

## Observer carrier soars to top, just won't quit

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Jeremy Marek builds model airplanes, but he's learning to fly by other means on his Farmington Observer paper routes.

That's right, paper routes. The Flower Middle School seventh grader has five routes totaling 132 customers, which keeps him hopping Monday and Thursday afternoons. He wants more subscribers, too.

When he's not delivering papers or building model airplanes, Marek, 13, spends his spare time signing up new subscribers.

Since March, Farmington Observer Circulation Manager Mike Cummins estimates Marek has brought in 100 new subscribers. He started off with 25 customers on his route.

Quantity hasn't cut into the quality of his delivery, Cummins said.

"We never get any complaints," Cummins said. "He always does a good job."

Such enthusiasm and diligence has earned him Carrier of the Year honors. Marek will be honored with the Observer & Eccentric's star carriers 7-9 p.m. Friday, Nov. 22, at the Birmingham Community House.

Marek's sales pitch is simple.

"I just go up and say, 'Would you like to sign up for the Farmington Observer,'" he said. "I just tell them I don't have that many customers and they'll feel sorry for me."

"I get five to 10 new starts a week."

Marek has been a carrier for only half a year, months. A friend's mother will drive him on his route. Otherwise, Marek delivers papers riding his bike to subdivisions, office complexes and apartment buildings alike. Apartments on his routes include: Farmington Oaks, Kensington Manor and Sunview Manor.

For customers who are physically disabled, Marek particularly makes sure they get front door service.

"I try to give everybody good service," he said.



STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LEMERY

**Moving up: Farmington Observer Jeremy Marek has increased his customer base by 400 percent since taking over his route.**

He's delivered the Farmington Observer in frigid, windwept and rainy conditions. Last May when the Observer sponsored a contest to sign-up new subscribers, Marek responded with 40 new starts.

Marek usually receives 50 extra papers so he can leave samples with customers, a Farmington Observer assistant area circulation manager said.

"He's such a go-getter," the O&E's Libby Heppler said. "... he's first to call in a new start or a stop."

"He just does not give up."

Marek plans to run truck or cross country. He enjoys sprinting to his friend's house, he said. In the future, he'd like to go to college and become a doctor.

In the meantime, he's content to fly by foot on his Observer routes.

"I just like delivering the papers," Marek said.

"It's fun to do."

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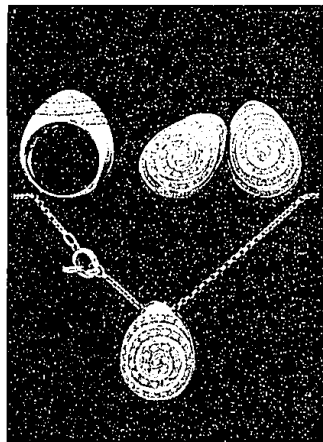
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