

Farmington Observer

VOLUME 106 NUMBER 59

THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 1995 • FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 112 PAGES

SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

© 1995 Suburban Communications Corporation

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Earth Festival: Trash will turn to "treasure" and quail will be released to highlight the third-annual Earth Week Festival April 29-30. /4A

Parking solution: A handful of Farmington High students are seeking a solution for another handful of students who are causing parking problems. /5A

One more time: Voters in the Oakland Community College district will decide on Monday, June 12, a proposal for an 0.8-mill property-tax increase for seven years. On March 16 voters said no to an OCC millage. /9A

OPINION

Dear reader: The unsigned letter, critical of a photograph in the April 3 Farmington Observer, deserves a response. /16A

LET'S GO!

Concerts coming: Dance groups are all a flutter as they prepare for springtime concerts. /1B

Pass the popcorn: John Monaghan reviews the controversial, just released movie "Priest." /5B

SPORTS

Staying on track: Mercy High School was a winner in dual-meet girls track competition Tuesday. /1C

CREATIVE LIVING

Starring role: Farmington Hills resident Harold Linton, assistant dean of architecture at Lawrence Technological University, created a giant Star of David for an addition at Temple Israel in West Bloomfield. The colorful work is a dynamic center of attention. /1D

Artistic honors: Honorees at the Dove Dinner of the Ecumenical Institute for Jewish-Christian Studies will be presented with awards created by area glass artist Blair Reed. /1D

SPECIAL SECTIONS

Golf guide: A special golf section inside today's Observer features a map and listing of area courses in a five-county region along with stories and advertising on new clubs and special tournaments.

INDEX

Building/Business 1F
Cable 10A
Calendar 6C
Classifieds E-G
Community Life 11A
Creative Living 1D
Let's Go 1B

Obituaries 4A
Opinion 16-17A
Police, Fire 6A
Recreation News 5A
Sports 1C
Y Highlights 8A

HERE'S HOW TO REACH US

Newsroom: 313-477-5450
Newsroom Fax: 313-477-6722
Sports: 313-883-2141
Reader Comment Line: 313-883-2042
Classified Advertising: 313-881-0500
Display Advertising: 313-881-2300
Home Delivery: 313-881-0500
Cable/TV Weekly: 313-883-2182

Hills mayoral race is heating up



The election isn't until November, but it's not too early to round up the usual suspects — and then some — for public office in Farmington Hills.

BY BILL COUTANT

STAFF WRITER

The specter of a voter-elected mayor has made the political landscape in Farmington Hills a lot more interesting.

Councilman Aldo Vagnozzi, who served as mayor in 1990, has announced that he will seek the two-

year term. Fellow Councilman Jon Grant, who served as mayor in 1992, has taken out petitions for mayor, and Councilwoman Nancy Bates, who is up for re-election for City Council, has taken out petitions for both mayor and council.

"It's too early to make a decision about whether to run for mayor or

City Council," said Bates, 62. "I am considering both. But I want to choose based on what is the best way to serve the community."

Grant is more definite. The Hills businessman, who backed the idea of having an elected mayor, said it is important that the first one set the proper tone.

"This does not change the system," he said, alluding to the fact that the mayor's vote will still be equal to the other six council members. "But it's the mayor's responsibility to be a leader."

Grant's key issues

Grant said that with the city mostly developed, key issues are redevelopment; improving the city's technology; and carefully scrutinizing the more difficult, remaining properties with development potential.

"I'm strong in the areas of administration and management," he said. "And I think the mayor has to have good PR (public relations) skills, which I have."

See RACE, 2A

Any oil under this land?



GRANUM LAMBERT/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Concerned resident: Juanita Compton likes what she sees as she looks out over a wooded stretch near her house on Westfarm. But Compton is concerned that the land between her street and I-275 may be rezoned for oil drilling.

Oil exploration plans OK with DNR

BY BILL COUTANT

STAFF WRITER

Although some residents are surprised, the oil and gas exploration business is not new to Oakland County.

Several residents of the Meadowbrook Hills subdivision in the southwest corner of Farmington Hills were a little surprised — and a lot irritated — when a representative of an oil and gas exploration

company showed up at their door, asking if they'd like to get in on the enterprise.

A representative of West Bay Exploration Co. of Traverse City was offering residents money up front and royalties on any oil or natural gas that comes from their property. Even though the drilling would be done outside the subdivision, some residents don't like the idea.

"He was not offensive," said Jus-

nita Compton, who answered when West Bay representative Jeffrey Hillman called. "He said several neighbors had signed up."

Compton said she didn't think too much about the proposition at the time. But after a couple of return calls and the assurance that there would be well drilling whether she signed on or not, she became concerned.

"The only thing I had for sure if I

signed up was \$200," she said. "What would happen to property values? What would happen if something went wrong?"

Compton called the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and learned that West Bay was not only allowed to conduct its business in residential areas, but was considered one of the more reputable firms doing so.

See OIL, 2A

Voters' call: How smart is SMART?

BY LARRY O'CONNOR

STAFF WRITER

Whether SMART runs or stalls is uncertain, but at least Laura Pappas will have a say.

The Farmington resident depends on the bus system. She was one of a handful who spoke on SMART's behalf at the Farmington City Council meeting.

The City Council agreed to join a countywide referendum on SMART's survival. Oakland County voters will be asked to approve a .33-mill property tax to generate \$12 million for the ailing transit system. On a \$100,000 home, that's an additional \$16.50 a year.

Pappas, who is blind, takes a bus from Oakland Community College to

her job at the McNamara Building in Detroit. She takes a cab to the bus stop.

Her vote is only one, though. "Heaven forbid, don't let this system go," said Pappas, who is a taxpayer service representative for the Internal Revenue Service. "We have nothing to replace it with."

See BUS, 2A



Against: County Commissioner Donn Wolf would vote against SMART.

Anyone want to serve?

The city of Farmington is accepting applications from residents to serve on its Beautification Commission.

Three open seats exist on the Beautification Commission, whose members are appointed by the city council. Members serve two-year terms. A person must be a resident of Farmington to serve.

The Beautification Commission has 16 members and an ex-officio member from the Department of Public Services. The commission meets the second Wednesday of each month.

The committee advises the council of recommendations for beautification of the city; it promotes and publicizes projects and acknowledges community projects that enhance the city.

Applications are available in the city manager's office. For more information, call 474-5500.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Trash to Treasures

The second annual rummage sale sponsored by the volunteers of The Longacre House (formerly the Community Center) will be held 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, April 29, at the Longacre House, 24706 Farmington Road, Farmington Hills. Donated items for sale are still needed. Call 477-3404 for additional information.

About medical problems

Learn how to take care of minor medical problems and how to improve communication with doctors at a free program 10 a.m.

Tuesday, April 25, at the Farmington Hills Senior Center, 31658 11 Mile.

A free medical self-care handbook covering 115 common illnesses will be given to those who pre-register. Call 473-1630 for more information or to register.

Listen to your heart

Botsford General Hospital will offer a free Heart Fair in the hospital's Cardiology Department (second floor of the West Pavilion) 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, April 29.

Included will be blood pressure and cholesterol screening, body fat analysis, cooking demonstrations and exercise counseling. Disney characters and treats will be given to the children. For more information, call 471-8870.