


## HEALTHY CHANGES



**Dear reader,**  
We'd like to know what changes you made in your life this past year that resulted in a healthier, more physically fit you. Did you commit to a diet that significantly lowered your cholesterol and blood pressure? Did you lose 30, 40, 50 or more pounds by making wiser food choices? Have you rediscovered the vitality of your youth through exercise? In other words, are you now an improved version of your old self?

Please tell us about the "new" you and send us some "before and after" pictures (you're entitled to bragging rights!). Send information to: Fernée Skoglund, Observer & Eclectic Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia, MI 48150; fax: (734) 591-7279; e-mail: rskoglund@oe.hometown.net.

## IN THE PAPER TODAY

**Helping: William Grace students are recycling pop tops for kidney dialysis. C-5**



**Returning: Willie Payne brings his popular show on Farmington Hills' link to the Underground Railroad to Longacre House. C-5.**

Farmington HomeTown Life, Honored as one of the best lifestyle sections in Michigan

## ENTERTAINMENT

**Dining: Have a passion for pizza? Head to Buddy's in Livonia or Farmington Hills. B8**

## CLARIFICATION

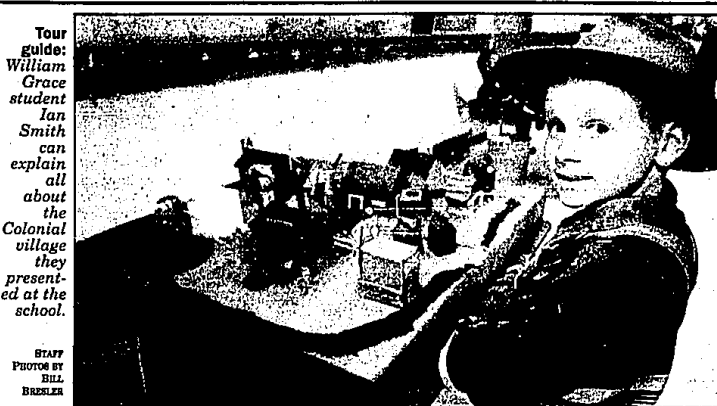
**At Highmeadow A name under a picture in Sunday's Farmington Observer was wrong. The Irish step dancer was Amber Chapell.**

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**Tour guide: William Grace student Ian Smith can explain all about the Colonial village they presented at the school.**

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRISLER

## At William Grace

### Colonial Fair teaches a lesson in history

BY TIM SMITH  
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For one day, William Grace Elementary School was a village from American Colonial times, "Graceville."

During Friday's Colonial Fair, fifth-grade students wore costume clothing and helped re-enact various aspects of what life was like in the

late 17th and early 18th centuries. For example, student Rachel Leads portrayed teacher "Mrs. Leads" in Graceville's one-room schoolhouse. "Please bring out your slate boards and practice the long division we did yesterday," requested Mrs. Leads. "Now, take out your horn books and practice the alphabet."

In another classroom, third- and fourth-graders and visiting parents watched as students demonstrated what they learned about how tinsmiths, blacksmiths, weavers and candle dipper perfected their Colonial-era skills. The students who participated in the two-hour program attend the classes of fifth-grade teachers

Linda Pollak and Kathy Maczko. "It's an enrichment program with a hands-on emphasis," explained Pollak about the project, which wrapped up a curriculum unit on Colonial America.

Students wrote their own scripts for plays about the Graceville general store and one-room schoolhouse. They made the slates and horn books, and even put together vintage picture flip books, the kind popular in arcades.

Illustrating how village tinsmiths might have made lanterns were students Joey Strucel and Rick Pascoe. They poured water into tin cans, allowed it to freeze solid, then tapped holes on the exterior. Those holes enabled wire hooks to be installed

Please see COLONIAL, A2



**Learning: Tinsmiths Joey Strucel and Rick Pascoe pierce decorative designs in cans.**



**Biding their time: Jeremy Grafmiller and Zack DiGilio play checkers on the old cracker-barrel at the general store.**

## Elementary attendance boundaries studied

BY TIM SMITH  
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Addressing concerns raised by parents whose children now live four miles from their elementary school, a committee is studying whether it would be feasible to redraw boundaries for that part of the Farmington district.

Safety and space are at the top of the list of reasons for the study, said Flinders Elementary School Principal Mary Joyce Reader, co-chairing the committee with James Myers, executive director of student services and William Hill, a parent in Section 8.

That section is bounded by 12 Mile,

Drake, 18 Mile and Halsted roads, and is in much closer proximity to three elementary schools than it is to Wood Creek Elementary, where many Section 8 children now attend.

Asked to co-chair the Limited Elementary Boundary Study Committee because the study will not impact her school, Reader explained that families who live in four subdivisions of Section 8 have traveled east to Wood Creek since 1990 — when boundaries were realigned for the then-new Hillside Elementary School.

And with additional space opening up at other nearby schools, from bond issue renovation projects and a project-

**Parents 'want to send their children to a school closer to home.'**

Mary Joyce Reader  
study committee co-chair

enrollment dip for the next decade, the committee of parents, principals, teachers and administrators decided the opportunity is now to take a closer look.

A full report from the committee will be presented to the Farmington Board of Education in February.

"We have three schools much closer to this area, Forest, Hillside and Wooddale," said Reader Tuesday, adding that parents "want to send their children to a school closer to home. In the past we haven't been able to do that, because the schools have been full."

The committee will concentrate on the following areas:

- Review Section 8 parents' questions about the potential reassignment of their children. Those moved from Wood Creek could wind up at Hillside, Wooddale or Forest — the latter being a

Please see BOUNDARIES, A2

## Couple files \$10 million lawsuit against Hills

BY JONI HUBRED  
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Even though it happened almost three years ago, Mark Gordanier can barely contain his anger when he talks about the night fire destroyed his Farmington Hills home.

After months of what he claims has been contemptuous behavior on the part of city officials, the fire and police departments, Gordanier's rage exploded Monday in the form of a \$10 million

**At issue is a fire that destroyed a Farmington Hills family's home three years ago, and charges of harassment**

lawsuit.  
He and his wife, Teresa, say repeated actions, both at their home and busi-

Please see LAWSUIT, A4

## He's a top cop

**Honored: Officer of the Year Eric Buckberry and Geoffrey Morrow pose for photos. Little Geoffrey was with his mom Victoria at Howard Jewelry at the time that Officer Buckberry presented an armed robbery. Employees of the store closed early so they could be at a ceremony honoring the officer. For the full story please turn to Page A5**

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRISLER



## Hills OK's next step for 14 Mile plan

BY JONI HUBRED  
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Farmington Hills City Council members shed a ray of hope on a delicate alliance of 119 individual property owners involved in a controversial Planned Unit Development that would put 850,000 square feet of commercial space in the 14 Mile/ Northwestern/ Orchard Lake Road area.

On a 6-0 vote, with Councilman Jon Grant absent, officials approved a PUD plan proposed by Phoenix and Grand Sakwa Development Monday night.

Their decision came after more than four hours of public testimony and doesn't guarantee the PUD agreement will become a reality. A PUD designation assures the property is developed as a whole, not piecemeal.

Following their vote, cast at around 1:30 a.m. Tuesday, officials agreed to meet with developers to negotiate myriad details.

The current proposal calls for several "big box" stores like Lowe's Home Centers and Kmart, as well as smaller retail stores and restaurants. Developer Gary Sakwa said a luxury hotel is

Please see 14 MILE, A6

## Survey: Community happy with its schools

BY TIM SMITH  
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The satisfaction level that the public has in Farmington Public Schools is on the rise, according to survey results presented during Tuesday's school board meeting.

Of significance was the level of response — 2,228 of 7,796 parent households (29 percent) answered a written 30-question survey mailed in November by Lansing-based Public Sector Consultants.

And in a related telephone survey, also done by Public Sector Consul-

Please see SURVEY, A3