

# Farmington Observer

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## Downtown Farmer Jack to close

Employees at the Downtown Center Farmer Jack store were told this week the market will close June 27. Store officials wouldn't confirm or deny the story Friday. The news wasn't happy for customers or workers.

While rumors have always been rife in the checkout line, it appears Farmer Jack has decided to close the register in downtown Farmington. The store in the Downtown Center in Farmington is expected to shut down. Management met with employees

Wednesday, telling them they would close June 27. On Friday, a spokesman for the Greater Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, which owns Farmer Jack, couldn't confirm the store's closing. "I'll have to get back with you," said Michael

Rourke, vice president for corporate affairs. News of the store's closing didn't sit well with one customer. "I'll go to Kroger, to hell with them," said Roy Dernberger, 81, who was wheeling his shopping cart to the parking lot. "They get a lot of old folks here. That's why I'm here. I think it's ridiculous." Workers would be transferred to other stores, according to one longtime employee who was upset by the

announcement. "I was in tears," the employee said. "Every year, we always have a threat or rumor that we were going to close, but this time they're actually going to do it." The employee, who requested anonymity, said other employees would rather stay, since many had worked there a long time. "I like the customers here," the worker said. Problems with the parking lot were

Please see STORE, A6

## Parental input debated

Not long after the cable television lights were shut off during Thursday's Farmington school board candidates forum, things started to heat up. Candidates were grilled by two Harrison High School parents about a forthcoming plan to implement block scheduling the fall of 1999. And two of the candidates were put on the spot about their participation in recent school district elections.

Resident Tina Jensen's question about why challengers Jackie Katz and Dr. Anwar Mahmood have only voted once between them since 1992 backfired. "I didn't vote because I wasn't a citizen. Not because I wasn't interested in education," said Mahmood, who became a U.S. citizen last year. Katz replied that she didn't move into the district until 1 1/2 years ago. She did vote for the most-recent bond issue in September, but had a good explanation for why she didn't vote in the March 1997 try — she was having complications with her pregnancy. Mahmood and Katz, along with challenger Melody Jaske and board incumbents Jack Inch and Cathy Webb, answered questions from Harrison parents Barbara Cooper and Beth Grossman about whether they would delay implementation of block scheduling, now apparently set for fall 1999, or at least include parental input — something Cooper and Grossman said has been lacking until now.

"There are many concerns regarding how this is going to happen and how they're going to handle the transitional students," said Cooper to the candidates.

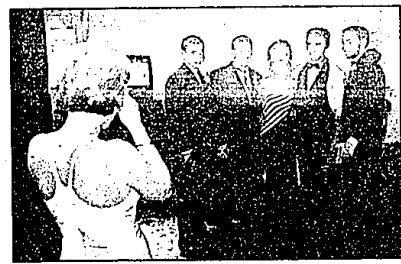
According to the parents, they were upset when they recently received a letter about the probable change to a "four-by-four" schedule (four 90-minute

Please see DEBATE, A5

## Going in style



From night's bright lights: Above, Brad Friedman and Jill Paggi dance under the colored lights of the disc jockey during the North Farmington High School Prom Tuesday at the Dearborn Inn in Dearborn. In the photograph at left, Blake Heraghty (far left) takes a photo of (left to right) Pete Bosler, Matt Beuchelaere, Kelly Kopf, Daren Lee and Shaun Godwin during the Farmington High School senior prom held at the Roostertail Club, also on Tuesday. For more sights of the two events, please see Page A3. And, for looks at the Harrison and Alternative Academy proms, check out Thursday's Observer.



**THE ROADS ARE A MESS**

Rush hour is a nightmare. If you are spending your mornings and afternoons sitting in your vehicles and wasting the hours away while waiting for traffic to move on I-275, M-14, Haggerty or on any road undergoing construction, the Observer wants to hear from you. We would like to do a story on any detours or suggestions you might have for other roaders.

Give Ken Abramczyk a call at (734) 953-2112, e-mail at kabramczyk@aol.com or fax him at (734) 591-7279 with your suggestions and comments.

**THE WEEK AHEAD**

**MONDAY**

Grand cruise: The first classic car cruise in downtown Farmington is 5-9 p.m. June 1 in the parking lot at the southwest corner of Grand River-Farmington roads.

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## Youth violence: Yes, it could happen here

Panel experts say it's reality

Paduach, Ky., Jonesboro, Ark., Springfield, Ore. ... Farmington or Farmington Hills?

Thursday's Family Forum on youth violence at Farmington's First United Methodist Church explored whether the tragic outbreak of school violence involving children and guns could happen here.

The answer is an unequivocal yes. "We're in the real world, ladies and gentlemen. Don't think it couldn't happen in Farmington or Farmington Hills," said Farmington Hills police Chief Bill Dwyer. Dwyer spoke as part of the panel discussion at the downtown Farmington church-sponsored forum, which follows the shooting in Springfield, Ore., where two teens were killed and 22 other wounded after a student opened fire in a cafeteria.

While the police chief and others won't dismiss the possibility of such an incident happening here, many on the panel that included a social worker, psychologist, minister and school administrator point out much is being done to prevent it.

At the high schools, there are police liaison and student assistance programs. Also, there are agencies such as Farmington Youth Assistance and Farmington Families in Action designed to help troubled youth.

Boys and Girls Republic Director Maryjane Peck blames the pervasive fear of youth violence on the increasing number of children who "don't seem to get it."

"They are not connecting the cause and effect," Peck said. "It's like they have no feelings, and that's scary to me." Since October, seven children and two teachers have been killed in U.S. schools. The family forum, which had been planned two months in advance, intended to talk about the root causes of violence and how to identify warning signs.

Please see VIOLENCE, A6

## Blunt Inch eyes longer tenure


Give Farmington Public Schools an Inch — and residents will get a school board member who tells it like it is.

Or at least Jack Inch will try to. Asked about local versus state control, he offered a typically blunt answer.

"I have a telephone number that's a 248," said Inch, 67, running for his sixth term on the Farmington Board of Education. "...Get in touch with me today and I may get you some kind of an answer tomorrow. Lansing is 70 miles away. It takes a long time to walk there."

Please see INCH, A6

**CANDIDATE PROFILE**



- Name: Jack Inch
- Age: 67
- Family: Married; sons Terry, 38, Christopher, 28, and Patrick, 26; daughter, Amy, 34.
- Occupation: Professor, Oakland Community College - Orchard Ridge Campus.
- Education: 1953, bachelor of arts degree, history major, Wayne State University; 1958, master of education, social studies major, Wayne State University; 1968, master of science degree, economics major, University of Illinois; graduate work at several universities.
- Community: Flanders Elementary School Parent-Teacher Association President, 1974-75; Farmington Middle School Study Committee, 1975-77; Farmington Board of Education, trustee since 1978.

## Mahmood to pay back community


It's pay-back time for Dr. Anwar Mahmood.

The 63-year-old Mahmood does have some plans for improving Farmington Public Schools should voters elect him on June 8 to a four-year term on the board of education. But he mainly wants to make sure that other children in the district get the same quality of education his own two children received while growing up in Farmington Hills.

"We have benefited from the system," said Mahmood, one of five candidates running for two terms. "It's a good system. The fact that we have stayed here that long (21 years) proves the fact that the system is good.

"Our children have done well ... I feel it's a debt I'd like to pay back. I want

**CANDIDATE PROFILE**



- Name: Anwar Mahmood
- Age: 63
- Family: Widowed. Two children, Ayasha, a medical student at Wayne State Medical School; Rizwan, a junior at University of Michigan.
- Occupation: Physician, Henry Ford Hospital, West Bloomfield.
- Education: Earned doctorate of medicine degree in Pakistan.
- Community: Member of Farmington Hills Commission on Children, Youth & Families; teaches foreign language program for community children; parent volunteer.

the children of the community to (also) benefit. I want to give some time."

According to Mahmood during a recent interview at the Farmington Observer office, "Somebody left it for us and now we want to leave it for others."

Please see MAHMOOD, A4

## Buckled Hawks

Students and faculty at Harrison High School "belted" cross-town rival North Farmington High in "The 1998 Farmington Hills Great Safety Belt Challenge."

The competition happened in two parts: one in mid April, another in mid May. Students Against Drunk Driving volunteers and Farmington Hills Police Officers conducted parking lot surveys at each school to compare safety belt use.

After the first survey, safety literature was distributed and public service announcements were made stressing the importance of safety belt use. For the second year in a row, Harrison was

## FARMINGTON FOCUS

declared the winner with a safety belt usage rate of 80 percent. North's rate was 68 percent.

Each school's SADD chapter will receive money from AAA Michigan — but Harrison will receive more. The Hawks also get a trophy.

**Football team fete**  
Members of Harrison High School's football team

may have captured the state championship last year, but the wheels of government do grind slowly, so it isn't surprising that it was May before they received government recognition.

But it was big. U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg read into the Congressional Record a tribute to the team's '97 championship, noting the Hawks' history of a 48-6 record in 16 playoff appearances and eight state titles.

"In addition to their athletic prowess," Knollenberg noted, "the team also holds the eighth-highest grade point average in the state with a 3.67 average GPA."

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