

## Kaboom!

### Join celebration of Hills' 25th

**C**ongratulations, Farmington Hills. It's been a good 25 years and boy, how you've grown. You've taken on a bit of weight so there's more of you to love, but you're still in pretty good condition as compared to your neighbors.

We've seen the leaner days, when you could be seen riding horses or actually tending farms. Now, you've pretty much joined the modern era, with plenty of cars and big businesses and buildings to toll in. It makes things a bit busier, and you've built roads and freeways to keep up with growth. The problem of your roads, though, still seems to be one of the biggest challenges you need to face.

However, bigger isn't always worse. In your heart and soul, Farmington Hills, you've really remained a small town.

That's evident by the fact that you still like to play, setting up a parks system over the past quarter century—an admirable trait to cater to the kid in all of us. And you've taken up golf, a great sport for those older years.

You've also paid a lot of attention to the

needs of others: Helping out older folks with programs at the Costick Center and youngsters with an elaborate after-school program. You've set up groups to help ensure that minorities of all kinds get a fair shake. And, you've shown safety is a priority, with major improvements to your firefighting abilities and nationally recognized efforts on the police department.

Yep, Farmington Hills, you've got plenty of reasons to be proud. So we hope you'll get out and celebrate this weekend.

Some of your finest community activists spent valuable time—and money of many great donors—planning an entertaining weekend, starting with a hoe-down square dance on Friday night; featuring a ceremony, kids events and music by the Farmington Area Philharmonic on Saturday afternoon; an elaborate fireworks display Saturday night; and the dedication of a Memorial Park on Sunday.

Join the celebration, Farmington Hills. You deserve it.

## A pair of kudos, suggestions

Short takes on recent stories in and around the Farmingtons:

■ Anti-Semitic graffiti showing up on a Farmington Hills synagogue and at a public school recently could obviously be seen as a despicable blot on this community's reputation. Yet, quick response by the city, school district and the Farmington/Farmington Hills Multicultural/Multiracial Community Council to set up a reward brought deserved notice from a representative of the Anti-Defamation League. It shows the town's unequivocal stand.

■ Last week's meeting between Farmington Hills and Detroit Edison brought some explanation, but little consolation to those neighborhoods who regularly get zapped powerless.

If Farmington Hills is the only community having trouble with Detroit Edison's consistent delivery of power, we'd be surprised. We suggest Hills officials use SEMCOG or a group of other towns with problems to file complaints with the Michigan Public Services Commission, aiming for the power of numbers. Otherwise, the city's new Consumer Protection Committee might try to get some action.

■ Congratulations to Farmer Jack for finally announcing the obvious, that it's closing the downtown Farmington store. And, it's showing real community spirit by offering to bus senior citizens from Farmington Place to its Nine Mile Road store two days a week. We certainly hope and expect that spirit to extend to leasing out to another grocer in town.

## Rouge cleanup: Need still deep

**W**e messed it up. Now we're cleaning it up. And we're doing a pretty good job. But there is still a long way to go.

The "we" is all of us—business, industry, government and individuals. The "it" we refer to is the Rouge River, which not so many years ago was considered one of the most polluted rivers in the country. In 1981 the polluted Rouge was designated an "Area of Concern" because of its potential effects on the Great Lakes.

The Rouge River Project, which began in 1992, was a joint effort of many agencies and individuals to improve the water quality of the Rouge and bring the river back to life. Readers of this newspaper are familiar with the annual Rouge Rescue (indeed, many of you have taken part in these activities).

We commend all the agencies, businesses and individuals who have participated in these efforts to restore life to a dying river. Thanks to them the water quality in the Rouge is better than it has been in years. But the job doesn't end when the last rotting tire is pulled out of the water.

The day-to-day activities of individuals—as well as business and industry—can have significant effects on the state of the Rouge, even if they think they live nowhere near the river. While industry once was a major cause of Rouge pollution, officials of The Rouge River Project say that now only about 2 percent of the pollution is from industrial sources.

Today one of the biggest hazards to the Rouge is polluted storm water runoff. Simply put that is water that runs over the ground during heavy rains and picks up pollutants that are carried into storm drains that lead directly to the river.



Dirty work: Volunteers pitched in with the Rouge Rescue in Farmington Hills earlier this month.

And where do the pollutants come from? From fertilizers, pesticides, oil or grease leaks from automobiles, even bacteria from pet wastes. In short they come from your well-manicured yard, your driveway, the street in front of your house. Downspouts that feed directly into a sewer system or onto paved driveways that lead to a sewer opening also add to the problem.

Local communities are beginning to deal with the issue of managing storm water runoff and, as part of the campaign, are setting up educational programs to teach residents how they can help reduce pollution. The Rouge Program Office has an excellent Web site ([www.waynecounty.com/wayne/build/rpo/](http://www.waynecounty.com/wayne/build/rpo/)) containing an online handbook with an abundance of information on the Rouge Project and how individuals and businesses can do their part to help.

We've done a good job so far of cleaning up what we collectively messed up. But there's still a lot to be done. In the immortal words of Yogi Berra: "It ain't over 'til it's over."

### TURNING BACK THE PAGES

This week in history as reported in past editions of the Farmington Observer and the Farmington Enterprise.

#### 40 YEARS AGO - JUNE 28, 1958 (ENTERPRISE)

The Farmington Township Board committed the township to join a partnership to help bring Detroit water to the area. Plans to build a 54-inch water main out to the 8 Mile and Inkster roads area would also help serve neighboring communities of Southfield, Redford Township, Livonia and the city of Farmington.

#### 25 YEARS AGO - JUNE 27, 1973

As Farmington Township ceased to be an entity after 146 years, auditors figured that it would end with a \$500,000 surplus. The money would allow the brand new City of Farmington Hills to begin operations on July 2 with money in its coffers.

#### 2 YEARS AGO - JUNE 27, 1996

Farmington Hills City Council members voted unanimously to offer a \$100,000 contract to Dan Hobbs, who accepted to become Farmington Hills' new city manager.

### COMMUNITY VOICE

#### QUESTION:

Farmington Hills, Livonia and downtown Detroit host fireworks this week. Are you going to attend any fireworks displays?

We asked this question at the Farmington Public Library.



"We're going to the hoe-down Friday night. We could probably see the fireworks from the corner of our subdivision. We wouldn't miss those."

Nan Reid  
Farmington Hills



"No, I'm not attending. I won't be available."

Ellis King  
Wixom



"We haven't decided which one yet, but we'll go. I love them."

Noreen Swanson  
Farmington Hills



"I haven't planned on it. I'll have to think about it."

Lane Bertrand  
Ann Arbor

### LETTERS

#### Don't deny needy seniors

**I**f there is some logic to this but, if there is, it escapes me. A provision of the Michigan income tax provides for a senior citizen prescription drug credit. The credit is available for those over the age 65 if their household income is under \$11,835 for a single individual or \$15,915 for a married couple. Depending on the money available (the fund maximum is \$20 million), the maximum credit is \$600 for singles and \$1,200 for married couples.

We all know how expensive prescription drugs are so this allows individuals with limited income to recover some of the cost to obtain the needed medication. However, the law is written so that if the individual lived in a licensed care facility for more than six consecutive months in the year, the credit is not available. A licensed care facility includes in the definition a nursing home and a hospital long-term care unit.

The logic of denying this benefit to those who may have the greatest need escapes me. The fund is limited to a certain dollar limit so the cost to the state will not increase. I have written to my state representative and state senator with no success. The state senator didn't even reply to my letter. The representative suggested that I contact someone else. Apparently there have been attempts to amend the law but they have all been unsuccessful.

When Ameritech wants legislation passed, it drafts the bill and then buys its passage with PAC contributions and through its massive lobbying efforts. I guess seniors with limited means don't have the same impact on our legislators.

Tom DeWard  
Farmington Hills

#### Past due for Jolicoeur

**I** hope all voters in the Republican Primary on Aug. 4, who are residents of District 18, will vote for Linda Jolicoeur for our county commissioner.

As a long-time commission watcher, I believe it is past time for a new voice representing our district. Linda brings an incredible list of credentials to this position, having served as an appointee of both Governor Engler and County Executive L. Brooks Patterson; in leadership positions with the greater Detroit and Farmington Chambers of Commerce; the area Republican party clubs and various business associations.

Linda is a successful businesswoman, active in her community, and an open, approachable, multi-talented candidate. She is most worthy of your vote on Aug. 4.

Joan A. Rollick  
Farmington Hills

#### Consumer board needed

**I**f anyone hasn't read Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi's letter to the editor in the June 18, 1998, Farmington Observer titled "Cable profits sky-high," I suggest getting a back copy and reading it. And for those who have read it, I suggest reading it again.

I suggest this not just because of his complaint about Time Warner's rates, but because Mayor Vagnozzi made the important point of how Time Warner's rates got so high, through Time Warner lobbyists contributing to campaigns of members of Congress.

The point is, our state and federal politicians who are supposed to represent the interests of constituents routinely betray their trust in order to secure campaign contributions to ensure their own personal feeding at the public trough.

For this very reason Michigan motor vehicle owners do not enjoy minimal auto repair protection by the Bureau of Automotive Regulation. The bureau cannot even levy fines against repair facilities who rip us off. They can only issue them meaningless citations with no fines. The only way they can get financial restitution for a rip-off victim is asking the facility for "voluntary compliance." Repair facilities laugh this off as a joke. The bureau can take a facility to Lansing to threaten its license, but this almost never occurs because the bureau field investigators carry such heavy complaint loads and do not want to take the time to take a facility to Lansing.

The bottom line? The repair rip-offs continue. The politicians get their campaign contributions to benefit the repair facilities, and we have status quo. I have thoroughly investigated this matter and know wherefore I speak. I wish to congratulate Mayor Vagnozzi for his idea of instituting a new Consumer Protection Committee in Farmington Hills. Maybe it can do what the state won't.

Kenneth Kemp  
Farmington Hills

**Opinions are to be shared:** We welcome your ideas, as do your neighbors. That's why we offer this space on a weekly basis for opinions in your own words. We will help by editing for clarity and brevity. To assure authenticity, we ask that you sign your letter and provide a day-time contact telephone number. No anonymous letters will be published.

The week prior to an election, this newspaper will not publish letters that discuss new issues, since last-minute attacks don't allow a chance for rebuttal. Responses to already published issues will be accepted.

Letters should be mailed to: Editor, The Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington, MI 48335; faxed to 248-477-9722; or e-mailed with your name, city of residence and phone number to [dvargo@oe.homecomm.net](mailto:dvargo@oe.homecomm.net)

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— Philip Power