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Celebrate
Cinco de
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Our Towns



If you could give your Mom a bouquet of flowers for Mother's Day, what would you write to her on the note? The Farmington Observer is giving away a gift of flowers courtesy of Westley Berry Florist to a lucky reader who submits the best note to Mom, as selected by Jani Hubred. Remember this note goes on a tiny florist card, so try to keep it around 25 words or less. Entries must be posted by midnight Monday, May 5. The winner will be announced on Mother's Day, May 11. Please submit your note to: Farmington Observer, Jani Hubred, 3341 Grand River, Farmington, MI 48335.

Top of the class

Mercy High School has named the valedictorian and salutatorian for the class of 2003.

Karen Kudelko has been named the 2003 Valedictorian and has been accepted to Brown, Duke, Georgetown and the University of Michigan. She is the son of Conrad and Zosia Kudelko.

Emily Gruber has been named 2003 Salutatorian and has been accepted to Boston College, Northwestern University, the University of Michigan and Yale. She will major in English and is the daughter of Michael Gruber and Katherine Gruber.

Moore family
The family of Sue Moore recently expressed its thanks to everyone in the community for the generous gifts and support in their time of need. Sue has worked in the Farmington area for 15 years and has been diagnosed with cancer. The family expressed particular appreciation to Rosanne Fitzpatrick, Country Lanes Bowling Alley and all who attended a recent fundraiser. The family also asks for continued prayer.



Author Laurle Gomulka Palazzolo listens to Stas' Wisnatch play the accordion in her Farmington home. She has written a book about polka and Wisnatch is one of the main subjects.

Dance Hall Days Farmington author records Polish-American music history

BY JONI HUBRED
STAFF WRITER

The band playing polka music at Proctor and Kirkwood in Detroit on Monday drew quite a bit of attention from passers-by. No one could have guessed the reason behind this reunion in what is now a vacant lot. But shooting *Dani Polski: Dance Hall Days of Detroit's Polonia* is part of a two-year odyssey undertaken by Farmington

resident Laurle Gomulka Palazzolo, in memory of her father and a part of his life she never really got to know until after he died. "Dad was diagnosed with cancer in May of 1998," Palazzolo recalled as she leafed through a thick binder of photos and memorabilia. "That year, he started talking about his career." Ted Gomulka was among the cadre of Polish-American boys who

launched their musical careers half a century ago in Detroit. They played weddings, showers, anniversaries, dance halls - anywhere they were asked, even in their early teens. "The boys would travel all over town, carrying their instruments with them. When they married, they played at one another's weddings. And they kept playing even though they all had full-time jobs. The stories were wonderful," Palazzolo said.

"These band leaders endured 50 years or larger just playing these ethnic jobs." Her original intent was to make sure Gomulka's children and grandchildren knew who he really was. Before he died - just a few months after he became ill - she said to her father, "I'm going to tell your story." Palazzolo spent the next two years writing *Horn*

PLEASE SEE POLKA, A9

PLEASE SEE ROADS, A10

Post office colors fly high

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington Post Office wants to say thanks to thousands of customers who said in an independent survey how well employees are doing. The local offices started flying two new flags Thursday in recognition of the high marks received from customers on the postal team's performance.

For the past quarter, the local service was also honored for having the most safe practices. Ceremonies were held at three local postal facilities - the branch on 12 Mile, the Farmington Hills Career Annex on Indopex and at the Farmington Post Office located at 2332 Farmington Road in downtown Farmington. Linda Palazzolo,

marketing manager for the Royal Oak Postal District, which includes the Farmington area, said Farmington received 57 percent "excellent" ratings from a group of residents. Farmington's acting Postmaster Donald Dombrow Jr. grouped up the 12 Mile facility for the flag raising and said, "We're going to raise this flag together." "These are two reminders of our commitment to our customers and to keep up the good work. I'm proud of all of us."

Lance Armstrong, national and world champion cyclist, two-time Olympian, and four-time winner of the Tour De France, is sponsored by the U.S. Postal Service. In recognition of the Royal Oak district receiving such



Denise Dubois (left) and Leonard Homozym, both postal workers, hang the customer appreciation 'yellow' eagle flag in front of the Farmington Hills Post Office.

high honors, one of his Jersey, signed and framed, will hang in each of the Royal Oak district post offices. The U.S. Postal Service's Customer Satisfaction Measurement

residential survey was started in 2000. The quarterly award focuses on overall performance plus accuracy of delivery, consistency of delivery and professionalism dealing with retail customers.

Pasta Stop loses battle to stay open

BY SUE BUCK AND PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

Pasta Stop owner Roger Ratkowski didn't bid adieu to local officials and community leaders when he closed his restaurant Monday. After losing two-thirds of his customers during last year's road construction on Farmington Road, Ratkowski said Friday that his business

never recovered. The recent harsh winter and flat economy also added to the lack of traffic in the restaurant, he said. Ratkowski decided to close the business after talking with his wife, son and attorney. "I just had to come to a decision," he said. Allowing himself more time

PLEASE SEE PASTA STOP, A10

State puts Franklin Road/I-696 ramp project on hold

BY JEFF COURTS
STAFF WRITER

Roy Bell of Southfield gets on one of the city's freeways "about 10 times a day," using them just like a surface road to engage in his daily routines. So when the 27-year resident and planning commission member heard work on a new

\$27 million interchange system for I-696 at Franklin Road has been delayed, he was "disappointed." "It should have been done 30 years ago," he said. "The transportation is one of the legs that helps the city survive." The project was put in the

PLEASE SEE PROJECT, A10

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