Serving Farmington and Farmington Hills for 111 years

Homefown Putting you in touch

### **Message to Mom**

Why is your mother special? Tell us in 50 words or less and you may win lunch or dinner for your mom (and three other people) at a local restourant. Mail, fax or E-mail entries by noon Friday, May 1.

PAAL: Community Editor Davo Varga 33411 Grand River Farmington, Mt 48335

FAX: (248) 477-9722

Be sure to include your name, your mother's name, your address and telephone number. You may sond a photo, however, judging will be based on your message.

We will print as many ontrins as

possible on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 10. The contost is open to readers of all ages.



Their mark: Two men whose lives left an impact on the Farmington area died this week./A2, A3

## COMMUNITY LIFE

The Farmingtons: Local students find 22 different U.S. cities of many shapes and sizes named Farmington./B1

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### THOW TO REACH US

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# Classic auto cruise gets a green light

Classic car buffs soon can add downtown Farmington to their list of destinations for summertime nostalgia.

The Farmington City Council last week OKCd a request from The Pasta Stop owner Roger Ratkowski to allow Monday night classic car shows in the city parking lot behind his Grand River/Farmington catery. Ratkowski and Dennis Pago, co-owner of Page's Food and Spirits, are co-sponsoring the weekly classic car cruise and display, to take place from 5-9 p.m. every Monday from June until September.

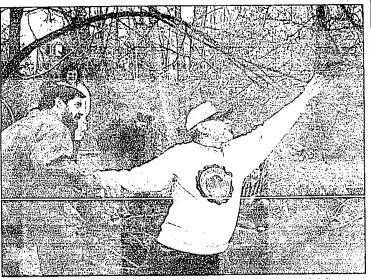
Still needing to be ironed out with the city are issues such as parking on event mights and whether loud cars or loud music in the parking lot might become a nuisance for nearby resilients.

Council members seem to favor the concept, as long as it is done properly. "We're going to have to watch traffic pattarns," said councilwoman Johano McShano.

"We should encourage this as long as it doesn't interfere with adjacent residents, added councilman William Hartsock.
Part of the parking lot adjacent to State



#### Hands across the water



Dorby day: Merv Rose, who was at the fishing derby with Beechview Elementary Cub Scouts Pack 321, unsnags a line from a low branch for a youngster, while Jim Sokoloff of Farmington Hills, who was fishing with his sons, lends a hand. For more on Saturday's derby, see Page A3.

# VOLUMB 1115 NUMBER 62 FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN . 90 PAGES . http://observer.eccentric.com refuse to take

Worried about their futures, Farmington's high school juniors see no good reason to take the revamped state tests. So, many opted out.



Only 18 percent of Farmington high school juniors will hather taking this week's Michigan Educational Assessment Program test and school officials are trying to figure out what to do now.

what to do now.
"We need that information," said "We need that information," said Farmington schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield at Tuesday's press conference about the subject. "But we need that information out of all of our kids, not 10 percent of our kids, not 10 percent of our kids. Too many parents apparently don't think the so-called high stakes test is valuable enough, or that it will make much of a difference in their young.

# Baby deaths trip alarm

The death of a 5-week-old Farmington Hills baby has given new impetus to the Oakland County medical examiner for a County medical examiner for a statewide program to combat positional asphyxiation – fatali-ties caused when a baby's air-ways are obstructed and the child dies from oxygen depriva-

chid ages from oxygen depriva-tion.
"Many of these deaths are caused by a few moments of inat-tention," said Dr. Ljubisa J. Dragovic. "Parents should be made aware of the danger."
The death that prompted Dragovic's concern happened April 19, when a baby boy was

sleeping on the chest of his father who was reclining in a chair at the apartment the couple shared in Farmington Hills.

Sometime in the early morning hours, the baby apparently slipped into the space between his father's body and the side of the reclining chair. The baby was found by his grandmother wedged face down and lifeless, according to the police report.

Initially police were auspicious, said Farmington Hills Police Chief William J. Dwyer. "But after we got into it, it became obvious that this death was a trugic accident."

The autopsy performed by Dr. Kanubhai Virani, Oakland's deputy chief forensie pathologist, concluded the cause of death was positional asphyxia. — the term used to describe fatalities in which the victims, usually infants, die for lack of oxygen. Sometimes, positional asphyxiation is caused when bedding gathers around the baby's head, said Dragovic. Occasionally, he said, positional osphyxiation is caused by "overpic. Occasionally, he said, positional osphyxiation is caused by "overpic." a reference to a parent laping" a reference to a parent laping on an infant, causing it to die from lack of oxygen.

Please see ALARM. As

# Despite warning, Hills baby dies

Ironically, the father had been warned.

But his 5-week-old son - after being fed and changed - seemed comfortable and the Farmington Hills man continued to let the baby sleep on his chest. His finnede, the baby's mother, was sleeping on a couch nearby.

The results were tragic.

As the baby's grandmether was preparing to go to work about 6:20 a.m. on April 19, she noticed the infant had slipped into the spane between his father's body and the arm of the reclining chair.

The grandmother told police she grabbed the baby

# In spirit

# WalkAmerica marchers brave rain, cold for the cause of kids

Mercy High School student Maggie Wright wasn't overly excited about participating in Sunday's annual WalkAmerica for the March of Dimes.

Maggie, 14, decided that WalkAmerica would be a good way to fulfill a 25-hour community service requirement at Mercy. So she persuaded her mom. Rosalio, to go with her to Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge for the Farmington Hills portion of the walk.

But despite the cold, rainy weather that heavily cut into the number of people showing up at OCC, Maggie after tune somewhere along the water-covered walk routs.

"I'll definitely do this again next year," said a soaking wet Maggie after returning to H Building after completing all eight miles with her mom. It was estimated that the weather cut the number of OCC walkers from a project at 1,900 to about 500 acid March of Mercy High School student Maggie Wright wasn't overly excited about participating in Sunday's annual WalkAmerican for the March of Dimes.

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Wet watch: Farmington Hills Sgt. Brian DeGrande (left) helps to ensure the safety of walkers at the intersection of Farmington and OCC in the driving rain Sunday.

#### Dedication shows

Dedication snows
Earlier, while Livonia resident Laurie Blacker was walking with other
members of the Preemie Star team, she
talked about dedication to the March of
Dimes by people who participated on
a bad day – even though they really did-

n't have to.
"On a day like this," said Blacker,
with husband Dave and children Katie
and Danny, with the pre-paid walk, at
least people have made an effort. They
collected the money, got the word out

Please see MARCH, A9

### Angels for Oprah

Angels for Oprah

Joan Pachan, director of the Farmington Hills
KinderCaro Center on Middlebelt, got a thrill earlier this month when she was invited to a taping of
the "Oprah Winfrey Show" for raising lots of money
for Oprah's Angel Network.

Pachan was recognized by the multiple Emmyaward winning daytime show host for raising \$1,400
in her preschool community in only three weeks.

Miriam Liggett, KindorCare's regional vice president for the Northeast, came up with the fund-raiseriden while on medical leave battling breast cancer. She set a goal of \$300 for each of her 300 center
directors and 16 area managers. Most went beyond
the call of duty.

directors and to rea managers, most well beyond the call of duty.

Pachin's activities included a penny drive, raffles, a "links of love" fund-raisor where the children and parents bought strips of colored paper that were made into a chain and an angel sale, where children

# **FARMINGTON FOCUS**

decorated angels and sold them.

"Meeting Oprah was great; she shook my hand," said Pachan, who has been with KinderCare 12 years. "She's an awssome woman.

"My 4-year-olds were thrilled because they were shown on the video. They traced their shoes in class, cut them out, and filled them with pennies."

The Angel Network is Oprah's yearlong campaign to help make the world a better place, with money sent to Habitat for Humanity and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

### **CROP** Walkers hit streets

Downtown Farmington will be invaded by walkers

Sunday afternoon, as the annual CROP Walk for

Sunday afternoon, as the annual CROP Walk for the hungry hits town to raise money. Walkers will begin and end at First United Methodist Church on Grand River, with the choice of a 2-mile Mini-Walk or a 6.2-Mile Walk starting at 2 p.m. The Harrison Jazz Band kicks off the registration period from 1:30-2 p.m. outside the church. Walk co-chair fue Broadwell (who is co-chairing with Donna Young) noted that last year Farmington raised \$36,000 - making it the third largest of 30 CROP Walks in Michigan, Statewide, \$2.2 million was raised.

One-quarter of the money stays in the community: serving the Farmington Salvation Army, St. Alexander's Food Cupboard, Baldwin Center in Pontiac and Neighborhood House. The rest helps victims of famine, war, flooding, etc. with food and education, such as how to drill wells, in 70 nations, including the U.S.