

# Farmington Observer

Serving Farmington and Farmington Hills for 111 years

HomeTown  
Putting you in touch  
with your world

VOLUME 151 NUMBER 90

FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 78 PAGES • <http://observer.eccentric.com>

SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS  
© 1998 HomeTown Communications Network, Inc.

## How to read this chart:

- Totals represent how Farmington (listed first) and Farmington Hills (listed second) voted.
- Check mark indicates overall winner.

UNOFFICIAL RESULTS

### FARMINGTON'S AUG. 4 PRIMARY RESULTS

#### GOVERNOR:

##### REPUBLICANS

John Engler - 1,082/6,882 ✓  
Gary Artman - 303/627

##### DEMOCRATS

Larry Owen - 318/1,940  
Doug Ross - 328/2,684  
Geoffrey Fieger - 311/2,417 ✓

#### U.S. CONGRESSIONAL:

##### 11TH DISTRICT

##### REPUBLICANS

Joe Knollenberg - 1,128/7,066 ✓

##### DEMOCRAT

Travis H. Reeds - 659/4,972 ✓

#### STATE LEGISLATURE:

##### 15TH SENATE DISTRICT

##### REPUBLICANS

Bill Ballard, Jr. - 719/4,787 ✓  
Barbara Dobb - 430/2,476

##### DEMOCRAT

S. Ruth Fuller - 665/4,990 ✓

#### STATE REPRESENTATIVE:

##### 37TH DISTRICT

##### REPUBLICAN

Andrew Raczowski - 1,097/6,704 ✓

##### DEMOCRAT

Steve Dilbert - 682/4,990 ✓

#### OAKLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

##### 18TH DISTRICT

##### REPUBLICANS

David Morris - 2,292 (Farmington Hills) ✓  
Linda Jolicœur - 2,185 (Farmington Hills)  
Laird Wine - 125 (Farmington Hills)

##### DEMOCRAT

Ryan Ossund - 3,270 (Farmington Hills) ✓

##### 19TH DISTRICT

##### REPUBLICANS

Terry Sever - 559/1,405 ✓  
Ben Marks - 431/820  
JoAnne F. Molin - 126/267

##### DEMOCRAT

Deborah J. Goldberg - 651/1,618 ✓

#### NON PARTISAN SECTION

##### JUDICIAL

##### OAKLAND CIRCUIT COURT 6TH DISTRICT:

Richard D. Kuhn, Jr. - 574/3,199  
Colleen O'Brien - 635/3,939 ✓  
Steven Kaplan - 395/4,611 ✓

#### PROPOSAL 5: (SMART)

YES - 1,609/10,893 ✓  
NO - 453/3,324

#### LIBRARY MILLAGE PROPOSAL:

YES - 1,515/10,371 ✓  
NO - 610/4,151

## Library millage passes



When Farmington Community Library tax boosters such as Vicki Barnett went door-to-door to convince residents about the merits of the \$11.7 million proposal, only two of them flat out opposed the plan. "Right then and there I knew it was going to win big," said Barnett, Farmington Hills Mayor Pro-Tem, following the first round of results Tuesday night. Barnett's prediction was on the money. More than 71 percent of registered voters in Farmington Hills and Farmington approved the tax. In Farmington Hills, nearly 30 percent of the city's 51,654 registered voters turned out at the 27 precincts or cast absentee ballots. And when

the votes were tallied, the library tax was victorious by a 10,371-4,151 count.

It was a similar situation in the six-precinct city of Farmington. With 2,243 of 8,433 registered voters casting ballots (almost 27 percent), the proposal sailed to victory by a 1,515-610 margin.

As a result of the victory - greatly aided by smart campaigning, hard work and lessons learned from failed attempts in 1989 and 1993 - both aging, overcrowded branches of the library will undergo renovations, while the Hills branch on 12 Mile also will be expanded.

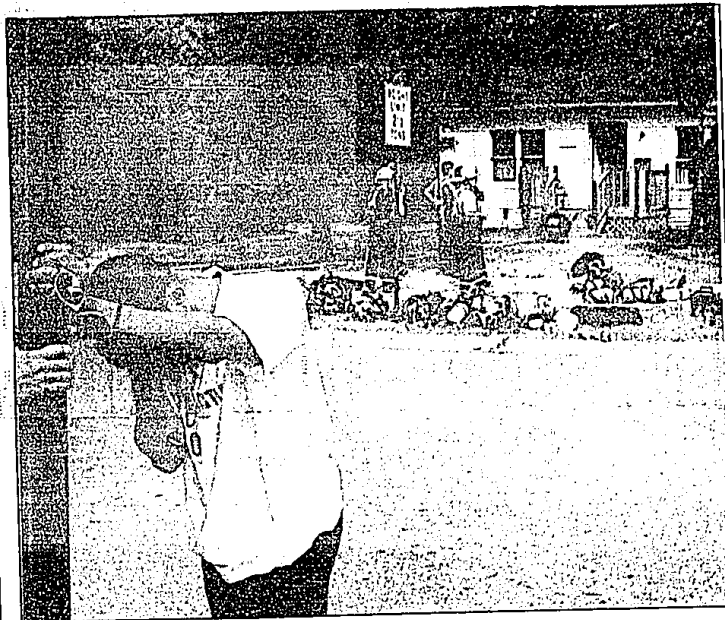
Bonds must be sold before work can begin next spring, said Farmington Community Library Director Beverly Papai. But for now, that will wait for the celebration to subside.

Please see LIBRARY, A4



Nico returns: Library Director Beverly Papai and Library Board President Bob Plummer look over promising early election numbers.

## Grief stricken



Personal loss: Jeffrey Amayo reacts to the damage to his home. All his military records were consumed in the fire that of his family's house.

## Family tries to regroup after fire

Helen Amayo lost her job on Sunday. On Monday, she lost the Farmington house she rented to fire. But yet, she remained thankful. "God is good," said Amayo Monday evening, standing at the curb near boxes and garbage bags filled with ruined personal belongings. "We start again. All my children are alive. We start again."

According to Farmington Fire Marshal Joe Schornack, the fire is still under investigation. He did say that faulty electrical wiring probably was not the cause. "We're thinking it's either a television set that was plugged into the wall outlet or a careless smoker," Schornack said. "But we're not looking at it as a suspicious fire. It's an accidental fire."

About 2:35 p.m. Monday, Amayo, an Irish native who is in her 50s and suffering from kidney infection, left her small frame house at Hawthorne and Nine Mile. She went to the bank and an area restaurant for a late lunch.

There was a funny smell in the air when she left the house, a neighbor said, but she didn't give it a second thought. When Amayo returned

■ 'I hope God puts out a hand here somehow and helps her. She just lost her job yesterday, believe it or not. And now today, this.'

Timothy Abraham  
—neighbor

shortly before 4 p.m., Farmington Public Safety firefighters were putting out flames. The fire, mostly confined to one room, caused extensive damage to the \$60,000 dwelling Amayo had rented since 1992.

"This is what I met," said Amayo, referring to the charred residence. As bad as that discovery was, it could have been much worse.

Sleeping inside the house when the fire began was Steven Amayo, 17, the youngest of Helen Amayo's five children.

Steven woke up gagging from smoke, and struggled to find his glasses through the haze. He touched the hot doorknob long enough to burn his hand and realize he couldn't open the door because of the rising flames on the other side.

Instead, he dropped himself down from the second-story window, sustaining cuts and scrapes.

"I knew if I opened the door the flames would come out," said Steven, who attends Farmington High School.

Shortly before 8 p.m. Monday, with a muted television set near his feet, 26-year-old Jeffrey Amayo lamented the loss of his wardrobe, stereo equipment and, most of all, his military records from the United States Air Force.

"All of my military records are ruined," Jeffrey said. "It will take me six months" to receive new copies.

Despite the tragedy, the family - which lost everything because it did not have homeowner's insurance - was coping, thanks to good-hearted neighbors.

One woman let Helen make a long-distance telephone call to 24-year-old son Fergal, who is in Ireland. Others were offering boxes to pack up damaged belongings and garage space to store them in.

And neighbor Timothy Abraham told the Amayos they could stay in

Please see FIRE, A2

## City puts pressure on grocery store chain

As long as good faith talks are continuing about finding a "suitable" tenant for the vacant Downtown Farmington Center Farmer Jack grocery store, city officials won't file a lawsuit against the national food chain.

But Farmington city officials, during Monday night's council meeting, made it very clear that legal action will happen if there is evidence of any "foot dragging" in finding that tenant.

The 20,000-square-foot facility closed on June 27, despite loud-and-clear protests from residents who signed a petition urging a top-quality, full-service grocery store be put into that space.

"We'll stay in their faces," Mayor Pro-Tem Bill Hartsock promised residents in attendance at Monday's meeting. "The real factor is whether a viable tenant for that store can be found and in an expeditious manner."

City Manager Frank Lauhoff noted that officials from Farmer Jack and its parent, Greater Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co., and the landlord (Kimco Realty Corp.) were expected to meet this week to discuss possible tenants for the empty store. He said there would be a grace period of 30-45 days to find out

Please see STORE, A2

## Tax cut could hinder Hills' effort to keep Compuware

### See related story page A9

A Senate bill that would wipe out personal property taxes for businesses would cost Farmington Hills \$2.2 million in revenue.

More so, city officials worry that the exemption will be another incentive for Compuware Corp. to move its base from Farmington Hills to Detroit. The Farmington Hills computer software firm is expected to make a decision by Aug. 31.

"We'll find someone to fill the location), but this is not the way for businesses to leave," said Mayor Aldo Vignozzi.

Businesses pay personal property taxes on computers, tools and machinery. Senate Bill 733 (H-4) would eliminate those taxes for businesses that locate to pre-determined "distressed" areas of the state.

That would leave cities like Farmington Hills open to "pirating" of businesses - such as Compuware - by other cities, officials said.

Please see BILL, A8

## Bungled robbery is no laughing matter to police

Police departments in seven communities are linking suspects of an armed robbery Monday at Denny's Restaurant in Farmington Hills to similar recent incidents, according to Farmington Hills Sgt. Tim Swanson.

Meanwhile, the hero behind the arrests of the three men in keeping in mind. Sometimes referred to as a manager, other times as the owner, the man called police from a cellular phone from outside Denny's and followed the robbers, advising police of the sus-

pects' whereabouts until they caught up. "He followed at a safe distance and I don't believe they ever knew he was behind them," Swanson said. "His alertness and willingness to get involved is what made these successful arrests."

Breakfast at Denny's the following day was back to normal, according to Thomas Burke, Denny's Restaurant general manager.

"Everyone showed up early and were ready to go," Burke said. "Those things are random. It was busi-

ness as usual (Tuesday morning)."

Three men were arraigned Tuesday afternoon in 47th District Court before Judge Frederick Harris on three counts each of armed robbery, because money was taken from the restaurant and witnesses.

Those charged are: Vernard Emanuel Adams, 20, of Southfield, who was believed to be the driver and was also charged with fleeing and eluding, which

Please see ROBBERY, A3

## INDEX

- Opinion A12-13
- Police calls A14
- Obituaries C7
- Crossword G6
- Classified Index F4
- Autos J3
- Home & Service J2
- Jobs H6
- Community Life B1
- Sports C1
- Entertainment E1
- Real Estate F1

## HOW TO REACH US

Newsroom: 248-477-5450  
Newsroom Fax: 248-477-9722  
E-mail: [newsroom@oonline.com](mailto:newsroom@oonline.com)  
Nightline/Sports: 734-953-2104  
Reader Comment Line: 734-953-2042  
Classified Advertising: 734-591-0900  
Display Advertising: 248-901-2524  
Home Delivery: 248-901-4716

