

# Farmington Observer

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## IN THE PAPER TODAY

**Post it:** Customers like the looks, operation at downtown Farmington's new post office, which opened Monday. /A2

## COMMUNITY LIFE

**Healthy view:** Leaders of the Farmington Family YMCA take a look at the future. /B1

## SPORTS

**Hawks fall:** Farmington Harrison's baseball game with Walled Lake Western was a battle for first place — it was never close. /C1

## ENTERTAINMENT

**Sounds of summer:** After a lackluster 1996 summer concert season, the lineups at a host of area venues, including Pine Knob and Meadow Brook, show promise. /E1

## REAL ESTATE

**Be good:** You can be a good guy real estate transactions, whether you're the buyer or the seller. /F1

## INDEX

At Home	D	Rentals	H4
Beliefs & Values	B	Entertainment	E
Calendar	C6	Movie Guide	E6-7
Classifieds	F-J	Oakland Digest	A15
Crossword	H1	Oakland Journal	A8
Index	G7	Obituaries	A12
Employment	H7	Real Estate	F1
Service guide	J4	Sports	C
Real estate	G7		

## Fishing derby lures all ages

Poles aplenty: The annual Farmington Fishing Derby draws a crowd to this bend in Shiawassee Park Saturday, at right. Below, Brad Paulowski, 2, is pacified with his perch at the shore.



STAFF PHOTO BY TOM HOFFMAYER

## Anglers rout stream's trout

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

The trout didn't stand a chance when pitted against the guile and cunning of anglers at the third annual Farmington Fishing Derby. Saturday's event drew more than 300 participants — young and old alike — to Shiawassee Park where they tried to land some 600 trout planted a day earlier in the Rouge tributary. Anglers used the latest in rods and reels to a plain stick with thick green string attached to land their catch of the day. Trout were snapping at corn, worms, salmon eggs and various lures and flies. An estimated 300-400 trout, ranging 12 to 15 inches in size, were caught. They bit better and faster than in previous years, said Joe Dorok, naturalist with the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department that co-sponsors the event with the City of Farmington.

The popular event commences with the start of trout season statewide. Organizers didn't intend the event to be a romp in the park for sportsmen but rather a family affair. Children fished with moms and dads and grandparents. Participants were limited to three fish each or nine fish per family. "It's on the honor system," Derek said. Children were to have first crack at the school of trout, but a few adults dropped their lines in the water ahead of the kids, Derek said. Such crassness had turned the naturalist into a fish detective Friday night before the event. Derek caught a man who was fishing in the dark and had already pouched a couple of trout. "I surprised him; I came out from behind a tree," Derek said. "He put both fish back into the river."

## Bidders dispute Hills' process



BY WILLIAM COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington Hills City Council put off a decision to spend \$1.3 million for a new computer system Monday after claims that the bidding process was flawed. City Manager Dan Hobbs asked that an agenda item to consider awarding a contract of \$1,320,740 to Graycon Services, Inc. be delayed until the May 12 meeting and the city council agreed. But Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi said that since two people had come to the meeting to speak on the item, they should be allowed to do so during the public comment portion of the meeting. Their claims concerning the bidding process got the city attorney's attention and some stern rebukes from city officials. Mike Grieves, president and CEO of Data Systems Network of Farmington Hills, Inc., said he believed the low bid price had been "manipulated." "The process has been seriously flawed," Grieves said. "A wrong decision now will cost lots of money, later, as well as time," he said. "It wasn't even dressed up to look like it was fair." Foster Molnar of Midwest Business Systems in Southfield said the consultant had only returned one of his 10 phone calls and he could

Please see BIDDING, A6

## School's PG-13 play too risqué for few

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

A North Farmington High production of a play where a boy finds home is in the heart made the blood pressure rise among a few audience members. Virgil and Lois Thill of Farmington Hills saw the performance of "Pippin" April 17-19. School officials took precautions to warn people about the mature subject content, putting a PG-13 rating on the production. The Thills, who weren't aware of the rating, were shocked. "Whether I knew it or not, I don't feel a high school is a place for it," Virgil said. Added wife Lois: "It was a little more than PG-13: It was maybe 'R.'"

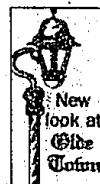
Please see PLAY, A6

## Customers file 21 complaints after antique shop closes

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Irate customers of a Farmington antique store that closed unexpectedly continue to call Farmington police. More than 21 people have contacted police over the closing of Hickory Hill Antiques on Grand River, said Michael Wiggins, deputy director. No charges have been filed. Many complaints are from people who had antiques items on consignment, including one case involving \$4,000 worth of heirlooms that are missing. Police said a man identified as the owner hadn't been at the shop since the end of March. A woman was running the store up until late last week, when police got reports that the store had been closed. A Farmington Hills man told police he brought an antique chair worth \$200 into the store to be sold. A woman running the place at the time told him he would have a check by the middle or end of April. As of Monday, he hadn't received his money. "I guess I'm fortunate it was only a chair," said Jim Robinson, Farmington Hills resident. A Livonia woman told police she paid \$334 for an antique dresser, but found the shop closed when she went to pick it up Saturday. "This isn't standard operating procedure for a business that closes," Wiggins said. Sentimental as well as monetary value is involved. A Walled Lake man told police he brought an 1800s vintage chair into Hickory Hill Antiques to be repaired in September. He kept calling for six months, but the chair was not being repaired. "He kept saying, 'We have a guy, but we just haven't got to it,'" said John L. Fitzpatrick, who filed a complaint with the Farmington police. "I went to go get it. I'm out a chair." The chair is valued at \$300, but money's not an issue. The antique chair was given to the Fitzpatrick by his father, he said. "It was more sentimental value. We used that furniture all the time. I have those memories from the holidays. I feel sad about it and betrayed." A woman running the shop told the man to bring in a photo of the chair to possibly match it with items in storage. Fitzpatrick had also brought in a piece from a matching chair to the shop to help find a similar missing part, so he is missing two of a four-chair set. Farmington police have taken 21 complaints and plan to present them to the Oakland County prosecutor on Thursday to decide if charges will be filed. "They may have to look at each case individually to see if it's criminal or civil," Wiggins said. "We'll find out." The man confirmed by police as the owner could not be reached for comment.

## Olde Town's spirit, growth unique to Hills' mix of subs



**Editor's Note:** This is our second in a series focusing on the development of the southeast corner of Farmington Hills, called Olde Town. Today, we look at how this community differs from the rest of the city.

BY WILLIAM COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

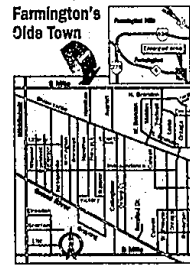
As one of the oldest sections of a young city, Olde Town is an area of interesting contradictions. Even 15 years ago, most of the streets in Section 3d, bordered by Middlebelt, Inkster, Eight Mile and Nine Mile, were dirt. There are still a few remaining dirt roads. Perhaps the most unusual is tiny Pearl Street, a short north-to-south block between Eight Mile and Grand River. It has been kept that way, as much for safety as for aesthetics.

"We don't want someone to take a shortcut too fast and run into one of those trees," says Dale



STAFF PHOTO BY BRIAN MYCIELSKI

**Bonched:** Activist Massie Kurzeja sits on a city bench at Grand River and Rockwell. It was the site of the Topps Motel — torn down when the city bought the land after neighborhood complaints.



Countegan, the city's planning director. "Those trees" he refers to are the mature hardwoods that stand right in the middle of the road. Although roads are paved, Olde Town has retained a mix of wood frame and brick houses on modest lots, apartments and small trailer parks. One one street, you can see an older house, a trailer park, and a new house. It is an area that has been improved with some newer housing, money for housing rehabilitation, and a multi-million dollar facelift of its Grand

Please see OLDE TOWN, A16