

the farmington enterprise & observer

YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

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today's hot line

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what's inside

Mad March Doings

It was Thurston vs. Franklin for one district basketball title Friday night, and Farmington Harrison vs. Detroit Henry Ford for another. Saturday it will be Plymouth against Churchill, and John Glenn facing Belleville. Last night's results and tourney details in full are on our sports pages.

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School Salaries

A new administrative pay schedule has been adopted by the Farmington school board, but not without some dissent. The story is on:

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More Mud

Photographic coverage of the problems residents are encountering with mud in Farmington is inside.

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New Music

If you are interested in classical music of this century, you'll want to hear a young American composer when he visits Observer-land next week. He's Clifford Smith and he'll give a benefit recital at Madonna College.

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In Art

Farmington residents are making a name for themselves in the art world. We have pictures of two groups today.

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FOCUS: Suburbia



"HOME FURNISHINGS"—what's new, what's in, and what to choose to reflect your personality—this is the subject of today's FOCUS: Suburbia section. Don't miss it!

Mud The Goo Closes 2 Schools



RICHARD CARDECIA hiked through the goo to his music classes at Power Junior High School shod in a couple of plastic trash bags.

Wood Creek To Hold 'Unopposed' Election

It will be a quiet election day, Monday, March 12, in Wood Creek Farms Village—about as quiet as the campaign which has seen three candidates run unopposed for three offices.

Running for reelection as village president is incumbent Al Albertson, 28701 Wellington. The two council seats will be filled by John Charles, 29204 Utley, and Kryn Ihrman, 28200 Wellington.

Incumbent David Martin withdrew. Charles, 37, is the village road administrator and is employed as district sales manager for the Standard Brands Foods. Of primary concern to him is maintaining the character of the village by protecting its residential zoning.

He would also like to see the roads paved this year. Ihrman, 42, is a research chemist with Ethyl Corp. in

Ferndale. He also expressed the desire to maintain the present character of the village through maintenance of zoning laws.

Both Charles and Ihrman are apprehensive about consolidating with the township to become the City of Farmington Hills. They fear losing the zoning it now maintains.

Albertson couldn't be reached for comment.

Township Outpaces Assessments In City

By DAN McCOSH

More property owners in Farmington Township than in the city are complaining about their assessments this year.

About 20 persons have shown up at the Board of Review in the city, "mostly hardship cases," according to City Assessor Dorothy Poston.

But Township Assessor Robert Romer reports about 150 cases have been filed, and extra hours for the board have been scheduled.

Main reason is that while both the township and city have hiked assessments in some areas, almost all the township is affected, while only about one-third of the city is being changed.

After going for two years without major adjustments, the township was notified the Oakland County equalization department was equalizing forcing an over-all hike of approximately eight percent.

Rather than take the proposed 1.08 "equalization factor," Romer said his department is making adjustments ranging from six to eight per cent on the local rolls.

He is anticipating a total township valuation of over \$300 million this year, up from \$275 million last year. Of the increase, about half is due to new construction, the other half to adjustments due to inflation.

The township board of review is currently going over individual cases filed appealing the new assessments. It will continue to take applications until Tuesday, March 13, and will meet as long as it takes to finish the job, according to Romer.

The city has hiked some areas by an average of about 11 per cent, according to Mrs. Poston. "This is to bring these areas up to the level of the rest of the city," she said.

Most of the parcels are in Sec. 26 in the city.

The last time the city had an over-all assessment change was in 1970, when local assessments were changed to eliminate a 1.28 factor assigned by the county.

The city is anticipating a \$70 million valuation this year, up from \$61.6 million last year. Of the increase, about \$1.5 million is because of the assessment changes, according to Mrs. Poston.

The remainder is new construction. Senior citizens can qualify for a \$2,500 reduction in their assessments if they are over age 65 and have a total income of \$6,000 or less, she said.

Disabled veterans with assessments of less than \$10,000 can also qualify.

Andrew Sroka, Harold Larson and Robert Dingman are members of the Township Board of Review.

John Clappison, Tracy Conroy, and Bayard Tupper are hearing complaints in the city.

By STEVE BARNABY

Muddy Gill Road took its toll Thursday, as Farmington School District was forced to close both Gill Elementary and Power Junior High.

"When the county trucks came to fill in the road with stone and gravel and got stuck, that was the straw that broke our back," said William Prisk, school district business manager.

"There was no sense for us to tear up our buses, and we weren't about to move the schools brick by brick to another location."

Power and Gill schools are on adjacent property, along Rhonswood, west of Gill and

south of Bridgeman. Access to the schools is possible only by Gill Road.

There seems to be some dispute as to who should pay for paving of Gill says Prisk. The county says Farmington Township should foot the bill, and township officials say they don't have the money.

Presently, Robert McConnell, township supervisor, is meeting with residents surrounding Gill to determine who will pay.

Meanwhile, school officials are planning improvement on the service drive that runs between the schools.

"Our dirt service drive is in better condition than Rhonswood or Bridgeman, says Prisk.

The service drive runs adjacent to Rhonswood.

Expressing reluctance at going into the road construction business, Prisk sees no other alternative but to make the service drive passable to reduce part of the muddy road problem.

"What kind of public service are we performing if we invite the public to use this road at a child gets hit?" says Prisk.

To protect against this danger, a fence will be constructed along the service drive to keep playgrounds separated from the traffic.

Early Thaw Blamed For Road Breakup

By DAN McCOSH

Teachers at Power Junior High, tired of getting stuck in the mud attempting to go down Gill Rd., petitioned to be bused through the muck to class.

An Oakland County truck sent to lay slag on the ooze bogged down to the axles. The crew got out and waded in with shovels.

Teacher Richard Cardecia stopped to class with two plastic bags covering his feet and pants.

Attempting to take a picture of the mess, Enterprise and Observer photographer Ralph Evert put his foot into a muck hole and sank in up to his knees. Back at his house, the family car was mired in, too.

It was just one part of one road, but the scenario was being repeated on gravel roads throughout the township.

An unreasonable thaw is causing the problems, according to the Oakland County Road Commission. Weight restrictions went into effect three weeks earlier than usual.

Frazier Staman, a member

of the commission, said, "The roads are really breaking up all over the county."

He blamed a "very wet fall," just now melting into mud, and added all the schools in Livingston County were closed because of impassable roads.

The county has announced a toll-free number for road emergencies. The number is 1-800-552-3707. A resident calling that number "should get an answer," according to Staman, but the county is concentrating on primary roads, not subdivision streets.

The county is dumping "slag" on roads. It is a heavy kind of gravel supposed to aid drainage and support more weight.

Staman was only slightly sympathetic with the schools, despite the closing of Power Junior High and Gill School on Thursday.

"Why build a school there (Gill Road)?" he said.

"We never had a school board come to us and ask our advice on where to build."

He also cited financial woes.

"When you break it all down, the average driver in the county pays about \$8 per

year that actually comes back to the county for road maintenance," he said.

"That works out to about 30 minutes of time with a grader."

Water is the problem, both frozen and thawed, according to David Jones, head of the Farmington City DPW.

The city has had only a few problems, with the exception of Hawthorne, he said, because "most streets are paved."

Dry grass, even dirt, will support weight and make a road, according to Jones.

But when water is added, both dirt and gravel lose their ability to support weight, and the result is a stuck car.

"A lot of the problem in the south end is because the water table is actually near the surface of the road," he said.

But this time of year, frost still in the ground under the road surface even traps water that normally drains away.

The result is that in low areas, or areas with bad drainage, mud will remain for "a long time."

Continued on 3A



AMBULANCE HELPERS transfer Mrs. Dorothy Brown, 65, to a hospital after she and her husband, Jack, 68, were struck by a car while crossing Orchard Lake Road south of 13 Mile. The Detroit couple suffered serious injuries. (Photo by Ralph Evert)

2 Pedestrians Are Injured Crossing Road

An elderly Detroit couple was injured seriously Thursday evening when struck by a car while crossing Orchard Lake Road south of 13 Mile.

Jack Brown, 68, and his wife, Dorothy, 65, of 1000 Merton,

were placed in the intensive care unit at Botsford Hospital. The driver, Charles D. Richards, 26, of Davison, Mich., was uninjured. He was alone in the car.

A witness said the couple

was walking from the east to the west side of Orchard Lake Road and stepped into the path of the southbound car. Sgt. Arlo Newell of the Farmington Township police traffic bureau said.