



HEALTHY Z 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 Renee Skoglund, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia, MI 48150; fax: (734) 591-7279; e-mail: rskoglund@oe.hometown.net.

THE WEEK AHEAD

ONGOING

Local Theater: The Farmington Players present *The Uninvited* a tale of a haunted house at 8 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays throughout the month of February at Barnes and Noble in West Bloomfield. To purchase tickets call 553-2955.

LOOKING AHEAD

Look for coverage: Adolescent depression and teen suicide are on the rise. Farmington is no exception to the trend. See what the Call to Action Coalition offers for advice to parents and educators. In *HomeTown Life* on Thursday.

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LOWE'S



Community responds to blood shortage

By TIM SMITH
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In record fashion, people came out all day Thursday to give blood at the Farmington Hills Fire Department headquarters. So many came out that 220 pints of blood were collected and there is talk of holding an additional Farmington Hills drive at a site-to-be-determined in May, said Joann Lindquist, Red Cross regional donor representative.

"Fabulous," said Lindquist, who was

rendered almost speechless by the result of Thursday's drive, which drew 253 people. (Some were turned away from actually donating, for reasons such as health, for example. That is typical for the blood drives.)

Of the 220 donors, 38 were first-timers, Lindquist said.

Activity was steady, with nine beds filled most of the day, said Farmington Hills Fire Lt. Mike Garr, about the blood drive's rousing success.

"There is still a lot of community spirit here," Garr said, adding that activity "never, ever slowed up, right through lunch."

Please see **BLOOD DRIVE**, A4

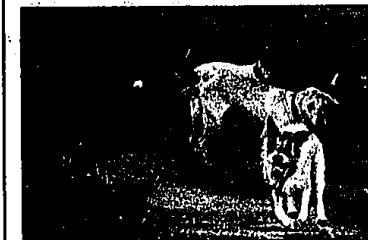
How are you doing? Annie Lambert RN, checks on donor Bob Wolf.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRESLER



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER



Doggy heaven: Top, Chris Towns and Kody take some play time. Above, George the Jack Russell Terrier leads the gang on a run around the room. Right, Kody jumps to greet a newcomer.



A dog's life

New business offers daycare for canines

By TIM SMITH
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Social hour for Oliver, Kody, Spencer, Ace, Kobe, Apollo, Foster and an Alredale named Jaelin Rose meant resting on a couch, watching some television.

But it also meant plenty of jumping, barking, sniffling and wrestling — and chomping down on tasty dog treats once in a while.

Such is the typical life of a dog who spends time at 4 Legged Friends Daycare on Nine Mile Road in Farmington. Kobe really likes it inside the spacious facility, opened in early December by co-owners Kim Thomas and Christine Towns.

"He's been here since it opened," said Thomas, looking down at the shiny black lab. "And he stays the night with us occasionally."

Oh, but Kobe is regularly joined by Oliver, a German short-haired pointer-lab mix. On this particular afternoon, Oliver was participating in an entertaining wrestling match on one of the doggie daycare center's fluffy couches, with a young yellow lab named Spencer.

Sometimes things get out of hand. When that happens

Thomas might bang some empty metal water bowls together for an authoritative statement. The better-behaved dogs can sit and pant, awaiting their next lams biscuit.

Pack dynamics

Noisy interaction amongst the canines is part of the deal, something Thomas and Towns knew about before they opened the 3,000-square-foot facility, a place for busy dog "parents" to leave their "kids" for the day or even overnight. (The facility charges \$25 for day care and \$35 for boarding.)

"There are so many animals here that pack dynamics do occur," Towns explained. "But that's what we're there for, that 'We're in control, you listen to me.'"

Often, however, the animals are oblivious to their human bosses.

"All those dogs back there love other dogs," Towns said. "So it's like we don't even exist."

As evidenced by Wednesday's enrollment into the pack of a beagle mix named Foster and a German Shepherd, Apollo, their business is catching on with dog-owners throughout Farmington, Farmington Hills and sur-

Please see **DOGGY**, A10

Hills battling to demolish 'disgusting' house

By JONI HUBBED
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After a frustrating year of delays and increasing deterioration, Farmington Hills officials say they're ready to pull out the big guns to deal with a dilapidated home at the intersection of 9 Mile Road and Karen.

Neighbors complained when Keating

Homes got permission to place the manufactured homes in an area with stick-built homes 13 years ago. While others have been kept up, City Manager Steve Brock said, this one has fallen into severe disrepair since it was damaged by fire and went into foreclosure.

"It's a mess, it's deplorable and it's not something we want in Farmington Hills," he said in response to residents' complaints at Monday night's City Council meeting.

Homeowners in the neighborhood couldn't agree more. Speaking on

behalf of her neighbors, Luella Hempel reminded council members she and others had complained over the summer when the lawn wasn't mowed. Officials had to take Atlantic Mortgage to court to get action.

Now, neighbors are also worried mold growing inside the dwelling may affect their health.

"We're asking for tests to be done on the stagnant water underneath," she said.

Hempel also voiced concerns about mold growing inside the home. She

showed photographs taken in May, when Atlantic hired a local lumber company to board it up. The walls were streaked with mold and the floor was rotted through in some places.

Ann Smith, who was inside the home in May after it was abandoned, said she had to step on beams to walk through. She described a stench inside the home that wafted across to her home during the summer months.

"It was a disgusting, wrenching, foul

Please see **OLD HOUSE**, A4



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRESLER
Michigan Attorney General Jennifer Granholm gives the keynote address.

Granholm praises local diversity efforts

By TIM SMITH
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Michigan Attorney General Jennifer Granholm did not hold back any words about the successful manner in which the cities of Farmington Hills and Farmington continue to embrace cultural diversity.

Granholm, the keynote speaker during Thursday morning's 2001 Rainbow Recognition Awards Breakfast at the William Costick Activities Center, said she was "blown away" by the overflow audience and the continuing dedication to bridging

Editor's note: The Farmington Observer will run names and highlights of all of the 2001 Rainbow Recognition Award Winners in the next two issues of the newspaper.

gaps of how people in the adjacent cities treat each other.

The attorney general also took part in handing out the recognition awards.

It was the sixth annual Rainbow

Please see **RAINBOW**, A7

Chamber recognizes its members

By JONI HUBBED
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Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce members took a look back at 2000 and a look ahead to 2001 Thursday night, at the organization's 37th Annual Meeting held at The Hotel Baromette in Novi.

Co-sponsored by the Farmington Observer, the event recognized the Chamber's 2000 Good Partner and Good Partnership honorees, JA

Please see **CHAMBER**, A6