

Judge orders treatment

By JONI HUBBED
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While Southfield resident Jim Thompson has been convicted on charges of fondling two young Farmington Hills brothers, authorities say the investigation into more than a thousand similar cases continues.

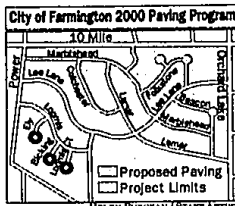
CIRCUIT COURT

Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer said the 56-year-old former statistician for the Detroit News admitted he has had contact with young boys over the past 30 years, and police are still reviewing video and audio tapes of some of those encounters.

"Certainly, the investigation is not complete," Dwyer said just hours after the conviction on Friday. "This is just part of the overall investigation into a sexual predator who has been out there for 30 years, doing a lot of mental damage to young victims."

Thompson was arrested after an alert school bus driver told school

Please see SENTENCE, A5



Spring brings paving work

■ Spring has sprung and with it the city's annual paving program.

By TIM SMITH
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It's that time of year again: The city of Farmington's annual paving program is about to begin.

Construction equipment will start to roll into the Bel Aire subdivision beginning Monday, May 8, with actual work to begin May 15. A second project, on Adams, Grace and Cass streets, takes place during June.

The total for both projects is \$660,000. The money comes from a property tax approved by voters in 1994, said Kevin Gushman, director of

the Farmington Department of Public Services.

Letters notifying residents of the impending projects were to begin being hand-delivered Friday, Gushman said. Residents will be informed about the type of projects in their neighborhood; what they can expect in terms of logis-

Please see PAVE, A6



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BAZELMAN



Battle Students compete in a page turner

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An almost palpable tension shimmered above the crowd as Farmington Community Library Executive Director Bev Papai scanned the sea of excited middle school students gathered at the William B. Costick Center Wednesday night.

"When was the last time you saw kids this excited about reading?" she asked.

The 14th Annual Battle of the Books, sponsored by the Farmington Friends of the Library, drew more than 300 participants and their families into the Center's Dublin Room for a competition that had students cheering wildly one minute and silent as death the next. The 66 teams represented the cream of the crop, culled from Warner, Power and Dunckel middle schools in semi-final competitions held last month.

It took a perfect score to win the title, and Dunckel Middle School's "Lost in Books" rose to the challenge. Jason Lubin, Kevin Miller, Ryan

Please see BATTLE, A7

THE WEEK AHEAD

Continuing: The annual Festival of the Arts continues Sunday, May 7, with exhibits open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Also on tap at 3 p.m. is the Farmington Community Band concert, "Good Old Days." The festival is free and open to the public at the William Costick Activities Center on 11 Mile Road, west of Middlebelt.

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What's the answer?

At top right, Chris Callahan and Mychal Coche ponder the answer to a question. Above, the Big Dogs celebrate when one of their answers is correct.

Team members are Michael Colton, Kyle Goldman, Aaron Lebowic, Letal Levan, Daniel Warsh and Zachary Yost. Right, Rachel Lubin kisses her brother, Jason, after his team clinched first place in the Battle of the Books. Jason's teammates are Kevin Miller, Ryan Patton, and Jeff Waldmann.



Merchants say they want advance notice

By TIM SMITH
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One downtown Farmington employee got off work early Thursday. Unfortunately, she couldn't go anywhere for a while because her vehicle was blocked in by newly laid asphalt in front, other vehicles in back.

"She's been walking all over downtown looking for whoever owns that car that's parked behind her," said Farm-

ington Bakery co-owner Becky Burns, one of several merchants who apparently had little or no advance warning about the asphalt of the municipal parking lot behind their Grand River businesses.

Larry Sallen, owner of Clothes Encounters, wondered why the project was done on a Thursday (a busy day for downtown stores) and why merchants weren't given sufficient notice by the contractor (T&M Asphalt) or

ASPHALTING

city. "As a retailer, there's nothing I can do to prepare for the parking lot being shut down," Sallen said. "But the timing is all wrong. What if I was planning to have a huge sale today?"

The front half of the municipal parking lot located behind businesses north of Grand River and east of Farmington

Road was topped with asphalt, as was the driveway used by many bakery patrons. On Friday, the back half of that lot was to be asphalted.

Complaints to Farmington city offices about the situation did receive quick attention, however. City Manager Frank Lauboff personally stopped by to talk with the bakery co-owners and later Thursday morning, orange detour signs were in place to help direct cus-

Please see NOTICE, A8

HomeTown Classifieds WORK!

"Excellent response to our classified ad. We were looking for a good home for our German shepherd. We had 35 calls - all very nice people. We found a very wonderful family to give our dog a home."

— Debbie T.

Inkster to close

By JONI HUBBED
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Traffic snarls on 12 Mile Road in northeastern Farmington Hills will get better this year, but not before they get a little worse.

The first phase of a \$2.5 million road widening project will begin Monday, May 8, closing down Inkster Road between 12 Mile and Northwestern Highway. A detour will be posted, directing through traffic to use Northwestern and Middlebelt as alternatives.

Road Commission for Oakland County spokesperson Craig Bryson

Please see WORK, A4



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BAZELMAN

Concerned: Mark Mergener has met with school officials about his concerns over behavior.

High school teachers' behavior concerns parent

By TIM SMITH
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Since September 1998, Mark Mergener has sought answers to concerns over the behavior of some teachers at Farmington High School, which his daughter attends.

Inappropriate language and classroom materials, according to Mergener, are at the root of those concerns. But apparently just as calling to the Farmington Hills resident is the response - or lack thereof - of top school and district administrators.

Nearly two years later, Mergener, and his wife Anita, still aren't happy with how their concerns have been dealt with. They both reiterated during a recent interview that teachers need to be held accountable both for their actions and for learning materials used in the classroom. At the top of their list is for a teacher code of conduct to be

established, something that would need to be negotiated with the Farmington Education Association in 2002, when the current contract expires.

"Every direction I turned to support it just seemed like I wasn't getting to the right spot," said Mergener about unproductive meetings and correspondence with various officials, including schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield and FHS Principal John Barrett.

Mergener last month filed and then withdrew his candidacy for the Farmington Board of Education election because he didn't want his concerns viewed as grandstanding. But he still wants the accountability issues to be front and center.

District officials defend their track record in handling Mergener's com-

Please see PARENT, A5



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