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IN THE PAPER TODAY

Unfinished work: The new arts coordinator for Farmington Hills wants to quit; city officials want her to stay./A3

COMMUNITY LIFE

Historic helix: Learn about the famous downtown Farmington bank robbery in today's Vintage Farmington column./B1

ENTERTAINMENT

Jazz: The Michigan Jazz Festival, returning to Botsford Inn in Farmington Hills Sunday, July 19, is still among the best bargains around./E1

Dining: Fusion cuisine, the blending of flavors and techniques from both the West and East, is David Lum's specialty at Eurasian Grill./E1

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Garage explosion leaves Hills man seriously burned

A Farmington Hills man, 35, was seriously injured after a garage explosion at Sierra Pointe condominiums Monday.

The victim, identified as Fred Borg, was taken to Botsford Hospital and then airlifted to University of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor. He was listed in good condition.

At 7:20 p.m., Farmington Hills fire responded to the home and found the man laying on the grass outside the garage. He had burns on the side of his face and was bleeding from the head, a witness said.

Reports indicate the man was filling scuba diving tanks with oxygen when the explosion happened.

A neighbor said he heard a hissing noise and then a loud explosion.

"I saw him coming out backwards; he sort of flew out," said Julius Yuhaz, who lives across from the victim's home. "The blast threw him against the van."

The victim is a scuba diver, as is his wife. Fire investigators found scuba diving tanks, oxygen tanks and an air compressor inside the garage.

The blast damaged a wall and roof of the garage, which has a bedroom overhead. A projectile shot through the roof and, as of Tuesday, hadn't been found by fire investigators.

The explosion shattered a windshield on the car inside the garage. The blast was heard throughout the condominium.

"It was deafening," Yuhaz said. "It blew the clock off my wall here. It was like a gigantic bomb. I could feel the concussion from here. ... It's a miracle he's alive."

New speed bumps take lumps



Three new speed bumps are a last resort to try to slow traffic speeding through one Farmington Hills neighborhood. Some neighbors and city officials, though, fear the bumps will shift, not solve, the problem.

The installation of speed bumps has raised a larger debate about whether they cause more long-term damage than a short-term solution.

Nonetheless, a Farmington Hills residential street is getting three of them in an effort to curb lead-foot drivers. At Monday's Farmington Hills City Council meeting, residents and city officials agreed the bumps are a last resort.

Three speed bumps will be placed on

LaMuera Street in order to alleviate cut-through traffic of motorists trying to avoid the 11 Mile and Orchard Lake intersection and reduce speeds. Council members passed the measure 5-1 with Councilwoman Vicki Barnett dissenting. Councilman Jerry Ellis was absent.

Speeds have been clocked as high as 40 miles an hour on the residential road. The speed limit is 25 miles an

hour. "I have two boys and absolutely fear for them to get near the curb within 12 feet," said Michael Truss, who lives on LaMuera. "You can go down the street and find rubber marks from the cars taking off."

Through the city's Safe-To-3 program, residents and staff worked on a three-step process of education, monitoring and enforcement. Hills police doled out 55 speeding tickets on the street during the past two years.

Average speeds have been brought down to 26.1 miles an hour between 7-9 a.m. Between 4-6 p.m., though, the average speed is 29.2 miles an hour

with an 85th percentile of 35 mph.

Some 22 people who live on LaMuera Street — 79 percent — signed a petition asking for speed bumps. The Springfield-LaMuera Homeowners Association endorsed the deterrents.

A Springfield Street resident handed council a petition with 29 signatures of subdivision residents opposed.

Those against would rather see more signs and warning letters sent to known offenders. Speed bumps will only increase traffic on Springfield Street instead, they said.

"To be honest with you, I'd probably

Please see BUMPS, A8

In the spray at Kids Day



Hydrant hilinks: Children react to water squirts by "Herbie the Hydrant," Tuesday during the Kids Day celebration at Shiuwassee Park during Founder's Festival. Herbie's sounds and sprays were operated by remote by Bob Rebtov, Farmington Hills' assistant fire chief.

Damp day afternoon

Thousands of kids take in Founders Fest

At Kids Day in the Park, children could meet a clown with a degree in balloontology, a farmer with few goats and pigs and firefighter with more than few safety tips.

But no one could avoid Mister Muggy.

He is invisible and only reveals himself through the sweat stains on shirts and blouses. He and his sidekick, Hugo Humidity, made this year's event Tuesday in Shiuwassee Park a hot and sticky one.

While some gasped for air while pushing strollers, kids ran in six different directions. Children burned a path to Farmer John's Barnyard

Express, where a miniature horse, calf, pigs and baby goat greeted children.

"She always enjoys this," said Petra Beierling of Farmington Hills, whose daughter Marina, 5, gleefully caressed the pates of small farm animals. "The kids are really having fun."

Another mom posed a query to her 2-year-old after the girl took a pony ride. "What are you, Morgan, a cow-girl?" asked Mary Jo Giles of West Bloomfield who also had daughter Caitlin, 4, in tow.

With the petting zoo and pony rides, this year's affair was a few

centures short of a traditional Kids Day. For the first time in 30 years, no pet contest took place. Veterinarian John Richardson discontinued the event due to a lack of participant interest.

Instead, a lip-synching group Earth Angels entertained the amphitheater audience with their neo-1950s dance routines. The 20-member children's group belted to Bill Haley and the Comets, Chubby Checker and Elvis tunes.

The Earth Angels, which consists of children from area dance studios,

Please see KIDS DAY, A6

Gill's float team eyes '5-peat' in fest parade Saturday

When it comes to creating prize-winning floats for the annual Farmington Founders Festival parade, the folks from Gill Elementary School are the team to beat.

But they don't plan to let that happen anytime soon.

The Gill float-builders have won four consecutive trophies — including the last three Queen's Trophies, awarded annually for "best concept" — and "We want to keep it up," said Fred Nassar, Gill PTA president.

Besides, the cash prize that comes with the trophy provides enough money to fund the next year's float.

This week, the float committee of some 30 or so parents, teachers and students — from Gill's Year-Round school program — are hustling to finish their latest creation in time for Saturday's 10 a.m. parade through Farmington.

They don't want to repeat last year, when "we worked up to mid-night on Friday night to get it finished," said Nassar.

The Founders Festival parade, a community tradition, steps off at 10 a.m. at the Target store on Grand River, heading for downtown Farmington.

Sponsored by Botsford General Hospital, this year's 34th annual spectacle will feature antique cars, pageant-winners, police and fire brigades, drum-and-baton corps, community and civic leaders and the ever-popular Moslem Temple Shrine motorcycles, Arabian horses and clowns — plus about half-a-dozen floats.

With the 1998 parade theme being Farmington Hills' 25th anniversary, the Gill group

Please see FLOAT, A3

Farmington to ticket minors who smoke

Minors caught smoking in the City of Farmington will face city penalties — rather than those imposed by the state — under an ordinance passed Monday night by the city council.

In effect, the ordinance increases involvement of the city police department in prosecuting offenses and also shifts offenders' cases from the local 47th District Court to Oakland County Family Court, formerly called Probate Court.

The new ordinance, which takes the state law and localizes it, was needed to effect the change in courts.

"It will help us to enforce the law more efficiently and have more control of the disposition of cases," said Public Safety Director Gary Goss.

The new law 'shows our youth that the community cares.'

Gary Goss
—director of Public Safety

It also will give the county prosecuting attorney's office, which currently handles such cases, more time to pursue more serious crimes, Goss said.

"We felt it was important enough to us to devote our resources to it," said Goss, noting the communitywide effort which includes

the Zero Tolerance program in the schools.

The new law, to take effect Aug. 24, "shows our youth that the community cares," Goss said.

However, he emphasized, it "won't stigmatize teens" by giving them a criminal record.

"It is a misdemeanor offense like driving past a stopped school bus," Goss said. "People are not fingerprint-

Please see SMOKING, A8

Festival help

The Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce needs volunteers to work at two chamber booths during this weekend's Founders Festival, from Thursday through Saturday.

Shifts are two hours and volunteers will help sell tickets to the Corvette/Cash Raffle, promote the chamber and help direct visitors around town. Volunteers are invited to bring friends, sunscreen and smiles. Call 474-3440 to select a time or for more details.

Learn about I-275 work

Farmington area residents are invited to learn about upcoming road reconstruction on I-275 from Five Mile Road to north of Grand River at a public hearing 5-8 p.m. Thursday, July 16, at Schoolcraft

FARMINGTON FOCUS

College's Waterman Center on Haggerty in Livonia. The \$70 million project — and the informational meeting — will be directed by the Michigan Department of Transportation. It will involve reconstruction of northbound and southbound lanes and it's planned for 1999.

Safety first

Farmington Hills firefighters and police will offer safety lessons in a free family presentation hosted by the Farmington Area Jaycees 1-2:30 p.m. July 19

at Fire Station No. 5 on Orchard Lake just south of 11 Mile. After firefighters teach fire safety and prevention, police officers will instruct children on stranger awareness. Reservations are limited to the first 15 families. Call June Farrell of the Jaycees at (888) 763-9861 and leave a message.

Golf league seeks members

The Oakland County Golf League, formerly the Lathrup Ladies Golf League, is seeking members and substitutes for the 1998 summer season. Members golf from May 11-Sept. 14 at the Glen Oaks Golf Course in Farmington Hills on 13 Mile Road.

Membership is not restricted to residents of Oakland County. Anyone is eligible to participate. Those interested should contact Joyce Gibson at (248) 559-1371.

