preventing them from enjoying freedoms of the past. /13A

SPORTS

Best of sports: Sports writers pick the top sports stories in Oberverland during 1995. /1C

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Disaster recovery sets up office



One company's disaster is another's business opportunity. Comdisco, which helps misfortune-stricken businesses recover, will open a facility on Interchange Drive in Farmington Hills.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A company specializing in recovering what's lost has found a home in Farmington Hills.

Comdisco Disaster Recovery Services will open a 15,000-square-foot work area disaster recovery center at

37890 Interchange Drive, off Halsted, in February.

The Rosemont, Ill.-based outfit specializes in helping companies weather power, equipment or building outages, as well as natural disasters that might bring business to a halt.

Comdisco has several Detroit area

clients, most notably Ford Motor Credit Company. Farmington Hills is ideal for one major reason: location.

"We found Farmington Hills to be an appropriate area: Nice, suburban, centrally located, easy to get to," said Steve Harris, manager of Comdisco's Rosemont, Ill. Superstore. "It's got great accessibility from the highways and it's got great amenities."

Three to four hotels and are within a mile of the new facility, Harris said. Several restaurants are also nearby.

Those factors are important when companies have to relocate employees in a hurry, Harris said.

The facility itself in the industrial park will have two 75-station work areas, which allows companies to recover data with Comdisco's private fiber-optic network in Rosemont as well as resume telephone and data communications.

Laserjet printers, computer terminals, conference rooms, copiers and facsimile machines are also provided.

Companies subscribe to the service, paying anywhere from \$1,000 to \$25,000 a month according to pub-

See DISASTER, 4A

What future for municipal libraries?



SHARON LEMMON/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

At the crossroads: "This is an exciting time to be in this business because things are changing so fast," says Beverly Papai, peering from behind a row of books.

Papai to head state library association

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Beverly Papai often ponders the future of libraries.

Will they become glorified reading rooms? Or will they add their resources to the Internet for access by schools, businesses, government and individuals?

The Bloomfield Township real-

dent and director of the Farmington Community Library will do more than think about it when she becomes president of the Michigan Library Association in July of 1996.

"The year before you become president is when you develop a strategy," she said. "It's an honor to be selected. And it's a time when libraries are at a crossroads."

Papai can empathize with the problems and opportunities of libraries across the state. Farmington Hills bought property next to the Hills branch in anticipation of an expansion. But that, like other unsuccessful attempts to enlarge the library, would have to go before local voters.

And yet, the Farmington Commu-

nity Library offers Internet access, children's reading programs, movie and video rentals, two branches, audio tapes and a circulation of more than 702,000 items.

"This is an exciting time to be in this business because things are changing so fast," Papai said.

See PAPAI, 2A

Graduate treks to Germany

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

North Farmington High graduate Rebecca Hauptmann is literally seeing a German city go from Trabant to triumph.

Hauptmann, 23, is living in Dresden in the former East Germany where the Trabants, three-cylinder engine vehicles, cluttered the road and came to symbolize the communist system's inefficiencies. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, though, the wheels of change are laying rubber.

"Everything has been a new adventure," said Hauptmann, whose family lives in Farmington Hills. "What I find to be the most interesting, espe-

cially living in the former East, is that I can realize the influence that the falling of the wall has had on all people.

"Some say, yeah, it was better in former times. Other people say no it wasn't. If I had a nickel for every time I heard, 'Before the wall fell,' I'd probably have two thousand dollars by now."

Or 2,800 German marks. Hauptmann is teaching this school year in Pirna, 35 kilometers (21.7 miles) outside Dresden, on a Fulbright Scholarship. She's a teaching assistant at Rainer Fettscher Gymnasium, a college prep school.

She plans to get a master's degree

in secondary education when she returns. She majored in German and minored in English at Wayne State University.

At the Pirna School she assists the English teacher. She helps students with pronunciation and, more so, the pronounced differences in Western culture.

It's a culture that was long held in contempt by communist authorities. Ironically, East Germans are being immersed into Western ways with Chinese fire drill expediency.

The energy the change is creating is remarkable, Hauptmann said. It

See GERMANY, 4A

Rebecca Hauptmann

Fieger: \$4 million award not enough

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Neither side has come away satisfied with a \$4 million medical malpractice verdict against Botsford General Hospital.

An Oakland County Circuit Court jury awarded more than \$4 million Dec. 21 to a Garden City boy who suffered irreversible brain damage shortly after birth. Southfield attorney Geoffrey Fieger represented Timothy Creamer, 6, during the two-week trial.

"They allowed him to suffocate, which caused brain damage," said Fieger, adding that the child will receive comprehensive care for the rest of his

life. "This will not nearly be enough to cover that cost."

The case, brought in 1987, charged that Botsford staffers failed to intubate the boy during his first hours of life, causing the damage that, he contends, led to cerebral palsy.

Although the jury decided in favor of Creamer, Botsford maintains proper procedures were followed.

"That was the plaintiff's supposition, that the cerebral palsy was brought on by the low levels of oxygen in the blood," said Margo Gorchow, Botsford administrator for hospital and community re-

lations. "We maintain that proper procedures were followed."

Gorchow said the award, which will work out to be much less than \$4 million in current dollars, could have been a result of the difficulty of finding fault. She said the case was also brought prior to tort reform legislation that no longer allows experts to testify unless they are practicing in the area in the same area of expertise.

Fieger filed a motion with Circuit Judge Steven Andrews asking him to set aside the verdict.

See FIEGER, 4A