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IN THE PAPER TODAY

Buckled up: Two Farmington high schools vie for the honor of having the highest percentage of seatbelted drivers. /A16

COMMUNITY LIFE

Mom times 4: With her first Mother's Day approaching, a Farmington Hills woman describes life after having quadruplets. /B1

ENTERTAINMENT

Theater: Ordinary people often do extraordinary things. Meet two sisters who are "Having Our Say." /E1

SPECIAL SECTION

All Stars: Four students from Farmington Schools are honored for academic and extracurricular activities



as part of this year's Observer Academic All-Star Team, featured in today's paper in a special section.

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Cool on Ice



STAFF PHOTO BY TOM HOFFMEYER

Grand "Beginnings": Carly Clemens, a featured skater in the "Competition" group, shows her poise Friday during the Farmington Hills Ice Arena's first annual ice show, called "Beginnings." Crowds packed the arena for the weekend's performances, which featured youngsters from the arena's skating programs plus staff professionals and guest skaters. For more photos, please see Page A17.

Apartment managers train to cut crime

The Farmington Hills Police Department is training apartment managers on security, screening applicants, helping police help them and more. The goal is crime-free apartments.



BY WILLIAM COULTANT
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills police want to ensure the city's apartment buildings provide safe housing and that the managers can better screen new tenants.

At the department's invitation, managers of 27 apartment locations in the city showed up for a free workshop at the William Costick Activities Center on April 24.

"The response was excellent," said Officer Bonno Unruh, a crime prevention specialist. "There was a lot of interest and questions about how to improve the situation."

Farmington Hills is one of several communities joining the Crime-Free Multi-Housing program. Those communities that have already implemented the three-phase program have seen increased occupancy rates and better security at their apartment complexes.

The program requires that managers first attend the eight-hour workshop.

That covers how to become certified, crime prevention through environmental design, applicant screening, rental agreements, management responsibilities, eviction laws, zoning enforcement, identifying illegal activity, police/management cooperation and fire safety.

Hills police provided experts on each of the topics.

The second phase involves a security survey of the apartment facility by police who set minimal requirements that must be met.

The third phase requires managers to conduct a tenant crime prevention meeting where police outline the program, Apartment Watch concepts, personal safety and other crime prevention subjects are discussed and a certificate is issued upon completion.

"I have been in this business for 25 years," said Pat Elvidge, property manager of Cedarbrook Apartments on Middlebelt. "I thought it was fair."

Please see CRIME, A1

Board hopeful sees gifts, grants filling tech needs

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

When it comes to technology, Mark Clevey believes the Farmington School District should first go hat in hand to corporations and foundations.

Clevey, a Farmington Hills resident, is one of three candidates for two open seats on the board of education in the school election June 9. The district's failed \$110 million bond issue March 25 inspired his candidacy.

"That turned my crank," Clevey said.

He thinks there's a better way to raise money for technology. Corporate gifts, foundations grants and matching funds could pay for new computer equipment rather asking voters to approve a bond issue.

The \$110 million bond proposal included \$22 million for new technology. The remaining portion would have paid for building renovations.



Name: Mark Clevey
Age: 49
Family: Married, two daughters, ages 5 and 7.
Occupation: Vice-president of MCRRA, a state-wide association of industry, education and research government and economic development organizations.
Education: Master's degree in Public Administration from Western Michigan University; bachelor's degree from WMU.

"I think the schools have to broaden their funding base if they are going to continue to provide quality services to the community," Clevey said. "It's not that there is something inherently wrong with bonding."

"It's just that in these times bond issues are enough and in many ways they are restrictive."

Alternative funding is the major peg on which Clevey is hanging his hat during his first run for public office. The mere idea of going beyond the traditional cash machine — taxpayers — to pay for an important aspect of education could pay dividends in other ways, he said.

Please see CANDIDATE, A4

Hill volunteers



Warner work: Carol Hyska of Farmington, who volunteers her time as a docent and her skills as a master gardener, digs into the herb garden at Warner Mansion Tuesday morning with Mormon volunteer Elder Brian Paulsen. A group of volunteers worked at the downtown Farmington landmark for the annual cleanup day. For more on volunteer efforts that benefit our community, please see Pages A3 and A19.

STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LEBELTZ

Beanie Babies promo questioned

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A promotion at a Farmington Hills gift and card store has ruffled one collector of the highly sought-after Beanie Babies.

She questions the policy and the legality of making people buy a certain amount of merchandise to be entitled to purchase a Beanie Baby at the regular price. Veena's Cards Gifts & Collectibles on 12 Mile Road in Farmington Hills is running the special as part of a Mother's Day promotion.

If customers buy \$5 to \$9.99 worth of merchandise, they can purchase one Beanie Baby at the regular price of \$4.99, according to a flier.

If they spend \$10 more, they can buy two Beanie Babies.

A purchase \$30 or more allows someone to buy four of the stuffed toys.

When questioned late Tuesday about the promotion, the store's owner said the flier failed to state that a person could buy one Beanie Baby without purchasing any other merchandise.

"You can buy one Beanie Baby without buying anything," said Veena Bhatia, owner. "In all you can buy five, or you can just buy one and walk out."

Judy Davis bought cards and wrapping paper for \$16 and thought the cashier made a mistake when the total came to \$26. She believed the two Beanie Babies she picked up — in the likeness of a squirrel and kangaroo — were free.

Davis, who works in Farmington Hills, has 70 Beanie Babies in her collection.

"When I left there (Monday), I realized I finally crossed the line in my Beanie Baby mania," Davis said.

She called the store later, upset at having to buy gift wrap and cards she didn't need in order to get the coveted items. She was allowed to bring the \$16 worth of merchandise back for a refund, but kept the two stuffed dolls and wrapping paper. "They're hard enough to find without buying \$30 worth of merchandise," said Davis, who lives in Royal Oak. "... If she gets away with it, they're all going to do it."

Please see SAGS, A2

Drivers: Beware Farmington Road

Farmington Road drivers can expect better roads and safer bridges. That's the good news. Bad news is that to get those improvements means closing lanes, merging traffic and plenty of detours.

Farmington City Manager Frank Lauboff said this week that drivers on Farmington Road will continue to see lanes closed around Eight Mile Road for the next 3½ months while county road crews work on the Eight Mile stretch of pavement including the intersection.

One recent change that got traffic flowing better for Farmington Road drivers: Officials from

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Farmington, Farmington Hills, Livonia, Oakland and Wayne counties all agreed to eliminate any left turns at Eight Mile.

"Dan's helped," said Lauboff, who noted that 40,000 cars a day flow past that corner.

Other parts of Farmington Road will cause drivers headaches this summer, with two bridge projects to start next month.

Bridge construction starts in June at the M-

9/Nine Mile intersection. Expect the current five lanes to be cut to two. It won't be finished until winter, Lauboff said.

Meanwhile, the Farmington Road overpass at I-996 in Farmington Hills will be closed completely starting June 30 for bridge reconstruction over the expressway.

Farmington Hill Public Services Director Tom Binzel said completely closing the road will disrupt everyone for a shorter period and coincide with the end of school (and passing of school buses).

That part of Farmington Road is expected to reopen by the beginning of school.