

IN THE PAPER TODAY

ARTS



Fooling around: The Farmington Players are having fun rehearsing for their upcoming production of *Once Upon a Mattress*. /B1

Celebrate: More than 200 special performers will be at Livonia Mall this weekend to celebrate the arts in a very special way. /B1



AT HOME



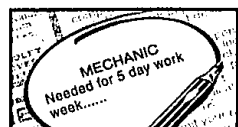
Transformed: Let a group of designers have their way and you end up with the Tudor home that's the Junior League of Detroit's Designer's Show House. 2002. /C1

HOMETOWN LIFE

Greetings: in 30 years, more than 12,000 international visitors have received an American welcome, thanks to the hospitality of volunteer citizen diplomats. /C1

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B. Plymouth

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Committee: Don't change start

■ A committee charged with exploring later start times for Farmington high schools is expected to tell School Board members May 7 they recommend no changes for the coming school year or the year after. They will, however, keep monitoring and studying the issue.

BY SUE BUCK
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The School Start Time Committee will present its recommendations to the Farmington School Board at its 7:30 p.m.

May 7 meeting — a report that's bound to get mixed reviews.

"There's no changes at this time, not this year or the year after," said Farmington Public Schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield at a recent committee

meeting.

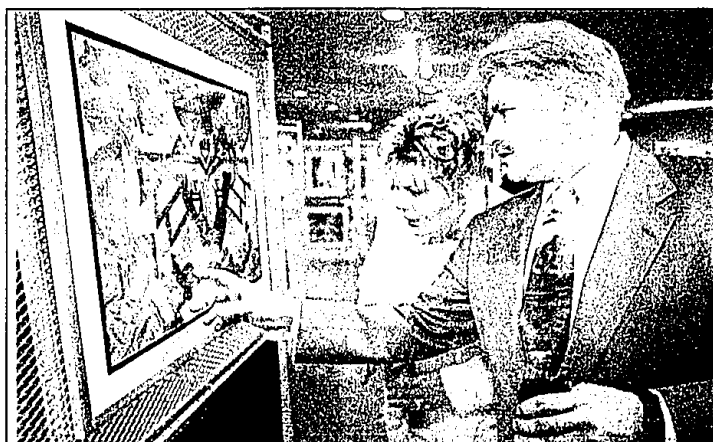
That doesn't mean those who see the benefit of starting high school classes an hour or more later than 7:30 a.m. won't continue to review and monitor data. The committee appointed by Maxfield began meeting in November to consider whether to delay the start time at Farmington, North Farmington and Harrison High Schools. The Edina, Minn. school district and a few others in the country have adjusted their start times; no Michigan school district has made the change.

Research on adolescent sleep cycles indicates teens need more sleep, proponents say. Still, almost all of the people who spoke at a Feb. 28 town meeting at the Costick Activities Center voiced opposition to the change.

Budget constraints, high transportation costs and athletic schedules dominated their concerns. The committee had suggested new start times take effect at the 2003 school year.

Please see COMMITTEE, A9

Starry, starry night



STAFF PHOTO BY ELIZABETH CANEVARA

A closer look: Terry and Tom Deichert examine the painting, "Aztec Mask" by Sharon Phelps.

Annual gala raises \$4,265 for arts

BY PAUL R. PACE
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About 100 people in the community turned out for the Starry Night Gala Saturday evening to support the many clubs that belong to the Community Arts Council in Farmington and Farmington Hills.

According to Nancy Comounoudouras, cultural arts coordinator for the two cities, the silent

and strolling auctions at the gala held at the Costick Activities Center raised \$4,265 for the program that highlights the many arts and cultural programs in the two communities.

The gala also launched the week-long Festival of Arts event open to the public at the Costick. Guests got a first look and an option to buy more than 100 pieces of artwork on display.

Guests enjoyed the evening with

live music, hors d'oeuvres, a gourmet dinner and silent and strolling auctions.

"We received nothing but enthusiastic comments (about the gala)," said Comounoudouras. She added the decorations were coordinated by Robb Clarkson, building supervisor at the Costick.

People can still enjoy the artwork

Please see GALA, A7

Owners ask for a break

BY PAUL R. PACE AND SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITERS

Steve Al-Hakim, owner of the Sunoco gas station at Nine Mile and Farmington Road, said he has reached a breaking point.

Al-Hakim is having trouble keeping his business afloat while road work crews are making it nearly impossible for potential customers to enter. He said customer traffic is down 80 percent since the work started, and he may lose it altogether if he doesn't get help soon.

"The only situation that is going to help me is to open up the main traffic," he said Tuesday. "I am really down with the money. I don't know what to do."

Al-Hakim spearheaded a petition signed by more than a dozen local businesses that are suffering from the road work.

While the majority are in Farmington, Al-Hakim's business is in Farmington Hills.

He took his petition to the Hills city hall Tuesday to seek a solution. He said he has an appointment to talk with City Manager Steve Brock to see whether he can receive some tax relief.

Other business owners have told him they have lost up to 80 percent of their customers due to the project that has closed all but a single northbound lane from Nine Mile to Grand River.

The petition asks that the time table for the road work be expedited; the businesses get a tax break or incentive during the construction; and, if possible, additional effort be made to open

Please see OWNERS, A6

Moving day nears for Farmington library

■ A 37,000-square-foot expansion at the Farmington Library's Hills branch is nearing completion; staff should begin transferring materials in July.

BY PAUL R. PACE
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The addition to the Farmington Community Library on 12 Mile Road is booking along, says Director Bev Papal.

Drywall work is almost finished on the 37,000-square-foot expansion that aims for an early July completion date,

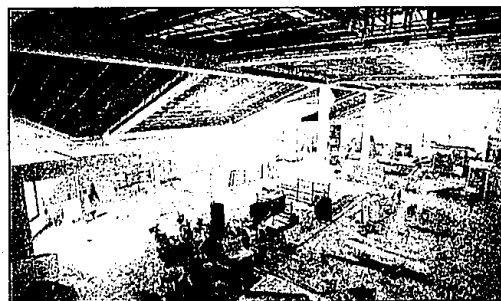
Papal said. Once ready, though, much of the work will be moving materials from the old section of the 1972 library to the new area.

Staff will likely be more than busy once they are allowed to transfer items.

"We'll be moving 150,000 pieces of material one way or another," Papal said.

Though much of the detail work in the new section has yet to be finished, the computer training lab and cappuccino room already have an egg crate-style construction in place.

Please see LIBRARY, A5



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRESLER

Shell game: Structural work is completed on the 37,000-square-foot library expansion, and mechanicals are underway.

Observer honors Academic All-Stars

In what has become an annual feature of this time of year, The Observer Newspapers proudly presents the Academic All-Stars in a special section of today's paper.

These are public and private high school seniors chosen on the basis of their grade point averages in academic subjects and SAT or ACT scores. They also distinguished themselves in such ways as community and school involvement.

"We are proud to honor the best and brightest students in our communities. Each of these students has set high goals for themselves. We wish them the best in all their future endeavors," said Hugh Gallagher, managing editor of The Observer Newspapers.

A panel of five principals from Observer area high schools met to sort through the 47 applications and double-check the numbers that gave scores to each student.

These numbers involved grade point averages and SAT or ACT scores. The highest possible total score was 2,000; all of this year's all-stars had total scores of more than 1,800.

This is the 17th anniversary of The Observer's Academic All-Stars program. The 2000 Academic All-Stars are:

Michael McDonald, Salem High School; Walter C. Lin, Churchill High School; Matthew R. Elsey, Harrison High School; Anne Lieberman, North Farmington High School;

Tekla Bude, Canton High School; Adam Z. Kogut, Churchill High School; Bothany Nestor, North Farmington High School; Stacey Ann Schroeder, Ladywood High School; Daniel Christensen, Canton High School; Prashanth Pandian, Harrison High School; John W. Schultz, Detroit Catholic Central High School; Alex Duncan, Farmington High School; Drew Mokris, Farmington High School; Luman Temby, Thurston High School; Suzanne Valade, Mercy High School; Rebecca Lobenz, Salem High School; Jerin Philip, Detroit Catholic Central High School; and Laura Anne Meili, Clarencville High School.

In addition, The Observer honors the 29 students who are runners-up.

