

## Work in progress Volunteers build support for fest

For the first time, the Farmington Community Arts Council approached the business community for support of Festival of the Arts. The result was a modest contribution of about \$10,000, including in-kind services.

The actual amount isn't as impressive as what might lie ahead for the festival.

Fund-raisers for this third annual arts festival may have embarked on a fertile course. We're optimistic that their efforts are a sign of an emerging partnership between the arts and local businesses.

It's the type of partnership, as Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi says, that could lead to the festival becoming to our area what the Ann Arbor Art Fair means to Washtenaw County.

That may sound unrealistic, but the fervor and dedication of the hundreds of volunteers shouldn't be underestimated.

While the Farmington area is largely identified as a blissful retreat of rolling hills, historic markers, parks and new subdivisions, there's been a growing, grassroots push to make the arts a high priority here as in other nearby communities.

With 23 art groups and more than 1,500 practicing artists in our community, many residents are demanding a deeper cultural life.

The populist movement in the arts isn't a passing trend. The days of widespread public financing of the arts is behind us. The future of the local arts — and local arts funding — rests with Farmington area residents.

And invariably, with our city officials.

Yet there are disbelievers — those who think that the arts are only for the wealthy, leisure-minded and are tangential to community life. Skeptics need only examine the long list of



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participants whose paintings, musicianship, singing and craftsmanship are showcased in this year's festival.

And perhaps next year, the festival could be further broadened to include the outstanding Farmington Philharmonic Orchestra. Of course, bringing in additional, professional artists will require more money — and greater efforts to corral local businesses.

But the tide seems to be turning. The festival's fund-raising committee may well discover the best timing to "sell the idea" of next year's festival is during this year's event.

As the anticipation about this year's Festival of the Arts proves, there's a buzz about the growing role of the arts in Farmington. In the past several years, for instance, there has been talk about the need for a cultural arts center. It was even cited as a potential attraction during a city of Farmington "visioning" session recently. Clearly, the William Costick Activities Center (current site of the festival) serves the community well, but it just doesn't have the features of an art center. Before an art center will become a reality, though, the need must truly grow. In this case, if they come we as a community will build it.

If the strength and vitality of a community can be measured by the civic actions of its residents, then the Farmington area is being defined by those who call themselves arts advocates.

That's a work of art worth completing.

## Cycling tips worth repeating

It looks like spring has finally arrived. The buds are out, the birds are back and so are the bicycles. Which means it's time to say a few words about bicycle safety.

AAA Michigan reports that most bicyclist deaths are the result of collisions with motor vehicles. On a national level, more than 500,000 children are treated annually as a result of such accidents.

With that in mind, we offer the following safety tips for bicyclists, young and old alike:

- Always wear a bicycle helmet. Most serious bike injuries are head injuries.
- Wear light-colored or fluorescent clothing.
- Don't ride at night, even if your bicycle is equipped with a light.
- Ride with the flow of traffic.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals.

- Use hand signals.
- Be aware of traffic around you.
- Ride as close to the edge of the road as possible.
- Ride in single file.
- Never ride into the street from a driveway or side street without stopping first and checking traffic in both directions.
- Keep both hands on the handlebars.
- Don't ride two people on a bike.
- Check the brakes and the air in the tires regularly.
- Always use a bike lock if you leave your bike parked in a public place.
- Register your bicycle with the proper local authorities.

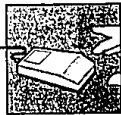
Most of these tips are common sense, but they can help keep you or your child from becoming another one of those AAA statistics.

## Library card: a world passport

Take a trip around the world.

The only passport you'll need is a library card. That's the theme for National Library Week, April 19-25. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the annual event.

To help library patrons "go global," Barbara Ford, president of the American Library Association, suggests that they borrow books to introduce children to cultures around the world, log on to the Internet and do some "global surfing," research their ancestors and their native countries or just find answers to questions such as: How much is a Mexican peso worth?



How tall is the Eiffel Tower? What's the weather like in Brazil? Ford noted that libraries offer a much wider range of services today than they did 40 years ago.

"Libraries today offer both global reach and local touch," Ford said.

"Thanks to new technology, library users in the smallest communities can connect to the Library of Congress and other great libraries, museums and research institutions around the world. And librarians are there to help."

So why not do it? Take a trip around the world this week. Visit your local library.

### TURNING BACK THE PAGES

This week in history as reported in past editions of the Farmington Observer and the Farmington Enterprise.

**40 YEARS AGO — APRIL 24, 1958 (ENTERPRISE)**  
 Two Farmington Township subdivisions had petitioned for blacktop paving — Staman Acres and Greencastle — and township officials were checking signatures. A third, Holly Hill Farms, was requesting petitions. A proposal by Farmington to annex eight square miles of Farmington Township wasn't making township officials very happy.

**25 YEARS AGO — APRIL 25, 1973**  
 Farmington Township officials put four roads on the top of their road paving priority list — Independence, Tuck, 11 Mile and Gill. Seven trophies were being readied for the largest Memorial Day Parade ever in Farmington.

**2 YEARS AGO — APRIL 25, 1996**  
 Despite a defense attorney's claim that the shooting death of Luvic Lucaj was a case of mistaken identity on March 22, two Detroit men accused in the murder were set to stand trial.

### COMMUNITY VOICE

**QUESTION:**  
 Do you think the Detroit Red Wings will repeat as Stanley Cup Champions this year?

We asked this question outside the Farmington post office.



"Oh I hope so. I think they will. They've got a lot of support in the community."  
 Barbara Seabolt  
 Farmington Hills



"I'm not a hockey fan. I hope they do though."  
 Ruth Hynes  
 Farmington



"I hope so. This is my first year back in Detroit after 17 years, so I'm a new fan. I think that'd be exciting."  
 Jody Frechette  
 Farmington



"I don't know and I don't care. I'm not into hockey."  
 Jerry Stehlik  
 Dearborn

### LETTERS

#### Know facts first

As a partner in Farmington Holding Company, the owner of the Village Mall in downtown Farmington, I read Alex G. Yvonou's April 2 letter to the editor with interest. It's just unfortunate that Alex didn't have the facts. Alex, I trust that you will be relieved after you understand the issue. The matter which your letter referred to was not a case of "petty grumblings," but rather one of serious public safety. This is not my opinion, but that of Farmington's Department of Public Safety. The City of Farmington, like most communities, has an ordinance which governs overcrowding in the hallways of commercial buildings. The reason is simple. Crowds are prone to panic, and when panic occurs, people can be injured. Shame on the anonymous source which told you about this matter for failing to also inform you about such an important aspect of the issue. And shame on you for criticizing a landlord who complies with a public safety ordinance. I quote a portion of the ordinance: "The owner or lessee of every structure shall be responsible for the safety of all persons, in or occupying, such premises with respect to the adequacy of means of egress therefrom." For the record, the measures that were taken to regulate sales at the Village Mall were the direct result of conservation with Farmington's fire marshal. Had these measures not been taken, a citation could have been issued. Alex, the next time you decide to accuse someone of being "terribly unjust," at least take the time to educate yourself about the issue. What appears like "kowtowing" to the uninformed observer, may actually have a more serious side to it, once you know the facts.

The Village Mall appreciates all of the customers who frequent its many fine shops. And it is because we appreciate these customers that we will not permit the self interest of a few to jeopardize the safety of everyone who shops there. And by the way, Alex, the next time you decide to take a cheap shot, don't pick someone like Barbara Horriagan-Goins of the Celtic Shamrock, who has been one of our finest additions to the Village Mall merchants. It merely reinforces the impression that you don't know what you are talking about.

David Cornwell  
 Farmington Holding Company

#### Alternative to cable

Don't think a week goes by where there is not a story in the Observer about cable television rates and service in Farmington Hills. The frustration we have all lived through with the policies and rate hikes of first, Metrovision, and now, Time Warner, is indeed a community wide concern.

My way of dealing with this situation was to obtain a mini-digital satellite dish for my television reception. As I investigated the market, I heard through the digital satellite dish grapevine, that there was a station devoted entirely to 24 hours-a-day of personal improvement programming. The station was The Peoples Network and it could only be received on a PRIMESTAR satellite dish.

I tracked one of those distributors down and a few days later I had a mini-dish installed in my yard.

The \$99 I paid for installation was one of the best investments I've ever made. For the same monthly fee I was paying for my cable service, I am able to have as many as 160 audio and video channels as well as the world's only success and seminar network delivered into my home. Instead of paying hundreds or thousands of dollars to attend a seminar on career advancement, selling, or relationships, I am able to watch some of the world's greatest success coaches — people like Les Brown, Brian Tracy, Dr. Ellen Kreidman, Mark Victor Hansen, Nido Qubein, Connie Podesta, and many others — in my home.

It is incredibly gratifying to know that your children are receiving constant positive programming designed to help them as well as you and me achieve more in every aspect of our lives. Also in knowing that your children are watching shows with no guns and violence and rapes and drugs in them.

I don't know why this concept of a positive programming television network never took root before, but I certainly am thankful for it.

George Sarkislan  
 Farmington Hills

*(Editor's Note: The writer works for Ford Motor Co. and is now a distributor for The People's Network. He is chairman of the Committee to Increase Voter Participation in Farmington Hills.)*

Opinions are to be shared: We welcome your ideas, as do your neighbors. That's why we offer this space on a weekly basis for opinions in your own words. We will help by editing for clarity and brevity. To assure authenticity, we ask that you sign your letter and provide a day-time contact telephone number. No anonymous letters will be published.

The week prior to an election, this newspaper will not publish letters that discuss new issues, since last-minute attacks don't allow a chance for rebuttal. Responses to already published issues will be accepted.

Letters should be mailed to: Editor, The Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington, MI 48335; faxed to (248) 477-9722; or e-mailed with your name, city of residence and phone number to dvarga@oe.homecomm.net

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— Philip Power