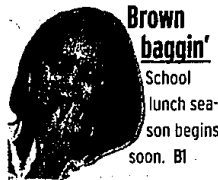


# FARMINGTON Observer

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## Our Towns

### Man promoted

RCI Electric Company recently appointed Joe Svoke to the position of chief estimator.

Svoke, a resident of Farmington Hills, has a degree from Lawrence Technological University in Industrial Management and has been with RCI Electric Company since 1998.

Svoke has solid credentials in everything from materials supervision, purchasing and Industrial engineering to plant management. He has been instrumental in the development of procedures and controls resulting in dependable estimates, efficient record management and increased customer satisfaction.

### Orientation day

When you are going into middle school, the environment can make you feel both more grown up and frightened.

Warner Middle School staff knows this and for the first time offered a three-day, voluntary orientation to acclimate students entering sixth grade.

James Long celebrates after competing in the shoe toss. More than 80 out of 200 students took them up on the offer. School starts officially Aug. 26.

"One of my main worries was that I would get lost," said Sara Lebovic of Farmington Hills.

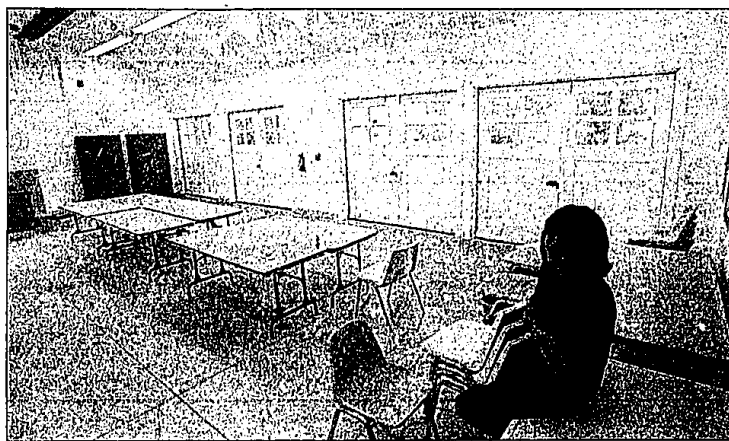
"Highmeadow had only three hallways. I got to know my locker combination and a couple things ahead of time."

Jackie Lorfel, a media specialist at Warner for eight years, helped organize the orientation, which included an indoor picnic with parents.

"They are overwhelmed," Lorfel said. "We know how nervous students are that first day. We played getting-to-know-you games."

In the True Colors session, students found out about their learning styles.

"I'm an orange," Lebovic said. "I'm happy to be in school and moving. I like hands-on activities and I like teachers to be happy and jolly and joking."



BILL BRESLER / OBSERVER

Farmington Hills arts maven Nancy Coumoundouros likes the large, well-lit studio space in the old stable.

## Art studio opens at Heritage Park

BY PAUL R. PACE  
STAFF WRITER

Move over horses, and let the artists on in.

The historic stable house in Farmington Hills' Heritage Park has a new life as an art studio for the Farmington Hills Cultural Arts Division.

The remodeled inside of the 1918 stable offers a new, large open space that allows plenty of natural light to flow from the windows of the stable doors and rooftops.

The city's Special Services Department

did the remodeling work that will offer art students, from children to adults, a studio-like facility, said Nancy Coumoundouros, cultural arts coordinator for Farmington Hills and Farmington.

The stables retain the charm of the building on the outside, while providing a generous high ceiling and plenty of creative space for classes and workshops, she said.

Award-winning artist Donna Vogelheim said she held a landscape workshop in the stable/studio recently and adores the concept of the building.

"I love the setting," she said. "I will be teaching there in the fall."

Vogelheim said because the studio is in the park, it will offer artists easy access to a calm setting where floral life is easy to find to inspire painting or drawing.

"It's very serene," she said. "It's one of my favorite spots. It has a lot to offer the artist."

Coumoundouros said the stable also has a new kiln for pottery making.

"It's a neat place," she said. "It's refreshing to see all the open, white space."

PLEASE SEE STUDIO, A5

## CTA plans community event

BY JONI HUBBARD  
STAFF WRITER

A group of community leaders from Farmington and Farmington Hills came together this week to answer two questions:

How do alcohol problems present in your community? What contributes to those problems?

Their answers will be the basis for a community-wide meeting held October 1 at Vladimir's in Farmington Hills, hosted by the Call to Action Coalition. The meet-

ing is designed to kick off a year's worth of activities that will call attention to the effects on the community when young people drink.

"This is the start of the process to look at how does it affect your community and what does it cost your community," said Penny Norton, CEO of Facing Alcohol Concerns through Education (FACE).

Founded in 1989, FACE is a separate project of the Mid-State Substance Abuse Commission located in Clare, Mich. In 1999, FACE

expanded its staff and services to offer communities help in facing the truth about alcohol.

Norton said the Farmington/Farmington Hills group represented one of the most comprehensive coalition groups she'd seen, with members from schools, community groups, law enforcement, the courts, the health care industry, city government and the business world.

"That's in your favor," she said.

PLEASE SEE CTA, A7

## Bank robbery suspect arraigned

BY PAUL R. PACE  
STAFF WRITER

A 40-year-old Detroit woman was arraigned in U.S. District Court in Detroit Thursday for robbing a Farmington Hills bank Wednesday morning.

The woman, referred to as a serial bandit who wears a bonnet, was also charged in three other area bank robberies.

According to the criminal complaint, Renee M. Bailey is accused of stealing nearly \$20,000 from the four banks. The report states she confessed to the robberies to Plymouth Township Police after being caught after a bank robbery there Wednesday afternoon.

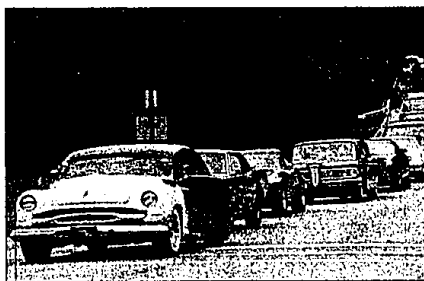
She is accused of robbing the Standard Federal Bank at 14 Mile in Farmington Hills around 10 a.m. Wednesday, then robbing the Comerica Bank on Ann Arbor Road in Plymouth around 1:30 p.m. the same day, police said.

She was caught by Plymouth Police walking in a strip mall near the bank just after the robbery.

The complaint states she admitted to also robbing two banks in Livonia, the Standard Federal Bank on Seven Mile on Aug. 2 and the Standard Federal on Middlebelt on July 3.

Bailey faces a 20-year prison sentence if

PLEASE SEE ROBBERY, A7



BILL BRESLER / OBSERVER

The lead cars travel southbound on Drake and turn right on Nine Mile on their way to Roush Performance.

## First Classic Cruise held

BY SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

A special, first-time Classic Car cruise out of Farmington drew a 188-car caravan to Livonia.

The cruise was organized by Roger Ratkowski, owner of the Pasta Stop who each Monday during the summer hosts "Cruisin' the Grand" in the parking lot behind his store. Those cars remain stationary in the lot, as aficionados tour the area and talk to the car owners.

The cruise started Aug. 14 in the parking lot of the Pasta Stop on Farmington Road and traveled to

car collector Jack Roush's garage in Livonia.

There car buffs toured Roush's private collection of vehicles featuring many one-of-a-kind, and special cars.

It proceeded west on Grand River south to Halsted Road, winding itself south to Levan, Plymouth Road and then onto Market Street.

Ratkowski pointed out the differences between this special cruise and the Woodward Dream Cruise.

"That's a totally different event," Ratkowski said. "We're a smaller city and we're a different city and a

PLEASE SEE CRUISE, A8

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