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Our Towns

Unexpected eviction

An ordinary assignment clearing out a few trees from a local historic home site turned into an interesting exercise in eviction for a local tree service.



Karen and John Woodson, who own K&J Tree Service, were hired to remove a number of dead pine and maple trees from property around the Historic Longacre House, said grounds committee chairperson Suzanne Sloat. The house sits on a five-and-a-half-acre, natural wooded site just south of Heritage Park.

At first, Sloat said, it seemed like an ordinary assignment.

But the removal crew jumped with surprise when a 30-pound raccoon scampered out a very large, very hollow maple tree on the edge of the driveway.

A crew member said the critter made a beeline for the woods that border the south edge of the property; it wasn't seen again.

Stoney search

Friends of the Rouge, a nonprofit group dedicated to restoring the Rouge River, is looking for volunteers to participate in its annual winter stoney search to take place Saturday, Jan. 11.

Volunteers will search Rouge tributaries for the aquatic insects.

The goal of the program is tracking changes in water quality over time by using volunteers to sample many sites.

Stoneyflies are sensitive to pollution, so their presence indicates clean water.

Last year, the group was surprised to find stoneyflies in several headwater streams of the Rouge.

Oakland County contains many of these headwater streams, which eventually feed into the main river.

No prior experience is necessary and volunteers will not be entering the water. Children are welcome when accompanied by one adult per child.

Interested volunteers are asked to call Friends of the Rouge at (313) 792-9621 or e-mail pccoordinator@therouge.org to register for the event. Registration is required.



Considerable progress was made on the Holocaust Memorial Center by late September. Rabbi Charles Rosenzweig walks the construction site on a gray afternoon.

Surprises filled 2002

Officials were left with vacancies to fill; elections heated up fall

This concludes our annual year in review, recapping the top stories for the second half of 2002. The first installment was published in our Dec. 28 issue.

"Friends of the Civic Theatre," who would help bring added programming to the city-owned movie house.

JULY

Former Hills dentist Donald Quinn closed out the criminal case against him by pleading guilty to five felony charges, seven fewer than originally filed. Quinn would serve no more than a year in jail under the agreement.

Two area Harmony House stores closed, as the company prepared to cease operations because of flagging profits and increased competition.

The Farmington Area Founders Festival drew 150,000 visitors to downtown Farmington July 18-20. New events included a showing of "The Wizard of Oz" at the Farmington Civic Theatre, complete with a Dorothy look-alike contest, and a croquet match that pitted city councils from Farmington and Farmington Hills against each other.

Volunteers at the Governor Warner Mansion restored an old printing press that had been rusting in a barn on the property. They used it for demonstrations during the Founders Festival.

Farmington announced it would seek volunteers to serve as

AUGUST

As the Downtown Development Authority began interviews to replace retiring director Judy Downey, a local businessman's Freedom of Information Act request for the candidates' names was denied. City and DDA officials told Becky Burns that revealing information would be an unwarranted invasion of the candidates' privacy.

Demolition began on Cowsley's Old Village Inn, which will be totally reconstructed as a two-story Irish pub on Grand River. Construction is expected to be complete in February.

Downtown Farmington merchants banded together to form a new association, with the idea of cooperatively promoting downtown business. They plan to start staying open later on Friday nights to draw more people into the district.

The historic stable house in Heritage Park opened after renovations to become an art studio.

Roger Ratkowski, owner of the

PLEASE SEE REVIEW, A5

School funding to remain stable

BY DAN WEST
STAFF WRITER

It's going to be a tough 2003 for Oakland County's school administrators as they try to make ends meet with no increase in public school funding.

During a pre-inaugural family event in Southfield on Sunday, Gov. Jennifer Granholm announced that foundation grants — or the amount of money school districts collect per student — will not increase for the "next couple years."

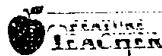
"We're in a crushing budget deficit," Granholm said about the state's budget crisis. "I promise we will not cut funding for schools, but the first year of this administration will be a year of streamlining."

PLEASE SEE FUNDING, A8

O&E seeks top Farmington area teachers

Beginning in January, the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers will honor two teachers monthly from throughout our circulation area for their excellence in the classroom. We are looking for readers to help in identifying these outstanding teachers.

Nominations can be e-mailed to cyyoung@oe.homecomm.net, faxed to (734) 953-2232 or mailed to Cathy Young at the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft,



Livonia, MI 48150. Nominations must be received by 5 p.m. of the third Monday of each month.

Deadlines for 2003 are: Jan. 20, Feb. 17, March 17, April 21, May 19, June 16, Sept. 15, Oct. 20, Nov. 17 and Dec. 15.

Two teachers will be honored

January through June and September through December. The teachers will be photographed in their classroom and receive four tickets to any Star Theater and a dozen roses courtesy of Wesley Berry Florists and the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

Nominations can come from students, parents, school administrators or community residents who have contact or knowledge of a teacher's classroom activities. To nominate a

teacher, please send the teacher's name, school address and the school's telephone number along with a statement of no more than 200 words telling us why this teacher deserves to be our Outstanding Teacher of the Month.

A panel of editors will make each selection. The winning teachers will be featured in all editions in the last week of each month. Please help us in honoring the many dedicated teachers who do outstanding work.



Eric Widmann plays Capture the Flag during Monday's session of camp.

Y gives kids alternative during the holidays

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

The holidays are full of busy times for families, but what do parents do with the kids when they have to work during the school break?

Fortunately, there's the Holiday Camp at the Farmington Area

YMCA on Farmington Road.

The camp took place Dec. 21, 23, 26, 27, 30 and it is run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., program director Dana Davis said. The camp is for children in kindergarten through the eighth grade.

"We split them up by age

PLEASE SEE YMCA, A8

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LOOKING AHEAD

F7	Winter white wines
B2	White wines from Alsace are often sweet and expensive, but f. e.
E1	Trumbach is known for its reasonably-priced, fruity wines.



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