

# Farmington Observer

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SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

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## Dear Readers,

On Sunday, February 2nd, we will begin publishing a Sunday edition that will replace the Monday edition of The Farmington Observer. While the publication day will change, our commitment to relevant, reliable and responsible community journalism remains. You can expect to find the same quality news and features you are familiar with in the Monday newspaper. (Please see the editorial page in today's paper for additional discussion of the change).

Along with this move, the Sunday newspaper will be delivered on Sunday morning by 8 a.m. for our customers who are on carrier service. If you don't have your paper by that time, please call our customer service department at (810) 901-4716.

Sincerely,  
*Thomas Byrd*  
Thomas Byrd, Publisher

## IN THE PAPER TODAY

**Frozen fairways:** A bit of winter can't stop golfers from visiting our local links, either just for fun (Page A3) or to commemorate the life of a friend (Page B1).

## BELIEFS & VALUES

**Friends:** The American Arabic and Jewish Friends has grown from its initial 45 members to more than 500. /B6

## SPORTS

**Cage contest:** Farmington Harrison and Farmington High battled each other to break a tie in the Western Lakes boys basketball standings Tuesday. /C1

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## Gifted shifts in name of equity



By LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

**Farmington Public Schools has been moving its gifted instruction into the regular classroom. The change is based on a district goal of equity. One critic, though, says it won't really work.**

Excellence and equity: It's not just a buzz phrase anymore.

Farmington Public Schools' philosophy of trying to be the best but also equal played a large role in two recent issues. The elimination of the long-debated sibling priority policy — mainly at Highmeadow Common

Campus — was largely motivated by opening more slots to the national exemplary school for other families. A second target for the equity push is the program for gifted children.

Delta director Elizabeth Hammar gave an overview to Farmington Board of Education trustees at a special meeting Tuesday night. Her purpose was to show how gift-

ed education in the district is no longer limited to a select few. The Delta program has evolved from where once children were tested — as early as the second grade — and identified as being a step above intellectually and taken out of the regular classroom for more challenging study.

Instead, a Delta coordinator now might work with a regular classroom teacher, trying to challenge all students, including the brightest ones.

Delta coordinators continue to work individually or with small groups of children. But they are

there to offer advice to students on independent studies and advanced classes.

"There has been a real increase in the equitability issue in the sense that we're not in the business of certifying giftedness," said Hammar, who became Delta coordinator in 1995. "That is not our role in any case; That's for a psychologist to decide."

"We just talk about students who have strengths in particular areas and we try to meet those strengths," Superintendent Bob Maxfield

See GIFTED, A7

## Nah, this isn't fun



Family time: Jaime Loftus, 6, left and Sara Duhr, 6, enjoy a bit of rolling laughter during Farmington Hills' free Family Night activities Friday at the William Costick Center. Check out more sights and words about the event on Page A2.

PHOTO BY BILL HANSEN

## Principal sticks to principle in court

By WILLIAM COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

North Farmington High School Principal Deborah Clarke will go to 47th District Court Tuesday to defend a principle — and guard her students' trust.

During a police investigation of a Nov. 13, 1996 assault by one student on another, school liaison Officer Duane Fox requested information about the school's internal investigation.

Clarke refused to turn over information, including interviews with students that she and they considered confidential.

Farmington Hills prosecutor Steve Meads subpoenaed Clarke's files. She refused to deliver them and a contempt order was filed.

Clarke's attorney, Currick Craig, filed a motion Tuesday afternoon for a show cause hearing in order to make his client's case that she would be violating a confidence by

See PRINCIPAL, A3

## District sets 4 sessions to sell bond to voters

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Though the election is not official yet, the informational campaign for the anticipated Farmington Public Schools' \$110-million bond and millage renewal is getting revved up.

District officials are waiting for state approval of its application before formally calling an election, which is expected to be Tuesday, March 26. That's not stopping them from getting the word out in a Madison Avenue meets Seams Street fashion.

The campaign borrows from the three R's and is coined: "Renew, Remodel, Reinvest. Mission 2007: Meeting the Challenge." The effort to inform the electorate includes the use of cable TV, mailings and Internet.

"We can't count on the residents to come up for information; we have to go to them," said Cheryl Cannon, assistant superintendent for finance. "We have to put out good information that is easy to

**'We can't count on the residents to come to us for information; we have to go to them.'**

Cheryl Cannon  
—assistant superintendent

read and understand. . . And that's what we're going to do."

Four, hour-long town hall election information meetings will take place 7-8 p.m. on the following schedule:

■ Wednesday, Feb. 26, at Warner Middle School cafeteria, 30300 14 Mile Road, between Orchard Lake and Middlebelt roads.

■ Wednesday, March 5, at Power Middle School cafeteria, 34740 Rhoadwood, off Gill Road, between Eight and Nine Mile roads.

■ Monday, March 10, at East Middle School cafeteria, 25000 Middlebelt, between 10 and 11 Mile roads.

■ Wednesday, March 19, at O.E. Dunckel Middle School, 32800 W. 12 Mile, between Farmington and Orchard Lake roads.

"Basically we are going to be giving a presentation on what the election is about: What the bond issue means;

See BOND, A7

## Power suit Rezoning case hits court

A developer's lawsuit against the City of Farmington Hills over rezoning along Power Road north of 11 Mile is expected to land in court Monday, when Oakland Circuit Judge Barry Howard will begin hearing arguments.

The suit was filed by developer Joseph Trupiano in September of 1995 after the Farmington Hills City Council approved a rezoning from RA-1 to RA-1A, the city's least dense zoning for the area.

That effectively ended the developer's bid to build 41 houses on the property.

The Philbrick Farms/North Power Road Homeowners were able to get the Natural Beauty Road designation for the half-mile stretch of "country road" north of 11 Mile in November of 1994, but found

out that the area was still designated as RA-1, a zoning that would allow houses on much smaller parcels of land than current residents have.

The area, which includes the original Philbrick Tavern building, was known as Powerville when it was first settled in 1827.

With only 35 houses now in that neighborhood, homeowners worried that 41 more would, among other things, damage the dirt road and threaten the use of well water and septic tanks in the area.

The homeowners then petitioned the city to rezone the area to the lower density zoning.

The lawsuit alleges that the city directed the homeowners to petition for the rezoning and seeks that the rezoning be nullified.

Taped last week, the shows will air in February.

## Pets as caregivers

The Pet-a-Pet Club is looking for a few good dogs and cats.

If your pet can help bring smiles to nursing home residents who may not respond well to other stimuli, the club is hoping you'll volunteer about an hour a month to help out.

Club members take their clean, vaccinated pets and a good attitude to three different areas nursing or retirement homes. They are:

■ Greenery Extended Care Center in Farmington at 10:30 a.m. on the first Wednesday of the month. Call Lori Clinton at 533-0222.

■ Botsford Continuing Health Center in Farmington at 10 a.m. on the second Saturday of the month. Call Estelle Biesendick at 464-9005.

■ American House in Farmington Hills at 10 a.m. on the third Saturday of the month. Call Anita Calfin at 471-3695.

## Arresting television

Look for a Farmington Hills police officer soon on the Maury Povich Show.

In a segment taped on Jan. 23, Officer Alex Pruss will be among officers interviewed for "Terror on the Highway." The segment deals with how officers handle dangerous or drunken drivers.

Pruss was on patrol Jan. 3 when a driver began swerving as if drunk while driving west on 10 Mile. The car then headed north on Farmington.

The driver did not stop when Pruss turned on his lights and siren. Thanks to Pruss and 14 other officers, only one car was sideswiped as they pursued the vehicle until it came to a stop at 14 Mile.

The man was a diabetic suffering from low



Officer Pruss

## FARMINGTON FOCUS

blood sugar.

"Thanks to these officers, no one was seriously injured in a situation that could have been tragic," said police Chief Bill Dwyer.

The Povich show obtained a tape of the incident after it aired locally on WXYZ-TV Channel 7 and called Hills police asking if they could fly Pruss to New York and interview him.

"He (Pruss) just returned and said it went real well," Dwyer said.

The incident was one of several caught on tape showing how civilians are put in danger from a fleeing suspect. The date when the show will be aired has not been announced.

Meanwhile, listen on the radio dial for Chief Dwyer, who was selected to do several readings for Black History Month on WWJ-AM 950.