

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Top teachers: Three teachers and a support person from the Farmington Public Schools were honored recently. /3A

Let it snow: The flakes were falling last Friday, but the youngsters at Farmington's Wood Creek Elementary didn't mind one bit. Neither did the five sled dogs who came to visit. /4A

Alarming story: Security systems are part of doing business today. Some area security experts discuss their trade. /13A

COUNTY NEWS

Feathered friends? Oakland University marshals its resources to combat a perplexing pigeon poop problem atop Dodge Hall. /7A

Snake for rent: An Oakland Community College student is sure a snake will be the life of your party. /9A

OPINION

Sound ice: An ice arena for Farmington Hills isn't as far-fetched as it might seem. A feasibility study should be conducted. /16A

Timely advice: City and DDA officials should harness all this anti-clock energy being generated. /17A

SPORTS

District champ: Farmington Hills Mercy is preparing for regional play after winning another district tournament in volleyball. /1B

Hoop tourney: All three Farmington boys basketball teams were in tournament action Wednesday at the West Bloomfield district. /1B

ENTERTAINMENT

Theater: Bold and original "Quilters," presented by a talented cast at Trinity House Theatre, explores the lives of the women who settled the American west. /5B

BUSINESS

Keys, please: A business that requires little in start-up costs tends to attract a lot of players. But starting up and prospering are not the same, as two brothers in valet parking will tell you. /12B

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Clock's another tick closer



The Farmington Planning Commission approves of the site plan for the controversial clock tower for the Masonic Temple corner — even if a growing number of residents do not.

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Amid discontent, the Downtown Clock Plaza cleared another hurdle. The Farmington City Planning Commission approved the site plan Monday in packed City Hall Council Chambers. The OK allows a building permit to be sought.

Approval followed a chorus of public comments on the project, which includes a controversial 28-foot clock tower on the corner of Farmington and Grand River.

Not that it mattered, though. The Planning Commission reviews such plans only to see if they meet city ordinances. Concerns raised —

such as the practicality of a third downtown clock and how it will affect the visibility of the historic Masonic Temple — weren't under consideration.

"All these people who have come here and voiced their concerns, basically it was a waste of time," said commissioner William Ingalls, who voted in opposition to the site plan.

"How does what these people say have some clout?"

People from the beautification and historical commissions spoke in opposition. Representatives from the 125th Committee and Downtown De-

velopment Authority commented in support of it.

Residents' opinions were as diverse.

"In a lot of cases, change is good," said Matthew Gerish, who has lived in Farmington for six years. "What it does is augment our historical sites."

Added Kenneth Crane, a resident for 38 years: "The clock does not sit well with me at all. I don't see people saying, 'Hey, Rachel, let's jump in the car and go see the clock.' I just don't see it."

See CLOCK, 2A



Creative cravat: Mike Flanagan, superintendent of the Farmington Schools, shows off one of his distinctive neckties.

The ties that bind add class

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

In a high-profile job where neckwear can feel like a noose, Farmington Public Schools Superintendent Michael Flanagan is knot above having fun with his.

His sprightly collection of ties includes an array of splashy colors and motifs, depicting smiling children's faces, school buses, the alphabet and crayons. He tries to make an educational statement as well as a fashion one.

People notice, too.

"Once in a while I'll hear, 'That's the same one you wore at the last two board meetings,'" Flanagan said. "I try to stagger them a bit."

His collection continues to grow. Last year, Flanagan received 10 ties as gifts.

Board member Cathleen Webb gave the superintendent a tie for Christmas, featuring a multicultural kids mural. A community member also passed along one with school buses on it.

The trend started a few years ago. Webb said board members noticed Flanagan would intersperse the wild designs with more uniform ones. That prompted discussion, and a flood of ties.

Four or five of Flanagan's ties are designed by children as a fundraiser for the Save the Children Fund. One of his favorites is the multicultural children's one, he said.

Not surprisingly, kids are the first to comment when Flanagan visits their school. He's heard everything from "super tie" to "I like your fish tie — not."

He'll continue to wear wild ties, though.

"Otherwise, I look more like a business executive," Flanagan said. "It's an ice-breaker."

See TIE, 2A

Ice arena operator stresses the extras

By BILL COULTANT
STAFF WRITER

The owner of a unique ice arena complex in suburban Montreal, Canada, told members of the Farmington Hills ice arena study committee that having ancillary services, like a restaurant and bar, is the difference between success and failure for him.

Leo Bourgault, owner of Les 4 Glaces, visited the city as a consultant for \$1,000 plus expenses. He opened his ice complex in 1978 with two rinks, in a city that boasts about

120 ice facilities. Bourgault expanded his operation to four rinks in 1984 and bought out his three partners.

"We're surrounded by rinks," Bourgault said. "But patrons come from 60 miles away to our facility."

Bourgault said ice rentals account for about 55 percent of his profits with his bar, restaurant and pro shop each accounting for about 15 percent of the \$5-million-a-year operation.

But Bourgault emphasized that the amenities keep people at the facility because they can relax before or after

an event, or watch from the restaurant situated above the four ice pads.

"You have to create an atmosphere," he said. "We have 80 TVs all around."

Bourgault said businessmen often play in a hockey league after work, at 5 p.m. or 7 p.m., and have dinner after. The family crowd comes in on weekends, with cartoons dominating the TV sets upstairs at the restaurant, as hockey games and figure skaters work out below.

And although he has some youth

leagues, Bourgault said Les 4 Glaces is primarily for adult skaters.

Farmington businessman Robert Picard, a former professional hockey player who now plays as an amateur, said having a warm venue in which to watch games is important.

"My wife won't watch me play if she has to stand in the cold," Picard said. "If she could sit and have a glass of wine while she watched, she would come."

See ICE, 2A

It's a real gas

Goodness gracious, the things that do turn up on grocery store bulletin boards these days.

Seen on the cork at the Farmer Jack market at Nine Mile and Farmington roads: "For sale: canister of carbon monoxide with mask attached. Excellent condition. Used once. Price \$100."

Strips of paper with a phone number written on each were attached to the note. Call the number and you'll reach the Oakland County prosecutor's office. It was no doubt somebody's idea of a joke, what with Dr. Jack Kevorkian and the assisted suicide debate raging in this area.

"Obviously, (it's) somebody with a sense of humor," said a receptionist at the prosecutor's office. "This has been the first call."

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Out with the old

Farmington area residents should be getting their new Ameritech telephone directories later this month and might be tempted to throw out the old directory in the trash.

But the Pace Warehouse on Hagarty will collect the old directories for recycling throughout the month of April.

All old telephone directories, even from other areas, will be accepted at bins provided in the store between 10 Mile and Grand River.

Memory Lane

From the March 12, 1953, edition of the Farmington Enterprise:

More than \$1,500 was collected during the first 10 days of the Farmington Red Cross drive. Hot dogs were advertised at 49 cents a pound at Lakeside Products Co. in Walled Lake. Eggs were 59 cents a dozen and ground beef was three pounds for \$1.05.

In high school district basketball play, Farmington beat Clarenceville, 54-48, but then lost to Livonia Bentley, 70-48. Bentley was expected to win the state basketball championship.

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