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VOLUME 113 NUMBER 21

FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 60 PAGES • <http://observer-eccentric.com>

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## THE WEEK AHEAD

**Floral:** Stop by the Warner Mansion 1-5 p.m. to see seasonal floral decorations. Admission is \$2.

### MONDAY

**Meet:** The Farmington City Council will meet at 8 p.m. for its regular meeting in council chambers, 23600 Liberty. The public is invited.

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## Charter change prompts action

BY TIM SMITH  
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At least two persons have applied for Farmington city boards and commissions since voters Nov. 2 approved a charter amendment reducing residency requirements from three to one year.

"Since that time, within two weeks, we already had two additional people come forward who are interested, who have less than three years residency," said Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff. "The city will be considering their applications for appointments shortly, and that's what the charter amendment was all about."

Lauhoff, who said it was too early to divulge the names of the applicants, and Mayor Bill Hartsock said they are encouraged by the response. But eight vacancies remain, spread among five boards and commissions.

And if council members approve a recommendation to form an official Governor Warner Mansion Committee, which could take place in January or February, another 14 or 15 appointments would need to be made, Lauhoff said.

There is a temporary Warner museum development committee. That would be dissolved if an official city museum committee were established, he said. (Current members on the museum development committee probably would just move over to the permanent committee.)

Seeing who applies to be a city volunteer because of the amendment is "going to be the most interesting part," Hartsock said. "And specifically, that's why we put it on the ballot, so we could draw from those people. ... Sometimes they're more enthusiastic and eager to help."

The vacancies were discussed during Monday's city council goal-setting/strategic planning session.

Those slots include three on the Farmington Beautification Commission; two on the Farmington Area Arts Commission; and single terms on the zoning board of appeals, historical commission and board of review. All positions are three-year terms.

Hartsock acknowledged there are

Please see CHARTER, A2



Brand new: Farmington Hills Dispatcher Kathy Anderson works the new 911 system. Sgt. Joseph Rebh and EMS coordinator Kevin Bersche keep an eye on the new system.

## System improves response

■ A computer-aided dispatch is designed to prioritize emergencies.

BY RICHARD PEARL  
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If you think you're hearing fewer sirens in Farmington Hills these days, you're right.

A newly installed computer-aided dispatching system at Farmington Hills police headquarters enables dispatchers to prioritize medical emergency runs while also assisting callers in helping the sick or injured.

"We're very excited about it," said Deputy Fire Chief Pete Baldwin. "It's a great improvement in terms of safety and advanced first aid instructions."

The new \$200,000 EMD (Emergency Medical Dispatch) system, which went on-line Wednesday, Dec. 1, lets dispatchers designate medical emergency calls as either life-threatening or non-life-threatening — and direct emergency crews to respond accordingly.

Critical, life-threatening situations, whether from illness, accidents

Please see EMD, A8

## MSP continues investigation into accident

BY RICHARD PEARL  
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The Michigan State Police -Detroit office is continuing its investigation into a one-car rollover accident, which claimed the life of a 21-year-old Farm-

### FATALITY

ington Hills man Saturday, Nov. 27. David Wayne Laberge II died of injuries suffered after he was pinned beneath the 1999 black Ford Mustang convertible he was driving northbound on the M-10/Lodge Freeway near Interstate 75 around 3:30 a.m. that morning.

The accident was not alcohol-related, according to the preliminary police report. The temperature was 42 degrees with cloudy skies, an 11-mile-per-hour west-southwest wind, and dry roadway. Laberge, an employee of the Unique Restaurant Corp. of Farmington Hills, was taken to Detroit Receiving Hospital. Services for Laberge were held Dec. 1 at St. Fabian Catholic Church in Farmington Hills.

Laberge, a native of Dallas, Texas, is survived by parents, David and Kay Laberge, and sisters, Angela and Amanda.

Arrangements were made by McCabe Funeral Home in Farmington Hills.

## Goodfellows gear up

BY JOANNE MALIKZEWSKI  
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The Farmington Area Goodfellows don't need snow or bright lights to get into the holiday spirit.

They're already at work collecting food, gifts, toys and anything else that's needed for their annual boxes for needy children and senior citizens in the Farmington, Farmington Hills area.

"The rest of this week we are getting food from the elementary schools and some middle schools that had canned food drives," said Dick Tupper, Good-

fellows president and general chairman.

Next week, Goodfellows and volunteers will box the items and on Dec. 18, the boxes will be delivered by volunteers, members and Honor Society students to families and senior citizens.

In the past week, the Goodfellows mailed letters to area residents informing them of the annual effort, along with a copy of the Goodfellows 1999 Christmas Newspaper and a request for help — either monetary or as a volunteer.

Until five years ago, the Goodfellows

Please see GOODFELLOWS, A6



Working hard: Ben Terrill and Harry Houge volunteer their time and aching muscles.

## Oh, Christmas Tree!

BY RENEE BEGLUND  
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According to the Michigan Christmas Tree Association, more than 4 million Christmas trees will be harvested in Michigan this year, with 1 million sold to in-state customers.

Michigan is the fourth ranking Christmas tree-growing state in the nation, but it grows a larger variety, 13, than any other state.

The most popular varieties are Scotch, white and Austrian pine; Douglas, Fraser, canaan, concolor and balsam fir; and blue Norway and white spruce. However, when

it comes to your Christmas tree, beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

"There's a tree for everybody," said Mary McCree, whose parents own Braun's Tree Farm in Ann Arbor. Rest assured, there are no "ugly" trees, she added. "We really don't have any. We trim them every year."

Cutting down a fresh Christmas tree has become a yearly ritual for many families. "A lot of people just want the experience of cutting their tree. They make it an outing. People spend hours here," said McCree.

Of course, there was the man who dashed up to Braun's a few days before Christmas, quickly cut down a \$20 tree, then bought a

\$180 tree stand. McCree says her family still laughs at that incident.

Tree farm owners advise cutting your tree soon. Their stock turns out closer to Christmas, especially for the popular firs. So, pile the kids in the car, leave the dog at home (need you ask why?) and head out to the snowy hills of the mid-Yule yonder.

To help in a quest for the "perfect tree," we have listed some area tree farms, as well as information on tree types and care. To obtain a copy of the MCTA Choose & Cut Guide, call (517) 322-5511 or mail request to MCTA, PO Box 1215, Okemos, MI 48805-1215.

### Tree farms

- **Thornhollow Tree Farm**, 44387 Hull Road, Belleville. Take I-94 to Exit 190 (Belleville Road); go south into town; take Jackson Sumpter Road one mile south to Hull, turn left to farm 1/2 mile on right. Weekdays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and weekends 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Scotch pine only, \$28 any size. (734) 699-3709.
- **Braun's Tree Farm**, 796 Warren Road, Ann Arbor. Three miles north of Ann Arbor on Warren Road between Whitmore Lake Road and Pontiac Trail. Tuesday-Thursday, noon-dark; Friday-Sunday, 10 a.m. to dark. Pines, \$20; spruces and firs, \$5 to \$7 a foot. (734) 663-2717.
- **Unquench's Tree Farm**, 230 S. Steinbach Road, Dexter. From Ann Arbor, take Jackson Road seven miles west to Steinbach Road (two miles west of Baker Road and Exit 167 on I-94), then south. 60 miles to farm. Wednesday-Friday, 3-5 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (734) 433-8733.
- **Good Tree Farm**, 3512 Notten Road and I-94, Chelsea. Take I-94 to Exit 156 (Kalamazoo Road), follow signs to farm. Scotch pine, blue spruce, Douglas fir, \$20-\$35. (734) 475-7564.
- **Black's Tree Farm**, 7155 N. Territorial, Dexter. Farm is located six miles west of U-23. Weekdays: 3-5 p.m. and weekends, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. White spruce and Douglas fir, \$30 any size. (734) 426-5271.
- **See Tree Farms**, 440 Judd Road, Saline. U.S. 22 to Willis, west to Platt Road, south to Judd, west to farm. Weekends only, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Scotch pine, \$24; blue spruce, \$38; and poplar Fraser fir, \$35-\$40. (734) 420-3666.

### Tree types

- **Austrian pine:** Dark green needles, 4-6 inches long; retains needles well.
- **Blue spruce:** Dark green to powdery blue needles, 1-3 inches long; good form; best needle retention among species, although it will drop needles in a warm room. Can live in nature 500-800 years.
- **Scotch pine:** Stiff branches and dark green needles, 1-3 inches long; holds needles for four weeks; keeps aroma throughout the season. Most popular Christmas tree.
- **Balsam fir:** Short, flat, long-lasting needles; dark green with silvery cast; soft, feathery appearance; very fragrant. During the Civil War, the resin was used to treat wounds.
- **Douglas fir:** Blue to dark green needles, 1-1 1/2 inches long; good fragrance; needles have sweet scent when crushed. Can live in nature for 1,000 years.
- **Fraser fir:** Dark green needles, 1/2 to 1 inch long; good needle retention, nice scent.
- **White pine:** Blue green needles, 2-5 inches long; retains needles throughout the holiday season; very full appearance; little or no fragrance; less allergic reaction than more fragrant trees. State tree of Michigan and Maine.
- **White fir or concolor fir:** Blue-green needles, 1/2 to 1 1/2 inches long; nice shape and good aroma; good needle retention. Can live in nature 350 years.

### Tree care

- Nothing "asps" the holiday spirit more than bringing a tree indoors and finding out it's too tall. Measure your ceiling height and the tree before you buy it.
- Trees sold on retail lots have been cut weeks earlier. They may have come from out of state and have been exposed to drying winds in transit. Shop early before the best trees have been sold.
- Look for green trees with few brown needles. The needles should not fall off if you run a branch through your hands. Raise the tree a few inches off the ground and drop in on the butt and end. Green needles should not fall off.
- Make sure base of tree is straight and 6-8 inches long so it will fit easily into the stand.
- Store the tree out of the wind or in an unheated garage until you're ready to put it up. Make a fresh 1-inch cut on the butt end and place the tree in a bucket of warm water.
- When you bring the tree indoors, make another fresh 1-inch cut and place tree in a stand that holds at least 1 1/2 gallons of water. Maintain water level around tree base to prevent resin forming on cut end. Once resin forms, the tree will not absorb water and will quickly dry out.
- To water a tree that's been decorated and surrounded by presents, buy a funnel and a 3/4 foot length of vinyl tubing. Attach tubing over funnel outlet, then fasten funnel/tube with a twist-tie or twine in an out-of-the-way but reachable part of the tree.

### Tree trivia

- The use of evergreen trees to celebrate the winter season predates the birth of Christ. The first printed reference to Christmas trees appeared in Germany in 1531.
- Using small candles to light a Christmas tree dates back to the middle of the 17th century.
- Thomas Edison's assistant, Edward Johnson, came up with the idea of electric lights for Christmas trees in 1882. Christmas tree lights were first mass produced in 1890.
- Teddy Roosevelt banned the Christmas tree from the White House for environmental reasons.
- 32.4 million families purchased a real tree in 1998.
- An acre of Christmas trees provides the daily oxygen requirements of 18 people.
- Artificial trees will last for six years in your home, but for centuries in a landfill. Source: Michigan Christmas Tree Association and the University of Illinois Extension Service.



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