

Farmington Observer

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Fifty Cents

IN THE PAPER TODAY

But how to pay?: Recycling is a fact of life in the Farmington area, but how to pay for it is an issue. Farmington Hills residents can have their say about it a budget hearing Wednesday./10A

STREET SCENE



Making music: Being on the same wave length can help when your business is making music. Maybe that explains Cylinderhead's music — a vibrant amalgamation of diverse musical talents which even in its rawest form can make you feel tingly all over./6A

OPINION

Regional cooperation: A new feature in today's paper is the Monday Points of View page where you will find regional correspondent Tim Richard taking a look at Mayor Coleman Young's budget call for cooperation with the suburbs./8A

SPORTS

Track triumphs: Farmington and North Farmington were dual-meet winners in boys track and field Thursday. The Falcons are tied for second in the Lakes Division./1B

TASTE

Season pick: Rhubarb is a spring-time treat. Rediscover the tart flavor of this old-time spring delicacy./1C

More mushrooms: Chef Larry Jones tells you how to hunt and cook Michigan morel mushrooms./1C

CABLE/TV WEEKLY

Heeeeere's Johnny: The maestro of late night TV goes into his last week after 30 years on "Tonight."

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Restaurateur pleads guilty



Frank S. Blair, co-owner of Gourmet To Go, pleaded guilty to sexually assaulting a 15-year-old female employee and will be sentenced on May 27 by Circuit Judge Robert Anderson.

By JOANNE MALISZEWSKI
STAFF WRITER

The 30-year-old co-owner of a Farmington Hills restaurant pleaded guilty to two felony counts Thursday for the sexual assault of a 15-year-old female employee in July 1991.

Frank S. Blair, co-owner of Gourmet To Go in the Midwood Square shopping center at Drake Road and Grand River, pleaded guilty to two counts of second-degree criminal sexual conduct

before Oakland County Circuit Judge Robert Anderson Thursday morning.

Blair told Anderson he was willing to plead to two second-degree counts, to reduce the sentence from the original charges of first-degree and second-degree criminal sexual conduct.

Anderson will sentence the Farmington Hills resident May 27. Blair faces a maximum 15 years in prison. He also is on probation for a drunken driving offense that occurred two years ago.

"I wish in your sentence you would consider that this man willingly and knowingly took my daughter out knowing how old she was," the girl's father, a Farmington Hills police officer, told Anderson.

The father also asked Anderson to prevent Blair from hiring minor children at his restaurant. His daughter, now 16, at first didn't want to report the assault for fear of losing her job, said the father, who admitted he had mixed emotions about the plea arrangement.

"As an investigator in the law enforcement community, I am pleased with what occurred (guilty pleas). It will do justice. As a parent, I would have preferred the maximum (charge and

penalty)," the father said.

Blair also spoke Thursday when Anderson asked about the incident. "I was on a date with the complainant. We ended up in the back of my truck. We were kissing and ended up fondling."

Oakland County Assistant Prosecutor Lisa Green gave Anderson further details of the assault.

She also told the judge that when the girl protested and tried to stop Blair, she said, "That's not cool, you're my boss." Blair reportedly replied: "I'll fire you tonight and hire you tomorrow." Green said Blair used his authority as the girl's employer to intimidate her, the father said.

See **GUILTY**, 4A

Patchwork of Farmington



Heritage quilt: Dressed in period costume for the occasion, Farmington city councilwoman Shirley Richardson and City Manager Robert Deadman hold a quilt unveiled last week as part of the city's anniversary of its incorporation as a village 125 years ago.

SHARON LA MIRA/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Board watcher enters race for trustee seat

By CASEY HANS
STAFF WRITER

Concerns about school boundary changes in 1989 got Joe Svoke involved in the Farmington Public Schools.

He's attended nearly every school board meeting since, where he likes to keep a watchful eye on school finances and programs. The 47-year-old father of four hopes to win one of two seats open on the Farmington school board this year.

He faces off in the June 8 election against veteran incumbent Helen Prutow, who is seeking her fifth term, and challenger Richard DeVries, who is making his third try for the board. The two top vote-getters will win four-year terms on the non-partisan board.

Svoke said the district has progressed since he first became a board watcher, offering residents a chance to speak their minds and getting parents involved at the building level.

"Today, there is a greater opportunity to voice your opinion," Svoke said. "And, with that, you get an appreciation for what goes on — a better flavor for the process."

Svoke believes his extensive business background gives him a good foundation to serve on the school board, and he feels he can make a real difference.

He is currently the operations manager for Devenir Corp., a Southfield-based consulting firm specializing in systems management and software engineering support and which was recently named to the Michigan Private 100 list of the state's fastest-growing companies. He worked for years for the Ex-Cell-O Corp. moving around the country and handling all aspects of industrial management and community relations.

"I've dealt with new people, new faces, different communities and different problems," he said. "Maybe that's a blessing for me in what I'm doing here."

He currently sits on the district's Safety Advisory committee, is on the board of the Harrison High School Band and Orchestra Boosters, and has

See **WATCHER**, 2A

Pets come along



Quite a cat: Jess Elson of Farmington Hills dropped off his household hazardous waste recently with his cat, Mimi, and his dog, Buddy (in the back seat). Waste Management worker Laurie Johnson was glad to hear Elson's story of how he adopted the animals from the Humane Society.

SHARON LA MIRA/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Want that Corvette?

Are you feeling lucky, reader? Well, are you? Maybe now is the time to purchase that \$100 ticket for the 1992 Founders Festival Fantasy Car Raffle. Grand prize will be a 1992 Corvette or \$30,000 in cash. Only 1,000 tickets will be sold. Shopping spree prizes worth \$2,500 also will be awarded. The drawing will be held June 11. The car raffle is the primary fund-raiser for the annual Farmington Founders Festival, planned this year for July 9-11 in downtown Farmington. Tickets may be purchased at the Farmington/Farmington Hills chamber of Commerce office, 33411 Grand River, Farmington, and at other area locations, including Cowley's Old Village Inn, Dunfee's Pub & Grill, Greene's Hamburgers, H.A. Smith Lumber, Hearts & Roses Florist, Huntington Bank, Metrobank, Pictures and More and Uniglobe Arboretum.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

For more information, call the chamber at 474-3440.

Attention, older adults

Smile, senior citizens of the Farmington area, an Oakland-Livingston Human Services photographer wants to snap your photographs. The photographer will be at the Mercy Senior Citizen Center, 28600 W. 11 Mile Road, Farmington Hills, 10:30 a.m. to noon, Friday, May 15. Photos will be used for identification cards needed for participation in the OLHSA senior discounts offered locally and nationwide. Call the center at 478-9147 for additional information.

Let the music play

"Group du jour," the Farmington-area's philharmonic orchestra conducted by Karen Nixen, presents its final concert of the season refreshments at 7 p.m. Friday, May 15, at the Mercy Conference Center, 28600 W. 11 Mile Road.

Brahms' Symphony No. 2, Beethoven's Symphony No. 1 and Hector Berlioz' "Roman Carnival" are on the program. Tickets at \$10 for adults and \$5 for senior citizens and students may be purchased at the door, or at Fox Formal Wear, 33326 W. 12 Mile Road. For more information, call 478-2075.

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