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SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Linked: Five more teens
face charges in connection
with vandalism at the
San Marino Golf
Course./A3

COUNTY

'Most dangerous?': The
12 Mile and Southfield
intersection gets that title
for the third straight year,
despite its record of no
fatalities./A5

TASTE

Pumpkins: Halloween will
be here to haunt us before
you know it. Find out
where you can pick your
own pumpkin./B1

SPORTS

Hawks roll on: Unbeaten
and top-ranked Farming-
ton Harrison went in
search of its fifth straight
football victory Friday to
Plymouth Canton./E1

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Sprinklers do job at Luigi's

BY BECKY BURNS
STAFF WRITER

Something didn't smell quite right when James McNulty came into work Tuesday morning.

A strong smoky odor permeated throughout Luigi's Trattoria in downtown Farmington, where McNulty is the head cook. When he checked the kitchen, he saw the gas stove was blackened with heavy smoke damage, and the overhead sprinkler system had been activated sometime during the night.

McNulty called the fire department to report it, although the six sprinkler heads above the stove had successfully done their job extinguishing the blaze.

A right rear burner had been left on all night, according to the official report. Apparently, the constant flame heated built-up grease around and beneath the cooking surface to the point that it caught fire.

"Once the grease ignited, the fire extended upward and into the hood-duct system," Farmington Fire Marshal Joe Schornack wrote in a supplement to the report. Several plastic containers sitting above the stove, filled with spices and other condiments, also ignited, he added.

When the fire reached into a hood-duct area above the stove, the wet chemical system discharged, promptly quenching it, the report said. Fire officials estimate the damage to the stove, plus cleanup costs, will be about \$5,000, though Domenico Belcastro, with his wife owns the Italian restaurant, said he has not come up with a figure yet.

Luigi's was closed Tuesday and part of Wednesday for cleanup, opening after the Oakland County Health Department said it had been sufficiently scoured. Though there is still more work to do, Belcastro said diners in the restaurant Friday couldn't tell there had been a fire.

It could have been worse, both he and McNulty agree.

Please see PAGE A4

Grill's staffers snag purse thief

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Employees at a Farmington Hills seafood restaurant made a purse snatcher their catch of the day.

Their quick actions resulted in a Texas woman getting her airline tickets and money back and two people being arrested by Farmington Hills police.

At 8:40 p.m. Wednesday, a woman

was having dinner with her cousin at Steamers Seafood Grill on 12 Mile, east of Orchard Lake, when the relative caught someone out of the corner of her eye reach down and grab the woman's purse.

A server, Dannela Gauthier, also saw the incident and screamed for help. Two employees and Gauthier went after the thief who ran out the entrance and toward Wendy's restaurant next door.

"When it happened, he took off through the door. I saw no one going to

the door after him. So I took off," said Nick Dietzel, who was starting his first day on the job as a waiter.

While chasing the culprit, one server noticed a female inside an orange red pick-up truck with the lights turned off. The employees continued to chase the man on foot through the Wendy's parking lot to the east side of the Comfort Inn where Dietzel tackled him and another employee, Damon Quarker, wrestled the purse away.

"Just as I got to the side of the building, the woman whose purse was stolen

came up crying saying that everything she had was in the purse," said Barbara Dietzel, Steamers manager and Nick's grandmother, in a statement to police. "Then we saw Damon running back with her purse. After he gave it to her, he ran back to make sure the guy didn't get away."

The woman expressed her gratitude to Quarker when he returned with her purse. "She offered a reward, but I refused and I said I'm just sorry that it

Please see SNATCHER, A2

Toys on trial



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIK MITCHELL

Kid stuff: Nine-year-old Alicia Beyer, left, and Brittany Brander, 11, enjoy trying out an electronic game called Light Wars made by Tiger Electronics.

A test kids love

Toy experts pick winners, bombs for holiday season

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Some Farmington Hills after-school students are helping department officials to the land of unwanted toys. But they're also having a hand in deciding what will likely be hot on toy shelves this holiday season.

Children in the Farmington YMCA Primetime program at Eagle Elementary in West Bloomfield are tak-

ing part in Duracell Kids' Choice National Toy Survey. Toy testing takes place through Oct. 10.

How does one get this supreme gig? Well, the Farmington "Y" said yes when asked by Mattel Corp. to take part in the survey involving 600 kids nationwide and were promptly shipped four boxes containing 28 toys.

"They're awesome," said Alicia

Boyer, 9.

"The games we have are usually wrecked by the time we get them," said Brittany Brander, fifth grader. "There's board games with all the pieces missing."

"With these games we can't wreck them because we have to send them back."

Good luck to anyone who has to

Please see TOYS, A2

Border issues face WB, Hills

Meeting focuses on
roads, developments

BY GREG KOWALSKI
STAFF WRITER

Facing a common border and similar concerns, the West Bloomfield township board and Farmington Hills City Council will hold a joint meeting at 6:30 p.m. Monday in West Bloomfield Township Hall.

It won't be the first time the two boards have met but it could be the start of more regular joint meetings in the future.

"We need to have a dialogue with each other about the gateways to our communities," said West Bloomfield Supervisor Jeddy Hood.

"We hope to start a process where the two communities will work closer together," said Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi.

"We've talked in the past, years ago about the extension of Northwestern Highway, but that is now dead," Vagnozzi said.

Very much alive, however, is the proposal to develop the West Bloomfield and Farmington Hills sides of the intersection where Northwestern, Orchard Lake and 14 Mile converge.

A major development is planned on the northwest corner in West Bloomfield. It will include housing and retail.

Another development, including shops, a Super Kmart and housing is proposed for the southeast side in Farmington Hills.

Each project is expected to cause a major increase of traffic at the intersec-

Please see MEET, A2

Expert: Give kids tools to reject drugs, etc.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

After 14 years of educating parents and children about the scourge of substance abuse, Farmington Families in Action members found themselves back right where they started: absorbed with spirit.

That came after Seattle-based substance abuse education consultant Clay Roberts provided a pep talk on new ways to combat a decades-old problem.

Roberts was keynote speaker at the group's annual breakfast to kick-off "Sober October" Wednesday at Glen Oaks Golf Club. The gathering attended by around 300 community leaders is one of several substance abuse awareness events planned during this month.

FFIA's annual "Celebrity Server Night" takes place from 5-8 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 8, at Big Boy Restaurant, Farmington Road, north of Eight Mile. Money raised supports numerous FFIA programs, which include B.A.B.E.S., Peer Pressure Reversal and Talking With Your Kids About Alcohol. FFIA is a grassroots parent organization whose sole function is to provide education on substance abuse prevention.

"I don't think it's the programs that make the dif-

ference for our children; it's the people who make the difference for our children," Roberts said. "It's the people in this room who make the difference to the children in Farmington and Farmington Hills."



STAFF PHOTO BY TIM HUBBARD

The messenger: Clay Roberts addresses hundreds gathered for the FFIA breakfast at Glen Oaks Golf Course.

On that front, Roberts encouraged organizers to look beyond the multitude preventative programs and get back to basics. Take an interest in one child whose "close to the edge," he urged.

If only half of the 300 people were successful, that's 150 kids saved right there, he noted.

FFIA efforts are needed more than ever. Drug use among kids is on the rise for the first time in 10 years.

"I'd like you to think of yourselves as the front line to prevention," Roberts said.

One key is re-examining who attacks the issue.

Kids who are not abusing drugs or alcohol might provide some answers.

"Yes, we need to look at the kids who aren't making it, but we also need to take a look at those kids who are making it," Roberts said, "and what seems to be going on in their lives and see if we can't make that happen for more kids."

For instance, studies show children who avoid drug and alcohol abuse have common threads: They tend to have three or more adults besides their parents

Please see FFIA, A4

Workplace diversity

For employers who want to create a more diversified staff, Farmington Public Schools Multicultural/Multicultural Community Council has the answer.

The group presents a panel discussion at 8 a.m. Thursday, "Recruiting, Hiring and Training of a Diverse Work Force," featuring area employers discussing the issue.

The workshop will be at the Farmington Training Center, 33000 Thomas St. There is no admission fee and continental breakfast will be served. For more information, call 473-8501.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Council candidate fund-raiser

Citizens for Good Government is hosting a fund-raiser to support the re-election bids of Farmington Hills city council members Jerry Ellis, Jon Grant and Cheryl Oliverio.

The event will be from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Thursday at the Botsford Inn, 28000 Grand River Ave. A \$50-a-person donation is requested.

Nightmare on Orchard Lake

No, it's not the traffic. It's the mischievous spirit of the Farmington Area Jaycees that will reveal themselves again this year, starting Friday, Oct. 17, and running through Halloween.

The Jaycees' Haunted House will be located on Orchard Lake Road, south of 14 Mile in the Kmart parking lot.

Admission is \$5. It's open from 7:30-11:30 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, and 7:30-9:30 p.m. Thursdays and Sundays.

Call 477-5227 for more information.