

# Farmington Observer

Serving Farmington and Farmington Hills for 112 years

HomeTown  
COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK  
Putting you in touch  
with your world

Sunday  
February 21, 1999

VOLUME 112 NUMBER 43

FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 72 PAGES • <http://observer@centric.com>

SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

© 1999 HomeTown Communications Network, Inc.

## THE WEEK AHEAD

### MONDAY

**City hall:** The Farmington Hills City Council will meet in a study session at 5 p.m. and then a regular meeting at 7:30 p.m. at city hall, 31555 11 Mile.

### TUESDAY

**Agenda:** The Farmington Board of Education will meet at 7:30 p.m. at the Schulman Administrative Center, 32500 Shiloh.

### WEDNESDAY

**Planning ahead:** Tickets are available for the Farmington Players presentation of the musical "The Fantasticks" this coming weekend. Call the box office at 553-2955.

### THURSDAY

**Join in:** The Team Farmington Special Olympics Bowlathon is Saturday. Sign up. Call Dave Clinard, 888-5024.

### INDEX

Obituaries	B4
Classified Index	E6
Real Estate	E1
Crossword	E8
Jobs	H2
Automotive	J1
Home & Service	J6
Taste	B1
Arts & Leisure	C1
Malls	C6
Sports & Recreation	D1

## Farmington mom seeks answers



By TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
tsmith@homecomm.net

Larry Thompson was found dead in a Detroit motel on Jan. 30, but his next of kin didn't find out about it until 10 days later - even though the 43-year-

old Farmington man had proper identification on him.

For that, his mother, Carol Thompson, is understandably livid with the Wayne County Morgue and Detroit Police Department. She called both for an explanation and received none,

adding that officials from both agencies blamed the lack-of-notification snafu on the other.

"You're just another number in the morgue is what it feels like," Carol Thompson said last week.

Each side is blaming the other and in the meantime, here's someone whose family is looking for him. How many other families will this happen to?

Marc Hulet, of the Wayne County Morgue, said he could not comment

**'Each side is blaming the other and in the meantime, here's someone whose family is looking for him. How many other families will this happen to?'**

Carol Thompson  
—mother

Please see MOTHER, A4

### Dueling pianos



Ebony and Ivory: The music of pianists Stefan Kukurugaya and Dana Croll brings patrons out of their seats and onto the stage.

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DRESLER

## Piano bar revels to the beat

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER  
loconnor@homecomm.net

At a dueling piano bar, one expects the marquee to read: Main event - Billy Joel vs. Elton John; Undercard - Dr. John vs. Jerry Lee Lewis.

Or as one woman said upon her first trip to Goodfellas: "I thought it would be boring."

Dueling piano bars are many things, but tedium doesn't enter the equation at Goodfellas. Forget Beethoven: This piano bar is a participation sport.

The Farmington Hills nightspot is a place for revelers, who tap into the energy supplied by two piano players side by side on stage. The pair pound out a relentless melody, featuring post-Baroque chestnuts "Bad Leroy Brown," "Crescent Rock" and "Brown-Eyed Girl." Pianists also field requests, ranging from indecipherable to arcane.

Please see DUELING, A7

## Flooding prompts yet another suit

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER  
loconnor@homecomm.net

More residents along Middlebelt Road are suing - this time stemming from sewer backups two years ago.

Franklin Knolls subdivision homeowners are blaming the city of Farmington Hills and Oakland County for sewerage backups in June 1996 and May 1997. Oakland County Circuit

Court Judge David Breck will hear a motion Feb. 24 to consider certifying the litigation as a class action suit.

Seven families in the neighborhood west of Middlebelt and south of 14 Mile seek damages ranging from \$25,000-250,000.

A similar lawsuit was filed by Lincolnshire residents after 4.5 inches of rain fell and caused flooding Aug. 6. That suit is pending. Lincolnshire is

east of Middlebelt and south of 11 Mile.

Dale Moore's is one of seven families in the Franklin Knolls suit, which cites the Farmington-Evergreen interceptor as the main cause for backups.

Sewerage destroyed Moore's partially finished basement, which had been stockpiled with his mother-in-law's belongings and heirlooms.

After the woman's husband died, family members moved and stored her

belongings at Moore's home. When he woke up one morning, raw sewerage reached the bottom basement steps.

"She was a collector; a pack-rat from way back," Moore said. "Unfortunately, most of it was all lost. And here is human waste floating in our basement."

Moore "very conservatively" esti-

Please see FLOODING, A7

## Royal Oak, Hills officials seek peace

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER  
loconnor@homecomm.net

In an effort to soothe some chapped hands of municipal friendship, Farmington Hills city officials clarified a previous statement that ranked Royal Oak officials.

On Feb. 2, Hills officials backed its Police Chief Bill Dwyer for his department's involvement in a highly-publicized gambling raid at the Royal Music Theater Jan. 17.

The Feb. 2 statement was a response to Royal Oak city attorneys later dropping more than 370 misdemeanor tickets to people who attended the invitation-only party, which police said was a front for a high-stakes football betting operation.

Royal Oak officials were upset to the reference that tickets were dismissed because "highly placed people" were involved.

Misdemeanor charges were dropped, but an investigation continues. The case will then be presented to the Oakland County Prosecutor, which may result in felony charges.

"We're just trying to keep the record

Please see PEACE, A5

## Going to the dogs

### Pet superstore owner markets for charity

By JOANNE MALISZEWSKI  
STAFF WRITER  
jmaliszewski@homecomm.net

You could say that Jack Berry's life has gone to the dogs ... and the cats ... and the birds ... and the fish.

And that's just fine with him. "I'm not one of those people who are obsessed with animals," said Berry, president and founder of Pet Supplies "Plus."

But on any given day, you might find Berry in his office accompanied by his faithful golden retriever, Brandy. His dog certainly was at his side when he opened his first store in Redford Township in 1988.

While Berry is known for his pet supplies superstore, his support of animals and animal groups, particularly the Michigan Humane Society and the Michigan Animal Adoption Network, shares the spotlight.

"Once you are in business and you are relatively successful, you get hundreds of requests from people," Berry said. "So I decided as long as I am in the pet business, whatever effort and energy should be with pet-related things."

#### Above and beyond

But Berry has done more than share his financial success with animal organizations. He's shown them how to market their needs. About four years ago when the pet food division of Heinz Foods bought a brand named Nature's Recipe, company officials who had conducted pet telethons

for a couple years went in search of their largest pet customers for help. Pet Supplies "Plus" was one of those businesses.

"They asked about the Michigan Humane Society in the Detroit area," Berry said. "They went to the humane society and laid everything out for them. But there is a cost to running a telethon."

Berry guaranteed those costs so no one would lose money. In the first year of the telethon, he committed \$100,000. In 1997, the telethon took in \$301,000 for the humane society.

#### See related story, Page A5

With the third annual PETelethon for the Michigan Humane Society coming in March, Berry is gearing up - once again with a financial commitment, as well as a lot of effort and marketing skills.

To bring in the stores - some are his, others are franchisees - donation canisters will be available. Also posters will be near entrances of the stores so contributors can stop by with a donation and sign the poster, Berry said.

Oververland Pet Supplies "Plus" stores are in Farmington Hills, Livonia and Canton.

On the day of the telethon - noon to 5 p.m. Sunday, March 7 - the stores will donate 10 percent of sales to the Michigan Humane Society. "So that could be another \$17,000-20,000 donated," Berry added.

Please see TELETHON, A5



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DRESLER

All in the family: Jeanette and Jack Berry and their faithful golden retriever Brandy.

