

Praise Mom with a poem

Celebrate your mother with a poem and win a prize for her courtesy of the Observer Newspapers. We're inviting our young readers, 18 and under, to submit a poem in praise of their mother. The poem can take any form from haiku to sonnet to free verse. A panel of judges will select their favorite. Seven winning poets will win a gift for mom. The prizes include an 11. by 14-inch portrait for up to 14 people from Focal Point Photography in Farmington and Canton (sitting fee is included), \$100 gift certificate to Ernesto's Restaurant in Plymouth Township, \$100 gift certificate to Antonio's Italian Cucina in Farmington Hills, \$100 gift certificate to Sandtraps in Livonia, and more. We'll publish the winning entry and other entries on Mother's Day. Entries are due to the Observer by Monday, May 6. Send entries to Mother's Day Contest, Observer Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or fax to (734)591-7279 or e-mail to hgallagher@oc.homecomm.net.

THE WEEK AHEAD

MONDAY

Start times: The Farmington Public Schools committee studying the possibility of delaying high school start times will meet at 7 p.m. Monday at the Farmington Training Center, 33000 Thomas Street. The committee expects to submit a report and recommendation to the school board next month. For more information, call (248) 489-3339.

INDEX

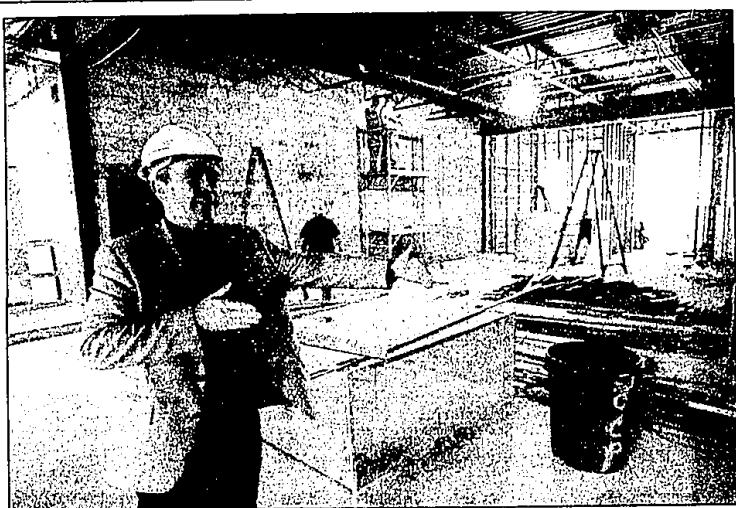
- Apartments/E3
- Automotive/F4
- Classified/D,E,F
- Classified Index/D4
- Crossword/D5
- Jobs/E6
- New Homes/D1
- Obituaries/A4
- Police Calls/A3
- Real Estate/D1
- Service Guide/F2
- Sports/C1
- Taste/B1
- Travel/B8

DRIVER
with mechanical ability,
CDL wanted.....

The ad went well, we had lots of response!

G... Wayne

HomeTown Classifieds WORKS!
1-800-579-SELL



Staff photo by Bill Dresler
Court administrator Dave Walsh explains the layout of one of the three courtrooms.

Prisoner tunnel shot down for new court house

By PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER
ppace@oc.homecomm.net

An idea to install a prisoner transport tunnel between the Farmington Hills Police Department and the new 47th District Court - being built on the city's government campus - has been shot down.

According to David Walsh, court administrator, the police department and city conceded with court officials that digging for a tunnel proved impractical in the end.

The alternative will be a secured underground entrance to the new court house specifically for prisoner drop offs via police vehicles. Two elevators will be devoted to transport prisoners from the basement to holding cells in the upper levels of the building, Walsh said.

"We examined many alternatives," Walsh said of the tunnel, "but none were workable."



Staff photo by Bill Dresler
New 47th: Court construction is on time thanks to mild winter weather.

Please see COURT, A6

District delays action on OLS

By GUY BUCK
STAFF WRITER
gbuck@oc.homecomm.net

The delay in approving shared time programming between Farmington Public Schools and Our Lady of Sorrows School is welcome for some, but many still have questions.

The Farmington Board of Education will consider a resolution at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 23, to support shared programs with the Catholic school. If board members agree, a committee will likely be appointed to study and implement the plan.

Superintendent Bob Maxfield said Tuesday that both he and OLS Monsignor Walter A. Hurley consider it prudent to wait to implement a deal until the 2003-2004 school year.

"We want to give it breathing room and bring it back next March," Maxfield said.

Hurley released a letter April 18 to parishioners indicating his support of shared time and cited negative opinions and his involvement with Archdiocesan business as reasons for the delay. He also quoted Cardinal Adam Malda's letter to several "concerned parents" He wrote:

"From the perspective of the Archdiocese, our review of the matter indicates there need not be any risk for diminishing Catholic identity through this arrangement; it has been done elsewhere without problems. In short, Monsignor Hurley has acted appropriately and prudently and has my support."

Despite the approval, more than 200 families oppose the plan. Some criticized the "form letters" sent to them.

Other parents favor the plan and back the OLS administration. And yet others cite concerns over separation of church and state and a conflict with the schools' mission statement on spirituality.

A possible contract wouldn't be signed until next March when the board will consider the committee's

Please see OLS, A5

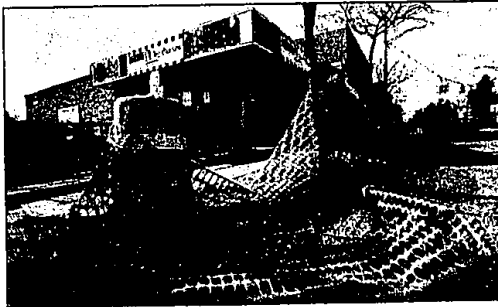
Businesses bear with Farmington Road construction

By HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER
hneedham@oc.homecomm.net

Downtown Farmington business owners are describing the Farmington Road construction project as a necessary evil and are giving varied reports as to how the construction is impacting their businesses.

The construction zone, which extends from Grand River south to Slocum, just south of Nine Mile, has shut down southbound lanes completely and left one northbound lane open.

The work from Slocum to Grand River is expected to be finished by July 15, according to the Oakland County Road Commission - in time for the annual Founders Festival. The remainder is expected to wrap up by Sept. 30. July is not nearly soon enough for Roger Ratkowski, owner of the Pasta Stop, 23631 Farmington, which has been open nearly five years. He said business has dropped 70 percent in the



Staff photo by Bill Dresler
Farmington Road construction can be a hardship on local business owners.

Please see ROAD, A6

Graduation requirements may change for class of '06

By GUY BUCK
STAFF WRITER
gbuck@oc.homecomm.net

Approval of changes in high school graduation requirements is on the 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 23, school board meeting agenda.

The board meets at the administration building located on Shilvassee, east of Farmington Road.

A committee met for almost two years to develop the changes. The requirements hadn't been reviewed for 10 years.

"My suspicion is if the board approves it, the incoming freshman, the class of 2006 will be the first ones to whom these requirements would apply," said Jerry Fouchey, curriculum director. "There's not a lot of big changes for ninth graders. The change is when you get to be juniors when you have to take that third math requirement, when you have to take that extra language requirement, when you have to make sure you have the technology piece in."

It was time to study the needs and goals of graduates, he said.

Also block scheduling necessitated a review. "All three high schools are on block scheduling," Fouchey said. "Students have an opportunity to take 30 credits whereas before they had an opportunity to take 24. The notion of ought we to be thinking about this differently became much clearer."

Different school districts have different characters, Fouchey said.

Farmington district students can expect to see

Please see GRADUATION, A6