

Farmington Observer

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Thursday
March 25, 1999

VOLUME 121 NUMBER 52 FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN 48106 PAGES: 11117//WWW.OBSERVERFARMING.COM SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

A note to our readers

Due to unforeseen technical problems, we were forced to adjust the format of our classified advertising sections in today's newspaper.

While we made every effort to ensure that all classified ads appeared in today's paper, some may have inadvertently been left out of the paper.

We apologize for any inconvenience this situation may cause our readers and advertisers.



Steve Pope
General Manager

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Opening: The new Mahle Technology Center is welcomed. /A4

COMMUNITY LIFE

Vintage: A peek back to the 1880s when the local library was born. /B1

Chat Room: Bruce Lilley talks up the planned Kids World PlayScape. /B1

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FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS



Editor's note: From now until the debut of the Festival of the Arts April 25-May 2 at the William Costick Activities Center, we will highlight the myriad of clubs and organizations that comprise the Farmington Community Arts Council, which hosts the week-long festival.

Farmington Garden Club

First organized in 1932, the Farmington Garden Club was federated in 1934, bringing its lifespan to a grand 67 years.

"We cover everything that's covered in the environment," said Janet Hunt, president.

The club, which meets monthly, offers programs running the gamut from floral design to horticulture to herbs.

Hunt served as the on-air spokeswoman for a video on beginning gardening offered by the club.

In addition to its programs, the club maintains gardens at Heritage Park and Longacre House. Members also have planted trees at Heritage Park. The club offers its biannual garden walk and its Good Neighbor Garden Contest.

Please see ARTS, A5

Limbo

Clairview residents say they're in it

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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Clairview residents feel they've been living at a change of address for nearly four years: It's called Limbo Street.

Homeowners want a solution to their plight, but not at the price a developer is currently offering. Mahle Realty is trying to buy their property to build a shopping center and condominium project on Orchard Lake, Northwestern and 14 Mile.

Haggling continues: A real estate agent has sent out contracts. Some don't feel they're being offered enough while others have already agreed to terms.

Neighbors are divided and wary of one another. Where block parties once took place, one resident likened the situation to a "war zone."

Something is getting lost in transaction, another homeowner said.

"There's a real connection here," said Don Young, who lives in the area that includes Clairview Drive and Court. "It just seems to be something everyone has forgotten about: This is where we've raised our families... I like where I live."

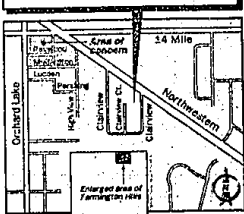
Ken Powell and his wife, Allison, grew up in Farmington Hills. They also has three children.

"It seemed like everyone got along with each other. Now there's neighbors pitted against each other," said Ken Powell, who has lived in Farmington Hills for 33 years. "It's not because of each other, it's because of the developer."

"They're good people here. We've been slammed as these greedy, money-

Please see LIMBO, A5

Residents speak out



Two-hour parking proposal tabled

BY TIM SMITH
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A proposal to institute two-hour parking in a portion of a downtown Farmington municipal lot was tabled until the April meeting of the Traffic and Safety Board.

DOWNTOWN

But, said Gary Goss, director of public safety and a member of the board, response to the proposal during last Thursday's meeting was mostly positive.

"Of course, there was the letter from Mutual (Financial Services)," Goss said. "And they are adamantly opposed to it."

The matter was tabled until the board's meeting on Thursday, April 15, because two board members (Ken Chiara, Dimitra Mehas) were absent, Goss said.

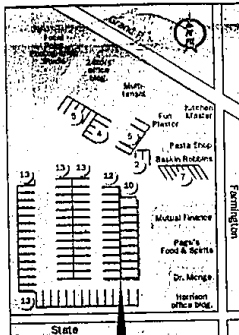
"We were missing two board members and we wanted their input," he said.

If the board recommends the plan be implemented, it would be forwarded to the city council for a final decision, probably during May.

According to the proposal, the bank of 22 spaces nearest Mutual Financial Services, Page's Food & Spirits, Dr. Ellozer Monge's office and business offices would be changed to two-hour parking.

The change, in part, is due to crowded conditions in late morning and early afternoon. Also, delivery trucks add to the congestion.

Please see PARK, A5



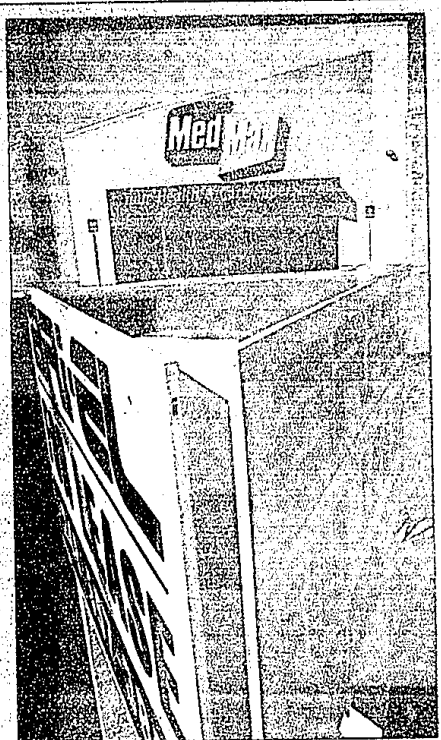
PARKING:

The long and short of it
Quest to make part of a Farmington municipal lot "short-term" (2-hr.) parking

2 = Number of parking spaces

Contributing to the situation, and friction between businesses, is the difference in parking needs. Some businesses, such as Mutual Financial Services, require longer-term parking for employees and customers, while patrons of restaurants such as Page's and the nearby Pasta Stop typically need 1-2 hours per visit.

Please see PARK, A5



Changes: MedMax, on Orchard Lake Road south of 13 Mile, has closed, and the building is for lease.

MedMax closes its Hills doors

A retail expert says there's not much to worry about though Crowley's and now MedMax are out of business.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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The closing of MedMax on Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills is a venture that looked good on paper, but couldn't survive in a competitive marketplace, a retail expert says.

The MedMax Superstore near 13 Mile has its windows covered. The Hills store was reportedly closed to stem losses. The company has not filed for bankruptcy.

MedMax shutting down coincides with the recent announcement that Crowley's on 12 Mile and Farmington is closing its doors. Such retail upheaval con-

tinues despite a booming economy.

"That's the paradox," said Fred Marx, retail consultant and partner in Farmington Hills based Marx & Layno.

Neither closing signals an overall downturn in the retail sector, Marx said.

Other stores continue to prosper, including those along Orchard Lake where Marx terms as "The Gold Coast."

That may be comforting news to developers and city officials, especially with proposed plans for further commercial development a mile north on the east side of Orchard Lake and Northwestern Highway. A high-scale retailer is interested in anchoring the proposed center.

As for MedMax and Crowley's, other stores will likely open there similar to when Staples opened in the wake of Party Giant, Marx said.

MedMax building's owner Ariel Liebowitz couldn't be reached for

Please see CLOSE, A4

Dusting off: Council deadlocks on assessment



Dusty: Power Road becomes dirt north of 11 Mile. City staff will decide how dust control will be paid for.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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When it comes to gravel roads, a few residents feel they get treated like dirt. A couple of city council members agree.

The issue is dust control: Residents who live on 22 miles of dirt road pay to keep clouds of debris from billowing during warm weather months.

City officials consider applying liquid calcium chloride to control dust four times a year a road improvement - not maintenance. Thus residents had been assessed 80 percent of the cost through a special assessment.

The price tag doesn't fuel the annual debate. City officials say dust control is more a philosophical one.

Homeowners complain the

assessment is unfair. At least three council members agree, turning down the Special Assessment District resolution at Monday's meeting.

The council deadlocked 3-3 with Councilman Jerry Ellis absent due to the death in his family. Councilwomen Nancy Deas, Vicki Barnett and Jody Soronen voted "no." Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi, Jon Grant and Cheryl Oliverio voted in favor.

City staff will determine how the \$36,000 cost will be paid when council meets April 12.

"An improvement is what you do once. It fixes the problem and you don't have to do it again for awhile," said Cynthia Rose, who lives on Miron Road in the northwest part of the city. "I'm an English teacher; I like definitions."

Please see DUST, A4



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