

# Farmington Observer

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## IN THE PAPER TODAY

**Dust settles: Farmington Hills officials aren't ready to spread to the entire city the cost of spraying gravel roads./A3**

## COUNTY

**Construction ahead: 'Tis the season, and local communities are reporting increasing areas of road work./D6**

## TASTE

**Asparagus: Food of kings reigns every spring, if only for a short time. Learn how to enjoy this seasonal delight./B1**

## SPORTS

**Seasonal outlook: Farmington Harrison has loads of experience on its baseball team, but the Hawks have a shortage of proven pitchers./D1**

## ARTS & LEISURE

**Fine art: Artists reveal their glittering glass treasures in the annual International Glass Invitational April 5 to May 4 at Habatat Galleries./C1**

**Books: Best-selling mystery author Anne Perry talks with irrepressible pleasure about the crime that begins her latest novel, "Ashworth Hall."/C1**

## INDEX

Arts & Leisure	C	Malts, Mainstreets	D4-5
Bus. & Finance	F8-8	Movie Guide	C4
Business Scene	A8	New homes	F
Classifieds	D, F, J	Oakland Digest	A4
Crossword	G4	Obituaries	A6
Autos for sale	H1	Police, fire calls	A5
Index	G3	Road Watch	D6
Service Guide	J5	Taste	B1-3
Real Estate	G1		
Jobs & Careers	H1		

## Call to recycle telephone books is answered

Farmington and Farmington Hills residents can recycle telephone books in their recycling bins beginning on April 14.

Residents of the two cities along with those in South Lyon, Southfield and Wixom will be able to do so as part of the Resource Recovery and Recycling Authority of Southwest Oakland County.

The telephone books should be placed in the bins loose, not in bags.

The books will be separated by hand at the Material Recovery Facility at Eight Mile and Evergreen in Southfield. From there, they will be shipped to market and recycled into animal bedding and hydroseed mulch.

The addition of telephone books to the curbside recycling program is in response to available markets and resident requests.

However, the recycling changes cut both ways. Farmington Hills residents, along with those in Southfield, will no longer be able to use plastic bags to recycle grass and leaves as of April 14.

They are encouraged to "grasscycle," by leaving clippings on the lawn or by mulching. Those residents who decide to bag grass and leaves can continue to put them in a rigid 30-gallon container labeled "yard waste" or use a paper yard waste bag. Paper yard waste bags will be available at the Farmington Hills and Southfield City Halls and DPWs, as well as at several local retailers.

The elimination of plastic bags is due to environmental concerns. During the past several years, large scale compost facilities have experienced difficulty completely removing the plastic from the finished product. Several sites have been forced to close because of complaints from residents about foul odors. The odors were caused by grass degrading anaerobically in the plastic bags.

The change is consistent with recommendations from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the Michigan Composting Council.

For more information, call Heidi Wayco, the authority's recycling coordinator at (510) 209-2270.

## Top of her class



Oakland County's best: Dodie Harris goes front and center with her fourth grade class. She was recently named the county's Elementary Teacher of the Year.

## Selling the sizzle

### Hillside teacher keeps class on its toes

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Hillside Elementary doesn't have a marquee outside that says: Dodie Harris: Room 209, September through June.

But perhaps the school should. The fourth grade teacher is a stand-up act.

Harris doesn't sit behind a desk, merely grade papers and occasionally peer over reading glasses to monitor the assembled students like some stereotypical school marm.

Instead, she prowls all four corners of her classroom only to pivot quickly on the balls of her feet and point to a student with a question. It's the kind of kinetic energy that keeps everyone on edge, and above all else, tuned in.

"I'd never want to be boring," said Harris, chafing at the mere thought.

A kid in her class can never drift off for fear of being called upon. A visitor to her classroom is not immune to the whirlwind of activity. She'll summon the person to

the front to explain what he does for a living and answer questions.

Harris has been named both the Farmington district and the Oakland County Elementary Teacher of the Year. It's the second year in a row a Farmington educator has received the county honor as Flanders Elementary's Pam Ellis was chosen for the award sponsored by WDIV-TV and Post-Newsweek in 1995.

The recognition "blew me off my seat," said Harris, who has taught

See HONORED, A2

## \$1.2 million set for Grand River/M-5 fix

By WILLIAM COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

Farmington and Farmington Hills officials were happy to hear the announcement by state Rep. Andrew Raczkowski that \$1.2 million in state transportation money will go to the Grand River/M-5/Halsted intersection project.

But they aren't exactly sure if all of the money is in place to complete the improvements to the intersection that has bottlenecked traffic and frustrated motorists for years.

"I greatly appreciate all the help Rep. Raczkowski has given to this

project," said Farmington Hills City Manager Dan Hobbs. "I'm just not sure of the total amount and degree to which money is committed."

Raczkowski, R-Farmington Hills, made the announcement Friday that the state Transportation Commission was providing a \$1.2 million grant toward the \$8.4 million project to alleviate traffic problems at the busy area.

"This is an area that has caused a lot of headaches for many years," he said. "This project will not only smooth out rough spots but make the area more efficient for drivers."

Raczkowski, who was elected to

the House last fall, said he believed this would be the final funding needed to fix the ramp and make other improvements.

"The access ramp is the most important part of the project," Hobbs said. "We were in Washington and talked with (U.S. Rep.) Joe Knollenberg about it. We're trying to get clarification on the multi-year funding. There are too many questions about it."

Money for engineering, site plans and property acquisition had already been approved for the pro-

See M-5, A5

## Disease victim sues market

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER



A lawsuit has been filed against Cattlemen's Farmers' Market by a man hospitalized during an outbreak of Legionnaires' Disease in Farmington during October.

Oakland County Health Officials cited an air condenser at Cattlemen's in the Uptown Plaza on Grand River as the source of the Legionella bacteria, whose airborne transmission was believed to have led to the outbreak where four people died and 30 were hospitalized.

The suit filed in U.S. District Court by Donald George, 62, of Redford charges Cattlemen's Market was negligent in its maintenance of the air unit. George is seeking in excess of \$75,000 for mental and physical anguish. George was hospitalized for a week in October with Legionnaires', his attorney said.

"There's a meaningful percentage of people who die and, fortunately, he wasn't one of them. But he didn't know that," said Henry Chayot, attorney for the plaintiff. "It's one thing to be sick, but it's another thing to be sick and knowing you could die."

See LAWSUIT, A6

## Price tag, computers doomed bond try

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

Fate of the Farmington Public Schools proposed \$110 million bond issue became clearer with every informational meeting.

The district conducted four such sessions at its middle schools and another at Our Lady of Sorrows before Tuesday's bond and millage renewal election.

Audiences included PTA members, PEP (Parents for Educational Priorities) supporters who opposed the bond and folks from the financial strategies committee who recommended the district go for it.

Eighty percent of the people in the district do not have children in the public schools. Some spoke up during those informational sessions.

Joe Q. Public's loudest response came at the ballot box. Residents who weren't aligned with any group still had concerns about the bond's size and undoubtedly played a role in the issue's narrow defeat.

Trustees will consider what do next at its regular board meeting April 8.

"We're going to have to sit down and talk about it," Linda Enberg, trustee. "Everybody is trying to listen first to see what the most objectionable things were to community members. I think we were very close to finding something the community could support."

See BOND, A6

## Missing in action

A Livonia man is hoping that some St. Patrick's Day reveler can help him. The man's black top coat and wallet were taken while he was at Cowley's Old Village Inn March 17.

"This is the only winter coat I have and the money in the wallet was to pay my room and board, insurance payment and car payment," he wrote in a letter to the Observer. "It was all the money I had in the world and I desperately need it."

The man is asking that the coat and wallet be returned to Cowley's at on Grand River just east of Farmington.

## FARMINGTON FOCUS

### Touting volunteers

The Farmington Hills Commission on Children, Youth and Families is hoping to recognize volunteers in the city from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 16 — with the help of the community.

The volunteer spirit will be honored with awards, the showing of a video of volunteers in action, visits to booths of area agencies and organizations that use volunteers and appetiz-

ers/refreshments.

Any groups interested in setting up a table or any volunteers interested in attending should call 473-1813.

### Looking for Brooks?

"Patterson and Company," a weekly half-hour public affairs program hosted by Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson, is now available to Farmington/Farmington Hills cable viewers on Time Warner's channels 8 and 12.

It can be seen at 9:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Saturdays and at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesdays and Sundays on Farmington Municipal Cable Channel 8; and 11 a.m. Wednesdays on Channel 12.