

Farmington Observer

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Sunday
February 16, 1997

VOLUME 110 NUMBER 41

FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 68 PAGES • <http://www.oeonline.com>

SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

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Road Watch

They're one of the most talked-about topics in Oakland County: the state of our roads.

To help keep you abreast of the latest construction projects planned for federal, state, county or local roads that traverse Observer & Eccentric communities, we're introducing Road Construction Watch, an update that will appear every Sunday inside your home-town newspaper.

Today you'll find Road Construction Watch on page A8. Please look for it in our front-page index every Sunday starting next week.

Bob Maxfield
Managing Editor

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Good marks: Farmington Superintendent Bob Maxfield gets good marks from the school board in his annual review. /A2

Good deeds: Four Farmington Hills residents are honored for their life-saving efforts. /A2

COUNTY

A study in change: Oakland University is experiencing tremendous growth in programs and facilities which are attracting business and students alike. /A5

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Success story: The Upton brothers share their secrets for three generations of hardy hardware sales. /B6

Lights out: Columnist Jeffrey Bruce details the sobering effects of smoking on the skin. /B6

TASTE

Cherries: George Washington didn't cut down a cherry tree for the firewood. He did it for the cherries. /B1

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You can't do it all on President's Day; here's what's open

President's Day is not a day to wait by the post box, deposit a check or pay a ticket at the district court. However, while most government agencies and banks are closed and there is no mail delivery to honor U.S. presidents of yore, a few institutions remain open Monday.

One of these places is the public library, which has several books on George Washington and Abraham Lincoln to peruse.

Also open Monday will be:

- Farmington City Hall, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday is a regular business day with no disruption in trash collection. Farmington City Council also meets 8 p.m. Monday.
- Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Both branches of the Farmington Public Library, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- Though there is no delivery, people can mail letters and handle other postal business at the Southfield branch post office, 22200 W. 11 Mile, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Closed for the holiday will be:
 - Farmington Hills City Hall with the city council meeting canceled. However, there will be no disruption in trash collection.
 - 47th District Court.
 - Farmington Hills and Farmington post offices.

Hills faces new fees, contracts



User fees might go up; four employee union contracts will be negotiated; and police administration will be streamlined. Finances will be the biggest issue facing Farmington Hills this year.

By WILLIAM COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills City Council members have a full plate for 1997. At a recent goal-setting session, they focused on city finances as the main course this year.

"We've got tight budgets," said City Manager Dan Hobbs. "But we

have some exciting initiatives that can save money."

Hobbs said the city will be negotiating contracts with four of the city's six unions. Finding a balance between rewarding employees while keeping costs down will be a challenge, he said.

Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi noted that

restrictions of Proposal A, which cap tax increases at 5 percent or the cost of living increase, will limit what officials can offer employees.

User fees will be targeted to see if more revenue can be generated. A study on those fees is looking at how much users of various services are charged, and what is reasonable.

"We're taking a business approach and seeing what the true cost is," Hobbs said.

The police department will be reorganized as of March 7, eliminating a layer of bureaucracy by dropping the deputy chief and inspector

positions while saving the city \$38,122 in salary.

The change won't diminish the city's sworn officer strength. (See related story, Page A6.)

Farmington Hills plans to take the lead in pushing Oakland County to add a surcharge of 43 cents a month to telephone bills to pay for 9-1-1 service, as provided for in a 1994 law.

"We're the only county in the area not doing this," Hobbs said, adding that County Executive L. Brooks

See FINANCES, A6

Betting on Detroit



Rambling, gambling: Virgil Carr of Farmington Hills hopes to secure some assurances to protect residents of the city of Detroit through his position on Mayor Dennis Archer's casino gambling committee, which has been visiting and learning from other towns that added casinos.

STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LASKULIC

He's pushing better odds for casinos

By WILLIAM COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Virgil H. Carr is not a gambler, but he's learning all he can to make sure the Detroit area doesn't go bust because of casinos.

The Farmington Hills resident and president of United Way Community Services in Detroit would seem an unlikely member of Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer's committee that is studying how to implement casino gambling in the city after voters approved the idea.

"I have 30 years in the human services field," said Carr, 56. "The impact of gambling in Detroit is too important for us not to do it right the first

time. Because we'll only get one chance. We can't blow it."

The Iowa native, who has lived with his wife, Mygene, in Farmington Hills for the past 3 1/2 years, trained in social work at Washington University in St. Louis. He came to Michigan from Chicago and has been impressed with the Motor City's comeback efforts.

"This has been one of the most exciting times in my life," he said.

United Way revolutionized philanthropy for social causes, making it easier for middle-class and working-class families to give through pay roll deductions and becoming a blanket organi-

zation for an increasing number of not-for-profit organizations.

Now those organizations face a new challenge: Helping the community reap some of the economic benefits of casinos without suffering the devastating social consequences associated with gambling in other venues.

Evidence mounts

Other cities, including Detroit's Canadian neighbor Windsor, have been convinced that casinos can bring cash and jobs into the community. But there have been few successes.

See GAMBLING, A6



STAFF PHOTO BY BRIAN MITCHELL

His moment: Michael Kraft, 11, came to America from Germany last September and is already writing short stories and giving oral readings in English class at the International School in Farmington Hills.

International School puts the accent on foreign language

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

At the International School, "Curious George" is a *singe, mono, or der Affe*. It depends on what classroom you're in.

Transgressions of the pesky monkey featured in the series of children's books are more likely to be read about in French, Spanish or German than English by kindergartners and first graders at the Farmington Hills private school, which is operated by former state Sen. Jack Faxon.

The International School — specializ-

ing in foreign language immersion for kindergarten through grade eight — moved to the former Lubavitch Center on Middlebelt Road in the fall. The school previously operated in Beverly Hills until its lease expired during the summer.

An open house is planned for interested parents 2-5 p.m. Saturday, March 1, at the school, 26555 Middlebelt, north of 12 Mile. Yearly tuition for the nonprofit school is \$4,000 for junior kindergarten (half days), \$7,250 for senior kinder-

See SCHOOL, A2

Hi-lo radio

Dean of Detroit radio and Farmington Hills resident Dick Osgood will discuss the history of "The Lone Ranger Show" during the second half of the Somewhere In Time radio program aired 7 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 20, on WDTR-FM 90.9.

Osgood will answer the following questions undoubtedly gnawing at the minds of many avid radio listeners: What happened to the rest of the Texas Rangers? Why did the Lone Ranger wear a mask? Where did the name "Tonto" come from? And, most importantly, what happened to the show when the cast spent two hours at the Aloha Bar on Woodward between shows for the East and West coasts?

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Mother knows best

"Mothers' Sayings," a collection of poem pictures from the 1920-40s that children often bought for their mothers, are on display at the Farmington Historical Commission's showcase at Farmington Hills City Hall.

The collection, which belongs to Pam Correll, is on display during February and March. The showcase is outside city council chambers in the southwest corner of city hall, 11 Mile and Orchard Lake roads.

Knollenberg speaks at GOP dinner

U.S. Congressman Joe Knollenberg will speak to the Farmington Area Republican Club, when it hosts its annual dinner meeting at 6:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 21, at The Longacre House, 24705 Farmington Road, between 10 and 11 Mile roads.

The event features cocktails at 6:30 p.m., with dinner (prime rib, white fish, three sides, salad, beverages and a desert table) at 8 p.m. Cost is \$22.50 per person.

For ticket information, call Ben Marks at 477-8404 or fax him at 477-4403. Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Observer: 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48335; or faxed to: 810-477-9722.