

Farmington Observer

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TODAY

Cautious: Defective water tanks have caught the attention of Michigan Attorney General Jennifer Granholm. /A8

News: Check out what the Walled Lake Schools are doing. /A10

Hooray: A Farmington Hills woman can pat herself on the back for collecting innumerable wheelchairs for a good cause. /A12

OPINION

Dating: When it comes to meeting someone on the Internet, be cautious. /A14

Introduction: Welcome to a new magazine, Fine-Line. /A15

COMMUNITY LIFE

Festival fare: Paul Barber takes a look at the 20-plus groups participating in the upcoming Festival of the Arts, which gets under way this weekend. /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 weekend festival.

Longacre House

The Longacre House of Farmington Hills is a historic home that operates as a private, nonprofit community center with a primary mission to provide cultural, educational and social opportunities.

The Longacre House was originally a six-room Victorian farmhouse built in 1869. In 1915, the house and property were sold to Lumen Goodenough who then employed Marcus Burrows to expand the house into a 20-room Georgian country house. In 1969, after the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Goodenough, the family donated the house and five acres to the people of Farmington to be used as a nonprofit community center.

Attend the Festival of the Arts and learn about the Longacre House through a display, "The Many Faces of the Longacre House." The display will showcase its diverse uses, including

Please see ARTS, A7



Arraigned: Defense attorney Thomas Cranmer leads his client, Matthew Wade, out of 47th District Court Wednesday. Wade was charged with possession of marijuana.

Internet lover arraigned on dope charge



BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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Saying his client has been "mischaracterized" by the media, an attorney for a Farmington Hills man involved in a highly publicized Internet romance rushed him past cameras and reporters at 47th District Court.

His love interest, Julie Yasa, 28, took her own life after he rejected her following a face-to-face encounter. Attorney Tom Cranmer said his client Matthew Wade, 24, is remorseful.

On Wednesday, Wade was formally charged with marijuana possession. He

stood mute while his attorney entered a not guilty plea on his behalf.

"Part of this tragedy in Mr. Wade has been completely mischaracterized in the media," Cranmer said with Wade at his side. "He is indeed a very remorseful, caring and sensitive person."

In a search of his Fairmont Park Apartment residence, police found 3 grams of marijuana while seizing computer equipment and files to investigate the six-month correspondence between Yasa and Wade.

Judge Maria Parker act personal

Please see INTERNET, A6

Tuition tax credit draws mixed opinions

BY TIM SMITH
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With the "click" and "sexy" Universal Tuition Tax Credit proposal, Michigan's public schools either will gain billions or lose billions if voters eventually approve a state constitutional amendment, according to panelists taking opposite sides of the issue Monday night.

But the real answer probably lies somewhere in the middle, and won't be discovered without some serious homework, noted several who attended a two-hour "town hall" forum at the William Costick Activities Center in Farmington Hills. Discussion centered on the UTTC, along with other school choice issues.

Debating the tuition tax credit issue were Gary Glenn, School Choice YES executive director, and Wendy Wagonheim, American Civil Liberties Union director of legislative affairs. School Choice YES currently is raising funds and circulating petitions to collect enough signatures to land the issue on the November 2000 ballot.

An overview was provided by Brian Whiston, Oakland Schools director of legislative affairs. Co-hosting the forum were the Farmington Area PTA Council

and West Bloomfield Schools Parent Communication Network; residents and officials from both districts attended.

According to the proposal, residents who send their children to private and parochial schools would be allowed to deduct up to 50 percent of tuition, at the end of the plan's decade-long phase-in. During the first year, however, applicants would only receive a 10 percent credit.

Under the plan, parents pay tuition first—and get the tax credit later. Glenn insisted that the UTTC is not another stab at a voucher system.

She sees benefit

One parent who might see both sides of the issue is Diane Stanton. She has one child attending public school in Livonia and another enrolled at Our Lady of Sorrows in Farmington. If the plan was currently in effect, she'd receive a \$200 tax credit this year, representing 10 percent of tuition costs.

Please see TAX, A6



Forum: Cathy Webb of the Farmington Board of Education listens to a panel discussion on tuition tax credits Monday night.

Time's up for cable

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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Like a student who has to go before his teacher, Time Warner officials asked for more time to turn in their paper.

Clearly fed up, members of both Farmington and Farmington Hills city councils gave Time Warner officials an emphatic "no" to a plan for a 30-day extension to reply to a request for a proposal to continue as the cable service provider.

Time Warner will still meet the April 26 deadline, said Bob McCann, regional general manager. Cable company officials only asked for more time to

reply "completely and accurately."

"We want to make sure there are no omissions or any less-than-complete responses to the RFP (request for proposal)," McCann said. "The amount of work it takes to do this is a little more than anyone anticipated."

Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission, which represents both cities and Novi, asked Time Warner to formally submit a proposal to renew a franchise agreement, which expired two years ago.

Informal negotiations have bogged down between both

Please see CABLE, A6

Colorado tragedy draws attention

BY TIM SMITH
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Littleton, Colo., is a suburb to a major American city. So is Farmington. But that similarity is the only reason a television news crew set up a camera toward the conclusion of Tuesday night's Farmington Board of Education meeting, said one district official.

"I don't know that community (Littleton) very well; other than it's a suburb. I don't know of any other comparison to Farmington," James Myers, executive director of K-12 student services, said Wednesday.

Earlier during the board meeting, Trustee Bobbie Feldman asked those watching the session on the district's cable channel 10 to reflect on what happened inside Columbine

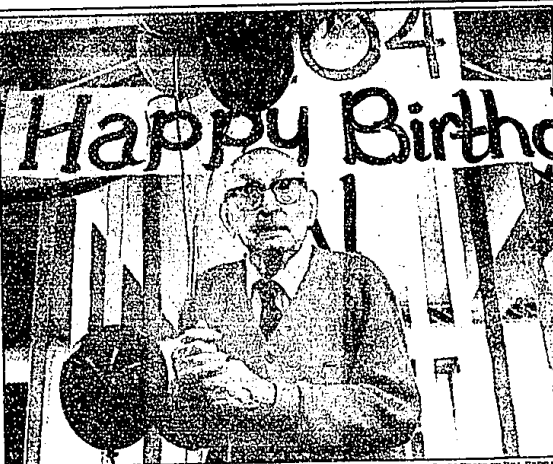
High School, located in a usually quiet community outside Denver.

"Take two seconds," Feldman said, "to think about what occurred and to count your blessings (about) where we are."

"It's inconceivable, and heartbreaking," noted Cathy Webb, president of the board. Myers said there could be another connection—the way people from schools naturally understand what's going on at other schools.

"Within a school you will always have empathy, no matter the distance between this school and that school," Myers

Please see TRAGEDY, A3



Who's counting? Al O'Connor just celebrated his 104th birthday at the American House in Farmington Hills, where he has lived for the past 10 years.

Al's still counting at 104

BY BILL BRESLER
STAFF WRITER

Al O'Connor doesn't hesitate when asked the inevitable question, to what does he attribute his 104 years?

"Alcohol!" says Al. "I drink one highball every day, made with William Penn whiskey." He adds, however, that he did give up cigars when he turned 60, some 54 years ago.

Born in Pittsburgh, O'Connor spent his adult life in the area, first in Detroit, then moving to Farmington Hills some 25 years ago. During more than 60 years of mar-

riage, O'Connor and his wife, Kathryn, raised eight children, six of whom are still alive. The oldest is 76.

World War I raged in Europe and Al prepared to enlist when he was old enough. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy and was ready to leave for Chicago when they called him. "They said, 'don't bother to come because the armistice was signed the night before.'"

He worked his whole life for the Koenig Coal Company selling coal, and and grav-

Please see AL, A4

