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IN THE PAPER

TODAY

America, Farmington style: Seventeen Japanese students are living with area families while they learn the culture and language. /3A

Final Billing: Enjoyment is on the agenda now that Earl Billing, Farmington's director of public services, has called it a career. /6A

Pinball wizard: A Farmington Hills man calls himself the greatest living authority on pinball machines. /13A

COUNTY NEWS

Murdered president: The 1963 assassination of John F. Kennedy is the topic of a new Oakland Community College course beginning Sept. 13. /7A

New alliance: L. Brooks Patterson pledges Oakland County's help to black business owners, but not as much as some of them want. /12A

OPINION

Early issues: Here's some fodder for our Farmington Hills polls — both wanna-bes and wanna-stays — to graze on. /18A

SPORTS

All-star game: The Farmington Hills Diamonds had an impact on the Incredible Girls Softball League's version of the summer classic. /1B

INDEX

Building Scene . . . 1F
Business . . . 12B
Classifieds . . . C-G
Auto . . . C-G
Employment . . . F-G
Real estate . . . E-F
Creative Living . . . 1D

Crossword . . . 10F
Entertainment . . . 5-7B
Obituaries . . . 4A
Opinion . . . 18-19A
Police, fire calls . . . 10A
Personal Scene . . . 9G

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New library plan washed out

A plan to build a new Farmington Community Library has been defeated for the second time thanks to bad weather and a bad tax climate. Although proponents of the plan to build and operate a new, 80,000-square-foot facility haven't made a final decision, another push isn't likely in the near future.

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER



Hills matched Tuesday's gloomy weather that probably doomed the plan.

A low turnout coupled with a high number of absentee voters were partly to blame for the failed proposals that would have paid for a new library on Orchard Lake across from Oakland Community College. But both supporters and opponents agreed that the tax climate in the state and country were also factors in the plan's defeat.

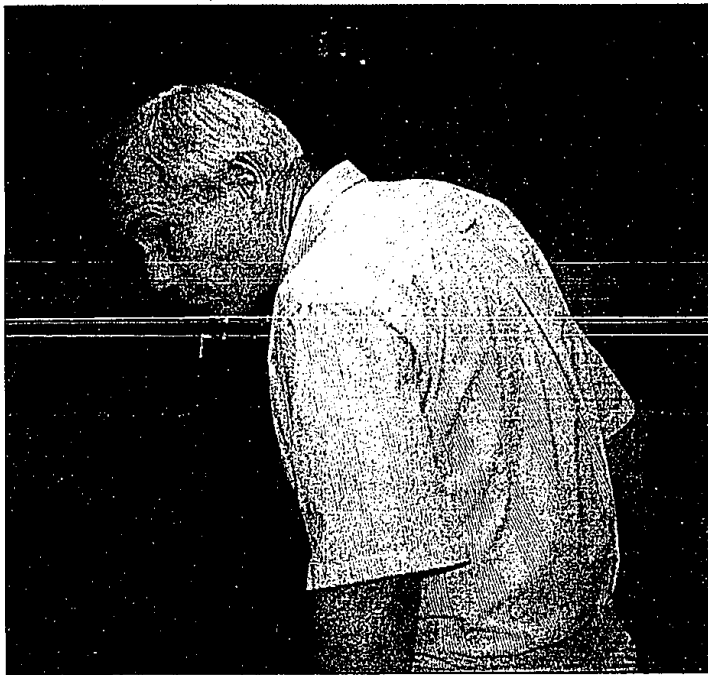
"There's been an anti-tax sentiment for the last several years," said Farmington Hills councilman Jon Grant, a proponent of the proposals. "It just gets stronger and stronger."

Only about 16 percent of registered voters in Farmington and Farmington Hills turned out to cast their ballots in Tuesday's special election, compared to about a 40 percent turnout in June's special election on a school tax reform proposal that also failed, said Farmington city clerk Kathy Dorman. "Rain always keeps voters away," she said.

The proposal to authorize issuing up to \$16.5 million in bonds to pay for a new library failed 4,814 to 4,495, or 52 percent to 48 percent; the proposal to levy 1.1 mills to pay operating costs for 20 years failed by a 55-45 percent margin, 6,046 to 4,134. Hills voters defeated the bond issue, 4,290-3,897, and the tax increase, 4,507-3,493. Farmington voters passed the bond issue, 641-524, but defeated the millage, 639-636.

Absentee votes made up about 66 percent of the total vote cast. "I knew there were a lot of absentee voters, and I thought we (yes votes) would get about 40 percent of those votes, which we did," Grant said. "I thought we'd get 60-70 percent of the votes cast yesterday (Tuesday), and we did. But there just weren't enough voters yesterday."

Grant said the recent move by the state legislature to eliminate property taxes for school financing didn't convince voters to part with more of their tax dollar. He said voters expect more taxes to replace the lost property taxes and pay for schools and the budget proposal pushed by President Clinton also includes more taxes. And many did not understand that about two-thirds of the tax proposal would amount to a shift, not an increase.



Casting his ballot: Larry Urewig of Farmington ducks under the curtain rod as he leaves the voting booth at the Farmington Training Center.

Hills resident Arlene Sudkamp said the proposals failed for many reasons, including the choice of location for the new library. But increasing taxes was probably the main problem.

"The whole thing (1972 facility on 12 Mile) was poorly planned," she said. "They had property behind the library they could have bought, but didn't. They ask you to tighten your belt, but any time they want something they just ask you to pay more taxes."

Library director Bev Papai said she had been optimistic but isn't doing any Monday morning quarterbacking.

"I don't know what else we could have done," she said. "We asked everyone we could for ideas and we had lots of people working on this."

Rosalyn Greenberg, president of the Friends of the Library, said she was disappointed by the vote, but doesn't expect to see another ballot issue any time soon.

"I don't know what else we could have done. We asked everyone we could for ideas and we had lots of people working on this."

Bev Papai
library director



Residents not sold on SourceClub plan

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

The idea of a large retail outlet in their neighborhood has some Farmington Hills residents steamed.

Johnna Reardon, a resident trying to develop 95 acres of property on the southeast corner of Middlebelt and 12 Mile roads to build a SourceClub membership store and 131 single-family houses. The property is owned by St. Joseph Mercy Hospital.

"This is a residential area," said

Brookhill Estates subdivision resident Ann Harris. "There would be a lot of heavy truck traffic and more theft in the area. I think it would bring in people from outside Farmington Hills and make the area poorer."

Harris said her neighbors and others living near the intersection don't want the development. They plan to show up at tonight's city planning commission meeting to voice opposition.

The meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. in the city council chamber at City Hall, 11 Mile and Orchard Lake roads.

Even residents far from Middlebelt and 12 Mile say they are alarmed at the plan for the development at 12 Mile and Middlebelt.

"We already have a Pace Warehouse in the city," said Rosemary Baker, who doesn't live near the property. "This would bring more traffic to any area where it is already heavy."

I just don't think people know this is going on."

The proposal would expand the area planned for commercial development in the city's master plan to allow the SourceClub membership store over about 14 acres, said planning commission chairman Paul Elzmann.

The city's master plan calls for two acres of commercial and four acres of

See SOURCECLUB, 11A

Coffee 'n' classics

The new Grand Cafe at 33316 Grand River in downtown Farmington will be the setting for Coffee and Classics 12:30-2 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 16. The Somerset String Quartet will provide the classics.

The quartet includes two violins (Kristin Toth and Mary Madill), a viola (Megan Smith) and a cello (Tara Speck).

Fund-raising fashions

The Farmington High School girls gymnastics team will put on a fund-raising fashion show beginning at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 19, in the auditorium of the high school on Shiawassee Road.

Team members will model fashions provided by Express and Clothestime. Tickets at \$5 each may

FARMINGTON FOCUS

be purchased at the door. For more information, call coach Alicia Herpik (229-1760) or the high school (489-3465).

Memory Lane

From the Aug. 19, 1953 edition of the Farmington Enterprise:

William Nuss, head football coach at Farmington High School, resigned to become superintendent of the Sumpter Township School in Belleville, Mich. During his stay in Farmington, Nuss became the first director of the Farmington Area Recreation Commission.

Hall lockers were being installed in the new

Farmington High School on Shiawassee, according to O.E. Dunkel, superintendent.

Short item: "Mrs. Emerson Ault of Mayfield Avenue escorted a group of mostly out-of-town guests on a visit to the fish hatchery near Northville last Thursday afternoon."

Welcome aboard!

A reception to welcome Rande Horn, new principal at Harrison High School, will be held 6:30-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 19, at the high school on 12 Mile Road west of Middlebelt. The public is invited to attend.

Horn was appointed to replace Clayton Graham, who retired last June.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336; dropped off at the newspaper office; or faxed to 477-9722.