

E-commerce is still alive

By TIM SMITH
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E-commerce in Farmington isn't dead after all.

But the Downtown Farmington MarketPlace did receive an important blood transfusion and face lift during Tuesday's Farmington Downtown Development Authority meeting.

The gist of the changes agreed upon by DDA board members include the following:

- There still will be \$600 subsidies provided by the DDA to the first 10 downtown merchants to sign up for the program, a collaborative effort with Farmington-based Marketing Communications Counsel Inc., which will design and operate the MarketPlace.
- Instead of \$50 per-month stipends over a 12-month period, the DDA is offering \$100 rebates for six months to the first 10 on board. Merchants would not have to pay as much up-front to check out the program, which could entice more to enroll. The program will cost \$200 per month otherwise.
- Although the DDA subsidies are only for downtown merchants, the Mar-

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COZIER FAMILY

For love: Curt Cozier will try to climb Mt. McKinley as a fund-raiser for the fight against breast cancer, a disease his mother has fought.

Uphill

Son climbs to fight breast cancer

By JONI HUBBRED
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Curtis Cozier was 28 years old and 400 miles away when he learned his mother had breast cancer.

He couldn't do much then, at least not as much as he wanted. All that changed when Cozier decided to turn his passion for mountain climbing into a fund-raiser to help organizations hunting down a cure for the disease, which will affect one in eight women during their lifetime, according to the American Cancer Society.

"It never really hit home until my

mother went through it," Cozier said from his office in Aurora, Colo. "The toughest thing for me was a feeling of helplessness, where you can't do anything."

Well, he's doing something now. In May, Cozier will join a group of climbers who will attempt to reach the summit of Alaska's Mt. McKinley, also known as Denali. At 20,320 feet, it's the highest mountain in North America, a summit reached by only 47 percent of those who attempt the climb.

Tough odds. Cozier thinks he can beat them. And he's had a pretty

Please see **CLIMB, A5**

Hills boy charged in pellet shooting

■ A 39-year-old Livonia man was shot less than an inch from his temple with a pellet, allegedly by a Farmington Hills boy, who is now free on bond. The family is still learning to cope with his injury and its impact.

By JONI HUBBRED
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Tom Nugent doesn't take the back way home any more.

The 39-year-old Livonia resident can't even drive down Nine Mile Road in Farmington Hills because of what happened to him there at around 9 p.m. on Feb. 26 of this year. He and his wife, Liz, with their three children in the back seat, were headed home from Twelve Oaks Mall when a pellet sailed through the window of his 1998 Mercury Mountaineer.

It struck the side of his head, less than an inch from his temple, leaving him bloodied and disoriented. Authorities have arrested a 16-year-old Farmington Hills boy, who is now free on bond.

"We were approaching Halsted and we were talking about the swim club on the west side of Nine Mile," Tom recalled. "Within seconds after that, I felt ..."

He struggled to find the right words for the sensation of being hit by a .177 caliber pellet, which then shattered beneath his skin into so many

■ 'It was something hitting the side of my head. The force was great enough to push me into Liz's side of the car. For a brief moment, I couldn't see where I was driving.'

Tom Nugent
—Shooting victim

small pieces his surgeon couldn't recover them all.

"It's so hard to describe," he said. "It was something hitting the side of my head. The force was great enough to push me into Liz's side of the car. For a brief moment, I couldn't see where I was driving."

Luckily, they were at a point where the road had spread into four lanes, so the car drifted safely off to the right side. Liz threw the gear shift into park, and Tom turned on the dome light. "Blood was everywhere," Liz said.

Please see **SHOT, A4**

THE WEEK
AHEAD
FRIDAY

Meet: The Democratic Task Force on Nursing Homes will meet at 7-9 p.m. in the Farmington Hills City Hall, 31555 11 Mile. It's your chance to offer your opinions.

SPECIAL SECTION

Too time: Check out the map of area golf courses and fascinating articles in our special section on golf./Inside

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Second-floor face lift targeted for this fall

By TIM SMITH
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The Civic Theatre already boasts an impressive new look that Farmington Mayor Bill Hartsock said was drawing favorable comparisons to the Fox Theatre in downtown Detroit.

But there is still plenty of work to do, much of it at the behind-the-scenes variety.

Hartsock and the rest of the city council Monday approved a proposal totaling approximately \$260,000 worth of Phase II renovations. That is in addition to about \$500,000 for the first phase, which was done last fall after the city purchased the theater from longtime owner Greg Hohler for another \$316,500.

Frank Lauhoff, city manager, said the total of \$760,000 in renovations was about \$110,000 higher than what was originally projected for the two phases combined.

But a big chunk of that extra cost, an estimated \$80,000, comes from a lift to transport handicapped customers from the lower auditorium to the upper

auditorium. Other Phase II work includes plumbing, electrical and upgrades to the heating-ventilation-air conditioning unit. Money for the work, which will take place from September- November, will be provided from the city's 2000-01 capital improvement fund.

"It's \$80,000 just (for the) handicapped lift that we feel is important to be added to the whole project," Lauhoff said, following the meeting.

The fact that the Civic is about 60 years old also apparently is adding some extra, unforeseen work and cost to the project.

Lauhoff said original projections are falling short for infrastructure portions of the project such as electrical wiring and plumbing, for example.

Bill Clark, president of Wixom-based MKA Inc., the contract manager for the project, told council members the lower auditorium would remain open for business while work upstairs took place.



Del Carmen shares her love of Spanish dancing

By DIANE GALE ANDREASSI
STAFF WRITER

Spanish dancing has been a focal point for most of Dame Maria del Carmen's life and she continues to make her castanets sing to the music of her feet.

"From the time I can remember, dancing was what I wanted in my life," del Carmen said.

The Garden City resident began taking lessons in the style of her family's culture when she was 8. By the time she was 13, she was a soloist, dancing in clubs throughout New York. At 15 she was the principal dancer of the Spanish production number of the Hollywood Hotel Revue in New York.

Traveling around the country and Canada, del Carmen got a delicious taste of show business, including the opportunity of working with top stars like Ethel Merman and Angela Lansbury.

The legacy continues with two of her granddaughters, Julie and Lisa Montes, who are among her students and are members of the dance company, Maria del Carmen, Grupo Espana, that she formed in 1981.

"It's a class, but there's a lot of rapport," said del Carmen who teaches

beginning and intermediate Spanish dance classes in the studio of her home. "It's a class where everybody is a part of what's going on."

"They learn, but it's a different frame of mind. Also, I will make demands on certain things."

The dance company has appeared in a number of venues, including the Warren Symphony and the Michigan Opera Theater in "Carmen" and continues to thrive.

Two medical doctors are among her current students who live in Canada and throughout metropolitan Detroit, including Livonia, Westland, Redford, Canton and Plymouth.

Part of her life

When her students come to class, they are encased by walls papered with framed photos of del Carmen as a young girl and later as she began to age.

In the corner of one wall is an inconspicuous plaque proclaiming a great honor bestowed by the King of Spain, Juan Carlos III in 1990, naming del Carmen a dame in recognition of her community work promoting Spain through her dedication to the art of

Please see **DANCE, A8**



STAFF PHOTO BY TOM HANLEY

In step: Julie Montes (left) and sister Lisa Montes of Farmington Hills (center) with dancers Cynthia Massenberg (behind left to right) of Farmington, Shizu Aoki of Livonia, Lesley Kimber of Warren and Victoria Lara of Redford work on their Spanish dancing at Dame Maria del Carmen's dance company in Garden City.