

HomeTown offers e-mail shopping

HomeTown Communications Network, the parent company of this newspaper, announced today formation of a new subsidiary corporation, hometowndigital.com.

The new company will carry out HomeTown's emerging Internet strategy, which includes creating a local electronic mall on the Internet. The e-mail, to be called "hometown-mall.com," will offer local merchants an easy and inexpensive way to get into the rapidly growing field of electronic commerce. For readers of this newspaper, the e-mail will offer a quick and convenient way to use the Web to shop their favorite local merchant from the comfort and convenience of home.

"An 'e-mall' works just like an ordinary shopping center," according to Phil Power, chairman of HomeTown Communications Network. "But instead of being made of bricks and mortar like an ordinary mall, it exists in cyberspace, like amazon.com," Power explained.

*Tenants in hometown-mall.com

Please see **COMMERCIAL**, A3

Schools forced to make up shortfall

■ Farmington school officials are dipping into the district budget to make up a shortfall in the state's financing of special education. Officials say state legislators need to take note of the problem and take action.

By TIM SMITH
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Approximately \$3.6 million will need to be siphoned out of Farmington Public Schools' general fund budget for 2000-01 to make up for a shortfall in

how much special education money is being provided by the state.

And until state legislators start listening seriously to the concerns of public school officials and even residents, the groundwork is being laid for an eventual financial tug-of-war between

the needs of special ed and general ed students, district officials said.

"I'd like to bring home the issue," said Farmington schools Trustee Cathy Webb, during Tuesday's regular board meeting. "... The state should be paying us 28 percent for special education, which it is not."

The impact for 2000-2001 in Farmington is the loss of \$3.6 million and the shortfall must be taken from the general education. If anyone is moved by that, I think the Legislature would

SPECIAL ED

like to hear from you." Citizens input still can have an impact on the final draft of the 2001 School Aid Bill, which members of the state House are expected to vote on in June, Farmington schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield said Monday.

"The House has a chance to make it

Please see **SPECIAL**, A2



STAFF PHOTO BY TIM SMITH

Guest: Former President Gerald Ford speaks at the Tyndale College Scholarship Dinner.

Ford says U.S. is headed for success in new era

By MARY RODRIGUE
STAFF WRITER

In a rousing patriotic address, former President Gerald R. Ford told patrons at William Tyndale College's annual scholarship dinner Monday: "I disagree violently with those who criticize and downgrade the U.S. I have been here almost 57 years now and have seen far more successes than failures. Democratic capitalism is on a roll."

"I'm an optimist primarily because in my judgment, we have laid the foundation for success in the 20th century. Thank goodness we stuck with our American principles. Our nation has been very successful, our economy far better than Japan or

Europe or the former Marxist hierarchy. I believe strongly that God's hand is on our nation's shoulder."

Ford was invited to speak by his friends and Colorado neighbors John and Marlene Bell. John Bell is vice chairman of the board at Tyndale, a small Christian liberal arts college headquartered on 12 Mile west of Drake Road in Farmington Hills.

The 38th president and the only one from Michigan, Ford gave a nod to the western part of the state, "Holland, Zeeland, Grand Rapids... I'm proud of the wonderful people who live there. For 25 1/2 years, I served them in the House of Repre-

Please see **FORD**, A10



Hello: Dr. James McHann, William Tyndale president, introduces Gerald Ford to King Ayi of the west African nation of Togo.

Friends recall his devotion

By TIM SMITH
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One day, Fred Steinkopf and Walter Sundquist were riding together in the same car. On one side of the street was a gorgeous young woman, on the other was a blue spruce tree.

"If I could sum up my father, it would be 'devoted, loving, caring Christian man,'" recalled Sundquist, a four-decade-long friend of the late Steinkopf, who died Friday, May 19. Steinkopf suffered a fatal heart attack in the very farmhouse where

he was born July 20, 1932, and not far from the offices for Steinkopf Nursery on Farmington Road north of Eight Mile Road.

That story was indicative of two things: Steinkopf's unwavering devotion to wife, Sharon; and his interest in the blue spruce.

Fredrick L. Steinkopf also enjoyed practical jokes, antiques, sports and the Farmington Road nursery he took over during the 1970s from his father. Above all, of course, were his strong religious beliefs and love for his family — which included seven children and 22 grandchildren.

Sarah Young, one of Steinkopf's four daughters, said Tuesday that her father would never so much as even glance at another woman. "If I could sum up my father, it would be 'devoted, loving, caring Christian man.' He loved everybody."

About 250 people attended the funeral services Tuesday in the Harvest Temple Worship Center, with burial at North Farmington Cemetery in Farmington Hills. The funeral procession stopped briefly at Steinkopf Nursery.

Officiating during the service was

Please see **WOUNDED**, A7

IN THE PAPER TODAY

OPINIONS

To the editor: Letters appear on **A12, 13 and 14** today.

Thoughts: Staff writer Joni Hubred gives her thoughts on a pet park in Farmington Hills. / **A11**

HOMETOWN LIFE

Help: Got a green thumb to spare? The Warner Mansion needs gardeners to help keep the grounds looking so nice. / **B1**

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HomeTown Classifieds WORK!

"We're very pleased with the ad we took out in the Observer-Eccentric Newspapers. Our pontoon sold in just two days."

—Fay K.
Farmington Hills

Masters speak up for their pooches

By JONI HUBRED
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Pongo the golden retriever sat quietly throughout Monday night's Farmington Hills City Council meeting, until it came time for his master to speak.

Even then, Pongo didn't make much noise. He jumped a little enthusiastically but sat quietly when commanded to do so. Jess Ellison brought him with because he enjoys taking his pets everywhere he goes.

In Farmington Hills, he can't do that: Dogs aren't permitted in Hills parks.

"It's very difficult to go on a picnic and enjoy the scenery and fresh air and not have my pets with me," Ellison told city officials.

While they discussed a request for a dog park and the possible compromise of allowing dogs on a leash in some parks, city officials concluded the issue needs more study. They also concluded that a compromise wouldn't really solve the problem.

■ 'It's very difficult to go on a picnic and enjoy the scenery and fresh air and not have my pets with me.'

Jess Ellison
—Pet owner

Although she doesn't own a dog and isn't a "dog person," Grace Tocco supported the idea of a dog park, a fenced-in area where dogs could run without a leash. While she once jogged around the track at North Farmington High, Tocco gave it up after being chased, nipped at and scratched by unleashed dogs.

Also, she said, her nephews frequently end up clearing dog feces from their shoes after playing soccer on the soccer field. "If it keeps the dogs off the soccer field, I'm all for it," she said.

Frank Delewsky isn't a Hills resi-

Please see **PETS**, A8

Sound of music Schools chosen as tops in the country

By JONI HUBRED
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You could have knocked Farmington Schools Director of Music Paul Barber over with a feather Tuesday morning.

He learned then the American Music Conference named Farmington Public Schools first on a list of the 100 best communities for music education in America. The list emerged from results of an Internet survey of school music education programs, conducted by the AMC, the National Association for Music Education, the Music Teachers National Association and the National School Boards Association.

"I just filled the survey out with the idea, this would give them more information about what's going on in music across the country," Barber



Paul Barber, music director

said.

Farmington shares the top honor with the Coppell Independent School District in Texas. Surveys were filled out by more than 5,800 public school and independent teachers, school and district administrators, school board members, parents and community leaders representing all 50 states.

According to information provided by the AMC, an overall score for each county was calculated based on the answers to each of the questions in the survey. The respondents' data

Please see **MUSIC**, A5