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IN THE PAPER TODAY

Having a Ball! Gerson Cooper (below), Botsford Hospital chief, bids \$3,000 on a Red Wing hockey suite donated by Michigan National Bank during the second-annual Cornucopia Ball last Saturday at the William Costick Activities Center in Farmington Hills./A3



SPORTS

Sibling rivalry: Sisters Amy and Susie Roble could find themselves on opposing sides in next week's girls district basketball tournament./C1

Playoff preview: Farmington Harrison travels to Trenton to play for a Class A regional championship Saturday./C1

INDEX

A&E	E1-5	Letters	A20
At Home	Section G	Movie Guide	B8
Cable Conn.	A4	Obituaries	A17
Calendar	B7	Police & fire	A4
Columns	A21	Real estate	Section H
Community Life	B1-5	Rec. News	A18
Crossword	I9	Religion	B11
Editorials	A20	Sports	C1-6

DSO 'strings along' at Harrison



It'll be a "Day for Strings" Saturday when members of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra come to Harrison High School to help some talented young musicians.

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Imagine: A high school quarterback needed some passing tips and the Detroit Lions' Scott Mitchell dropped by practice to help.

Or, a chemistry student had a question on his homework and Dr. Jonas Salk turned up with his elemental chart in the classroom.

Something akin to that happens every year with "Day for Strings," which features members of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra working with music teachers and 300 Farmington Public School instrumental music students.

This year's program starts 10 a.m. Saturday at Harrison High. Rehearsals, clinics and section

rehearsals take place throughout the day, which is capped off with a free "informance" at 3 p.m. in the school's gymnasium. Admission is free.

DSO members — including many who live in the Farmington area — and other professional musicians offer their expertise to students. This is fifth annual "Days for Strings" program.

"It's a winner all around," said DSO member and Farmington Hills resident Marshall "Larry" Hutchinson. "The kids get a day of fellowship, fun and instruction. Teachers from our district get to observe other

teachers at work. They get a good learning experience, too.

"For us (in the DSO), it's a good community relationship."

DSO members are more than happy to turn out, Hutchinson said. Many do clinics at area schools and are concerned about education, he said.

DSO's Paul Wingert and wife and free-lance cellist Karen make the event a family affair. Daughter Jenny plays the cello and is in ninth grade at Harrison High while son Andy performs on viola and is in

See 5TRINGS, A2

In a fog on 14 Mile



STAFF PHOTO BY SIOBHAN LEONARD

Hot stuff — cold air: That's not the Ancient Mariner sailing through a shroud of fog. It's James Perkins of ASI Asphalt spreading his product over a parking lot at a commercial development at 14 Mile and Orchard Lake roads in Farmington Hills last week. A cold rain was falling as Perkins spread the hot (250-300 degrees) material. When hot meets cold, the result is fog and mist. The new development will include a Navy Yard clothing store and a Novelties/Kidoodle store for kids.

Hobbs: Japan has lessons for Hills

By WILLIAM COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills City Manager Daniel Hobbs found that Japan and the United States are in a small world after all.

Hobbs, who returned from a two-week trip sponsored by the Japan Local Government Center, found a lot of common features of the two governments, peoples and businesses.

"I met the general manager of Nissan," Hobbs said. "He was in Farmington Hills from 1988-91, in charge of Nissan's research and development center."

Hobbs had been selected as one of three city managers to accompany other U.S. officials on the tour that included visits to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Saitama Prefecture, Wako City, Saku City, the National Ministry of Home Affairs and the Japanese new town of Dove Mountain, 30 miles west of Tokyo.

Japanese companies have a large presence in Farmington Hills and Oakland County and the city's population is 3 percent Japanese.

Hobbs had been selected to participate in the trip while city manager in Greenbelt, Md. The Farmington Hills City Council approved the trip when it hired Hobbs and the city paid his round trip air fare. The rest was picked up by his hosts.

"I was always made to feel quite welcome," he said. "Part of that may be that there are many people there who I met that have had contact or been to the United States."

Hobbs met a former exchange student who had stayed for a year with the family of the city manager of Centerline, Ohio, the community where his parents live. He met a doctor and mayor who had lived in a village that was on the brink of starvation after World War II, but received food thanks to the kindness of a man from Cadillac, Michigan.

And Hobbs and his wife Irma stayed in a private home where no one spoke English.

"We communicated through signs, gestures and a few small phrases that I knew," he said. "We got along fine. The hospitality and openness were wonderful."

That warmth and the ability of his hosts to get him into one of the first Honda plants built in Japan along with other areas most Americans do not get to see in action. Hobbs saw factory workers in white coats, working in clean areas and using

See HOBBS, A2

Better roads could lead to parking woes

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Roads leading to Farmington will soon be well-paved ones.

Farmington City Council approved of an agreement with Road Commission of Oakland County that will start preliminary engineering work on widening Farmington Road between Eight Mile and Slocum.

'We're a three-car family. It's going to be a problem not having anywhere to park.'

Joseph Moskal
—Farmington resident

The expansion will allow for a left-turn lane on the four-lane county road. Construction is not expected to start until 1999 or 2000.

Other road improvements planned are:
■ The widening of Grand River from Gill to Shiawassee, which includes a left-turn lane and traffic signal. Construction was supposed to start this fall but has been delayed until spring as the Michigan Department of Transportation can reopen bidding.
■ Installation of the Fast-Trac computerized signal system at Grand River and Farmington is expected to start by the end of the month. New signal poles and pedestrian bollards.

Such improvements coincide with the already completed widening of Orchard Lake Road and paving of Grand River.

The widening of Farmington Road is considered particularly important. Beautification commissions from both Farmington and Farmington Hills are working on plans to enhance the area surrounding the

See ROADS, A2

Barn's now 'historically correct'

That huge old barn in Heritage Park, Farmington Road between 10 Mile and 11 Mile roads, has been newly painted in "historically correct" colors, according to Kay Briggs of the Farmington Hills Historical Commission.

The barn, visible from Farmington Road, is red with white trim around the door and windows. The adjoining stable is now a stark white.

Coinciding with the new paint jobs is a display on barns in the hallway of the Farmington Hills City Hall, 11 Mile and Orchard Lake roads.

Al and Ruth Moehlman, members of the Hills Historical Commission and the Historic District Commission, assembled the barn exhibit.

Included are photographs of Farmington-area barns, past and present, as well as illustrations from books of tools and implements used to raise

FARMINGTON FOCUS

these huge buildings.
Also shown is the way rural communities would come together for a "barn raising."
The exhibit may be viewed during business hours at City Hall.

Holiday light show coming

They're untangling wires and checking light bulbs at the Farmington Hills City Hall these days.

Why? The annual Holiday Light Ceremony is coming up. The event, open to the public, will

begin at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 26, in the front of City Hall, 11 Mile and Orchard Lake roads.

The program will include a short ceremony, singing traditional songs, a visit from Santa Clause and refreshments.

Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi, with the help of the children, will flip the switch that will light up the Christmas tree.

Santa will visit with the children in the lower level conference room in City Hall immediately following the ceremony.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 3341 Grand River, Farmington 48335; faxed to 477-9722; or dropped off at the newspaper office. For the computer literate, the Internet e-mail address is: packy@conline.com.