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IN THE PAPER TODAY

Giving: Residents and city employees line up to give blood at the Farmington Hills Fire Department Monday./A7

Bonding: The Farmington Public Schools will sell bonds early./A9

OPINION

Squalor: Gov. John Engler and his buddies should take note of the plight of a Farmington Hills man who was found living in a dilapidated and unkempt house./A12

COMMUNITY LIFE

Let it snow: Dave Litogot, local historian, traces the area's blizzards./B1

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Survey: Parents aren't connecting



A 1998 survey of parents and students in grades five-nine shows that while parents think they are getting through to their kids about cigarettes, beer and other substances, that may not be the case.

BY TIM SMITH
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Too many times, parents think they effectively communicate with their children about the perils of beer, cigarettes and other substances.

But they usually fail to connect with their intended audience, according to just-released findings of a spring 1998 survey of Farmington Public Schools parents and students in grades five-nine. The survey was conducted by Co-Operation Health, a cooperative part-

nership between Farmington Public Schools and the Botsford Health Care Continuum.

Findings also were to have been discussed during last night's second annual Call to Action community coalition-building summit.

"We need to figure out what's an effective message," Margo Gorchow, administrator of hospital and community relations for Botsford General Hospital, said during a press conference Tuesday about the findings. "If it

Please see related story, A10

is, 'Your breath will stink, and girls won't want to kiss you (from cigarette smoking),' then we're going to go with that. Because then, it's a deterrent."

Telling 12-year-olds they could eventually contract lung cancer or heart disease from the cigarette habit is meaningless, Gorchow added.

Meanwhile, getting parents, merchants and the general public to

Please see SURVEY, A10

Kosova conflict plagues students

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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A "important" announcement bellows over the Harrison High public address system: Friday is the last day to buy tickets to the Junior Formal Dance. A few feet away, in a room separated by a glass partition, a male student scans a videotape of models on the Internet.

Merita Gjetaj and Vilson Sinistaj don't notice either.

While Gjetaj and Sinistaj talk about fears ethnic Albanians have about being murdered and being forced to flee Kosovo, the everyday setting of high school life is somewhat surreal. (Though spelled "Kosovo," ethnic Albanians prefer "Kosova.")

"Here they think about having fun," said Gjetaj, 17, who has been in the U.S. for 1½ years. "It's not their fault because other people are dying."

"But when I see them, I think about the other students back home and I start to cry."

Students Gjetaj's age are sleeping in their clothes without run-



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BERLIN

Arrived: Merita Gjetaj's mother and father work as a dishwasher and cook respectively at the same restaurant. In Kosovo, her mother was a nurse and her father a social worker.

Please see STUDENTS, A1

47th asks for third judge — again

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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Farmington 47th District Court officials have made their plea: They need a third judge.

District Court Judge Marla Parker and 47th District Court Administrator David Walsh made an impassioned argument to state legislators Rep. Andrew Raczowski and Sen. Willis Bullard during an informal meeting Monday. They talked during a study session meeting with Farmington Hills City Council members.

With jurisdictional changes in civil and criminal cases, the 47th District Court workload continues to swell, according to court officials.

After Jan. 1, the threshold for misdemeanors involving property crimes increased from \$100 to \$1,000. Instead of being felonies, which are transferred to the circuit court level, those cases will be decided in district courts.

That means anywhere from 200 to 400 cases, which would have been clas-

Please see JUDGE, A5

Parents have one last chance

BY TIM SMITH
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Farmington Harrison High School parents have one more chance to ask questions and get answers about block scheduling before a proposal is voted on by the board of education.

The next, and likely last, parent information meeting about the subject is set for 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 9, at the Harrison auditorium. Previous Q&A sessions took place last June and October.

BLOCK SCHEDULE

"We still have some details to work out," said Mary Brown, Harrison assistant principal, urging parents to come out for the meeting.

One subject likely to be brought up again is whether students receive as much class time under block scheduling as they do currently.

Please see PARENTS, A6



Searching: Vilson Sinistaj searches the Internet to get updates on his homeland.



Arrived: Sinistaj and Gjetaj are among the newest members of the Farmington area's Albanian residents.

Don't expect too much from snoozin' groundhogs

BY JOANNE MALISZEWSKI
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Punxsutawney Phil may step out of his den to see if he sees his shadow in Pennsylvania Feb. 2 — officially Groundhog Day — but the chances of Farmington Fred doing the same are almost nil.

"Woodchucks are groundhogs," said Farmington Hills naturalist Joe Derek. "They don't stand up to see anything. They are one of our true hibernators. They go into hibernation because of the cold weather and food supplies."

In other words, chances are no one in Farmington or Farmington Hills will see a groundhog Feb. 2 or anytime soon after unless the thermometer hits high-

er temperatures.

"I don't know how Groundhog Day ever started. They just don't come out until late spring. Maybe they borrow one from a zoo or find a den and take one out," Derek said. "If we had a very warm snap, they might come out and look around."

The origins of Groundhog Day date back to the 1700s. On Candlemas Day originating from early European Christians — clergy blessed and distributed candles among the people. Also on that day, if a hedgehog cast a shadow it was believed that there would be six more weeks of winter.

When settlers arrived in the New World, they discovered the groundhog or woodchuck, which resembled the



Groundhog Day
Tuesday,
Feb. 2, 1999

European hedgehog.

The Indians that Europeans encountered in America believed the groundhog to be a wise animal, and if the sun was shining on Feb. 2 (Candlemas Day) the groundhog would see his shadow, and there would be six more weeks of winter.

Punxsutawney and the official Groundhog Day began in the summer of 1887 during a groundhog hunt and

picnic. A man named Clymer H. Freas, apparently a Punxsutawney resident, remembered that according to legend the groundhog was an expert weather indicator. He then claimed for the Punxsutawney groundhog all weather rights. He made a home for the creature on Cobbler's Knob, which is now world-famous. Later, W.O. Smith, a U.S. congressman, made Punxsutawney a weather capital of the world.

Back in the Farmington area, you are certain to see plenty of groundhogs — but not until spring.

"We have lots of them. We have even joked that they should be our city animal," Derek said.

Please see GROUNDHOG, A5

Residents continue to scrutinize

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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Whether viewed as vigilance or nitpicking, Power Road residents continue to scrutinize an impending development like a stamp collector using a microscope.

Many returned to the Farmington Hills City Council for preliminary plan approval of the controversial Oakwood Knollwood Subdivision.

The planned 23-lot subdivision north of 11 Mile on the west side of Power Road pitted existing residents against the developer and city, which was eventually settled out of court.

On Monday, council members considered what otherwise would have been a routine matter. Said City Attorney John Donohue: "As with everything else associated with this property, it's a little more complicated."

POWER ROAD

The council agreed to allow one lot to be 20 feet less in width. The reduction from 125 to 105 feet increases the size of a neighboring storm water basin and allows the developer to still build a home on the lot.

Through his engineer, the developer agreed with the change.

"I think that would calm everybody's nerves a little bit more," said John Hennessy, the developer's engineer. "We want to be good neighbors."

North Power Road residents wanted answers to drainage and other questions. Some wondered if a storm basin to handle a 100-year rain is enough, especially with recent flooding problems along Middlebelt Road.

"We may not want to cram a home right

Please see RESIDENTS, A10

