

# Farmington Observer

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## THE WEEK AHEAD

MONDAY

**On tour: Join Farmington Hills naturalists for a tour of the area's wildflowers. Meet at 10 a.m. at the Woodland Hills parking lot.**

TUESDAY

**Meet: The Farmington Planning Commission will meet at 8 p.m. in council chambers, 23600 Liberty.**

### "Can It Happen Here?"

#### School Community Forum

**Who:** Farmington/Farmington Hills Commission on Children, Youth & Families

**What:** A panel discussion on recent events in Littleton, Colo. moderated by veteran TV newsmen Vince Wade.

**Why:** Address concerns about Colorado shootings; What schools, law enforcement and other local institutions are doing to prevent violence; and let people know what resources are available to children and families.

**When:** 6-9 p.m. Thursday, May 13

**Where:** William Costick Activities Center, 28800 11 Mile Road, east of Middlebelt.

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## Safer lunch on menu?

**An open or closed campus. That's the latest question. But a campus committee recommends that kids stay in school for lunch.**

By TIM SMITH  
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Many high school students in the Farmington district now enjoy their lunch at area cafeterias such as Big Apple Bagel or Wendy's.

But as of fall 2000, they might have to get used to brown bagging it.

The Farmington school board Tuesday heard a report from open-closed campus committee members recommending that students at Farmington, Harrison and North eat on campus beginning in the 2000-2001 school year.

Among committee members is Harrison junior Kim Gass, who spoke during the meeting. She talked about how a closed campus might not be all that bad.

"What I keep telling them (classmates)," Gass said, "is, as a student, I feel the responsibility that it will be the best place possible to have lunch if we can't leave school."

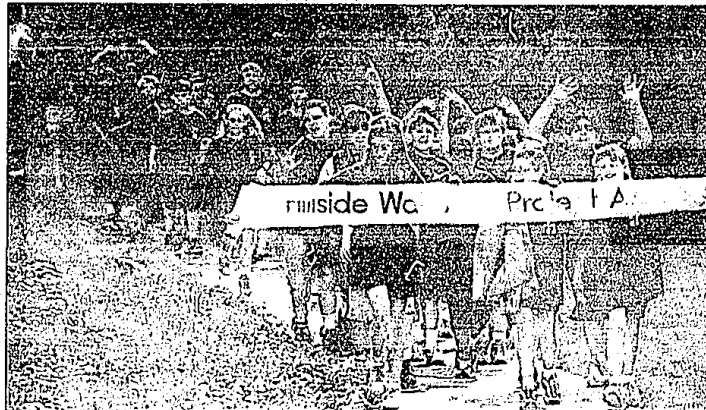
Gass recalled a recent visit to Livonia Stevenson's cafeteria, where students were chilling and relaxing while doing lunch. "It was right out of a TV show."

Cost factors of closing campuses need to be worked out, as well as the logistics of keeping everybody in school for lunch, said committee chair James Myers, executive director of student services.

Having a lunch option has been permitted since the early 1970s. But the committee apparently felt keeping kids in cafeterias would enhance safety and

Please see LUNCH, A4

### We did it!



**They're A.C.E.S.:** Hillside Elementary School students and staff finish a 1-mile walk during the recent "All Children Exercising Simultaneously" event, where 10 million kids around the world exercised for 15 minutes. Also taking part in A.C.E.S., designed to promote fitness in children, were students and staff at Wooddale Elementary School.

## Attorney backs out of case

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
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An attorney for a Farmington Hills woman charged in a murder-for-hire caper has withdrawn, citing death threats against him as the reason why.

Southfield-based attorney Neil Rockind asked to be dropped as Paula Kuchciak's lawyer. Oakland Circuit Court Judge Alice Gilbert granted the request.

On Wednesday, the judge adjourned Kuchciak's entrapment hearing until 9 a.m. Thursday, May 13. The court has appointed attorney Bob Adams to represent her.

She is charged with solicitation to commit murder after police said she tried to hire a hitman to kill Michael D'Annibelle, who is the father of her 4-year-old son. Rockind said he received a death threat in a letter from a Jackson Prison inmate, who Rockind said is in a pen-pal program with Kuchciak. He also learned threats against him were circulating in Oakland County Jail where Kuchciak remains in lieu of bond.

"It was time for me to get out of the way of the case,"

**'I held nothing back in representing her. I don't know what prompted those type of threats, but it's something I wasn't going to tolerate.'**

Neil Rockind  
—Defense attorney—

Rockind said. "I held nothing back in representing her. I don't know what prompted those type of threats, but it's something I wasn't going to tolerate."

Rockind, who worked in the Oakland County Prosecutor's office before going into private practice, received threats when he worked on the Jack Kevorkian case. He termed those "par for the course."

"In a case like this, they're not par for the course," Rockind said. "They're bogies."

## 'Clown' robs Hills store

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
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A man wearing a black clown wig and make-up to match robbed a Farmington Hills store at gunpoint May 3.

Shortly after noon, a worker at Wine Tasters called Hills police to the store on Nine Mile Road near Tuck, reporting an armed robbery where a man made off with \$400 cash.

The cashier said the man wearing a wig and dark covering came into the store, pointed a black pistol and demanded money. The cashier filled a plastic bag with money.

After getting the loot, the bandit took the money and discarded the bag. He ran out a rear door in an unknown direction.

Besides the robber's get-up, police are surprised at the timing of the lunch hour hold-up.

"It's unusual," said Sgt. Tim Swanson, Farmington Hills police Investigative Bureau. "It's probably a sign of a desperate individual."

Prior to the store robbery, another man said he was held up by the same bandit for \$15.

Another witness told police she saw a thin white male running hunched over

Please see CLOWN, A4



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DEERLEN

**Stopping by:** Shoppers stop to visit the new Farmington Hills Police Department's mobile command unit that stopped in the parking lot of Target Thursday. Tours were given of the new unit that allows police to have a mini-station of sorts.

## Mobile unit is a traffic stopper

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
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As soon as Farmington Hills' new Community Police Vehicle hit the pavement, it immediately found a Target.

The 30-foot custom designed mobile station pulled into the West River Center near the Target store. On Saturday, Hills police officially deployed the vehicle at the center on Grand River after a few dry runs on Thursday and Friday.

Crime prevention technicians, dispatcher and a bicycle patrol officer answered questions and gave tours to curious shoppers.

Officer Bonnie Unruh said people are in awe of the massive mobile unit.

"When it goes down the road, everybody is looking," she said. "It stops traffic."

The \$115,000 unit was paid for through a law enforcement block grant, a voter-

Please see WHEELS, A6

## Garden City mother chosen as 'A-May-Zing'

Selecting one mother to be recognized as "A-May-Zing" wasn't an easy task, since each and every mother nominated was truly amazing in their own right.

But after careful consideration, it was the tribute Jennifer Zylla of Garden City wrote about her mother, Donna Mallard, also of Garden City, that was selected from the seven semifinalists who represented each of our Observer communities.

About her Mom, Zylla wrote: "Having four children, one child suffering an unexpected disability, my Mom, along with her new medical responsibilities, emotional distress and frequent prayers, still took time - time to love



us individually, applaud our accomplishments, debated our goals, encourage our dreams - giving all of herself to us. Making her most A-May-Zing Mom."

As our "A-May-Zing Mom," Mallard will receive a complete makeover at Gerald's Salon in Northville Township, an ensemble from Boon-Loot in Northville and dinner for two (a \$50 value) at Fonte d'Amore Ristorante in Livonia.

Because of the volume of responses, one winner was selected for each community, with the overall winner selected from that group of semifinalists. In addition to Mallard, the finalists were:

■ Sharon Horger of Redford, nominated twice by her daughters Karyn and Dawn.

■ Debra Gray of Westland, nominated by her daughter Tina-Marie Gray.

■ Nancy Kashini of Plymouth, nominated by her daughter Amanda Marie Wroblecki.

■ Mary Morrison of Livonia, nominated by her daughter Sharon Morrison.

■ Rena Weintraub of Farmington Hills, nominated by her daughter Deb-



Donna Mallard

bie Weintraub.

■ Cheryl Gambrell of Canton, nominated by her daughter Nicole Gambrell.

You can read their letters as well as those of our

other A-May-Zing Moms on Page A5.

