

# Farmington Observer

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## IN THE PAPER TODAY

**Closed:** Farmington and Farmington Hills city offices are closed today and Christmas Day.

### OPINION

**Blessings:** Malls, shopping, stress and good eats are part of the holidays. But let's not forget the true meaning. /A10

### COMMUNITY LIFE

**Organizing:** A new group is forming in the Farmington area to address reform of the nursing home industry. /B1

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## Vote prompts mixed bag of local opinions



The recent vote to impeach President Bill Clinton has prompted plenty of opinions among local residents, some Democrats, some Republicans.

BY TIM SMITH  
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Never discuss politics or religion, goes the old adage, steadfastly adhered to in the Farmington Hills home of Kathryn Behjati. But such discussions apparently are permissible elsewhere, like at the library.

That especially was the case Monday at the Farmington Public Library, where several patrons were asked at random about Saturday's impeachment of President Bill Clinton.

### CLINTON IMPEACHMENT

Behjati and her sister, Jane Lambert, got into a bit of a tiff — albeit somewhat amiable — over the subject. Their bi-partisan views are not unlike those being expressed in Washington D.C., where Republicans and Democrats are at each other's throats about the subject.

Behjati, a Democrat, and Lambert, a Republican visiting from Oklahoma for the holidays, had decidedly different — and

Please see IMPEACHMENT, A2



Sisters disagree: Jane Lambert (left) and Kathryn Behjati don't agree about Bill Clinton.

## Physical education waiver scores

BY TIM SMITH  
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The world of physical education in Farmington Public Schools takes on new dimensions with a comprehensive revamping of the program curriculum as the 21st century approaches.

School board members Tuesday night, Dec. 15 approved the recommen-

dations of the physical education study committee, including a half-credit waiver for high school students taking a "rigorous academic and special interest" schedule.

Before voting to OK the recommendations, which will be phased in over the next few years, school board Treasurer Frank Reid lauded committee members for their vision. The waiver

takes effect immediately.

"I found it (the proposal) to be a real good indication of the future," Reid said. "Physical education won't be 'gym' any more. It will be part of an integrated process."

The process, according to those who assembled the recommendations, also will help students develop a mindset for good health throughout life, and

better understand the connection between good physical health and academic achievement.

Physical education director Brian Swinchart stressed that the recommendations shouldn't be taken to mean that the existing program wasn't effective.

Please see WAIVER, A4

## Council: The answer is no

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
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An adult group home operator is twice spurned in his attempt to expand his facility in Farmington Hills.

The Farmington Hills City Council backed a planning commission recommendation and unanimously denied a rezoning request, which would have allowed a home for seniors suffering with Alzheimer's to expand from six to 20 beds at the Middlebelt and 12 Mile site.

The proposed switch from single family residential to a special purpose district doesn't fit in with the city's master plan, officials said in denying the rezoning. A long-standing agreement with former Woodcreek Village residents upon incorporation also stipulated the area remain residential.

Seniors' dire need to live in a residential area should override both of those factors, the home operator's attorney argued.

Gregory Bator, attorney for Carl Simcox, said seniors are entitled to live in a residential setting — especially in communities where they lived most of

their lives — under an amendment to the Fair Housing Act.

"Your planning commission made an error, I believe," Bator said.

Numerous places already provide care for frail and disabled seniors in Farmington Hills, city officials said. Councilwoman Nancy Bates said she's aware of at least one facility where there are openings.

Later, city council approved a planned unit development site that includes a 113-bed assisted living facility and a new Farmington Players theater on 12 Mile near Kendallwood subdivision.

"I don't think the city has taken a position against them; I think they've accommodated them," said Claude Coates, city engineer.

Bator cited a case involving the city of Taylor, which lost a \$550,000 judgment.

City Attorney John Donohue said the clamor over residential senior housing has led to increased litigation, but urged council members not to be swayed.

"It does not mean when someone comes in and says they have a problem, you have to make a change," Donohue said.

Please see NIXED, A4

### Knollenberg's office



Aftermath: By mid-afternoon utility workers were restoring phone and power to Joe Knollenberg's local office in Farmington Hills.

## Fire

### No direct link found to impeachment vote

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
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Farmington Hills fire investigators know it's arson. The questions that remain: Who started the Sunday morning fire at U.S. Congressman Joe Knollenberg's district office?

Was the blaze sparked by the congressman's well-publicized stance favoring President Bill Clinton's impeachment?

"We have no direct evidence that it was related to (the impeachment vote) and the person has not been apprehended yet," said Trent Wieceup, Knollenberg spokesman. "(But) We have drawn a link in our own minds."

"It's only common sense ... the fire coming the morning after the impeachment vote."

Hills police Chief Bill Dwyer contacted the FBI and the Capitol Police to investigate what may turn out to be a case of domestic terrorism. The Michigan Arson Prevention Committee is offering a \$5,000 reward for information that leads to the arrest or conviction in the case.

Detectives continue to track leads on the arsonist, who set fire to several political signs in the rear of Knollenberg's office on 12 Mile and Orchard Lake around 9 a.m. Sun-

Please see FIRE, A2



Fixing: Workers secured plastic to the roof of the office to prevent water damage.

### A promising holiday



Thankful: Sue May with her son, Mark May, watch as his sister, Ashley Schultz, opens a present delivered Saturday by the Farmington Area Goodfellows. For a story and more photos, please turn to Page A7.

STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LAMLEY

