

## Petition: City asks state to increase cost-of-living clause

Farmington Hills is leading a petition drive to improve the state's homestead tax rebate law. The present law provides state rebates of up to \$1,200 to homeowners in certain income categories.

"We are asking the state Legislature to update the law by increasing the maximum amount allowed and to put in a cost-of-living clause for the future," said Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi. "The \$1,200 maximum hasn't been changed in 24 years. Meanwhile, property taxes have gone up about three times as much."

An improvement in the law would help many homeowners, especially our senior citizens.

To help with the petition drive, people should call city hall at 248-473-9500, and ask for a copy of the petition. Then as many signatures as possible should be gathered and the petition returned to city hall as soon as possible. "We will make sure that it is forwarded to the legislators from our area," said Vagnozzi. "This is a very effective way of getting the Legislature's attention for a needed improvement in our tax laws."

## Talk will benefit Kosovo refugees

Local lecturer and personality, Michael Farrell, professor of art history at the University of Windsor and Central Michigan University, will lecture at 8 p.m. Wednesday, June 2, at the Birmingham Temple in Farmington Hills.

The lecture topic will be "Berlin: Nationalism, Anti-Nationalism in the Arts and Ethnic Cleansing" and all proceeds will benefit Kosovo refugees. This slide-illustrated event

will focus on the drive for German nationalism in arts and architecture in the first three decades in the 20th century.

The donation is \$10 minimum. Call 477-1410.

## Scams from page A1

Farmington Hills Sgt. Tim Swanson recommends not letting anyone into your home unless you called the utility company. Con artists sometimes carry fake IDs, he said.

"If you didn't call them, a red flag ought to go off immediately," Swanson said.

Inside, the pair without a clipboard or tools, told the woman to go into the basement to hold the electrical box open while they examined the wiring.

For 10-15 minutes, she heard the man walking around

upstairs. He then told her she owed \$28. She told him she only had a \$20 bill. He said, "That will be fine," taking the money before he and the woman left.

The pair drove off in a white car.

Scams involving people posing as utility workers increase particularly in spring, Simons said.

Scam artists try to get into someone's house pretending to have a refund. Edison and other utilities typically adjust customer accounts by mail.

Another ruse involves tree

trimming services in which homeowners are charged to clear limbs from wires.

"We do not charge for that service," Simons said.

Edison also notifies residents by mail before conducting a line clearance program.

To curb the problem, the state Legislature passed a law that makes fraudulently posing as a utility company representative a criminal offense. If convicted, the penalty carries up to two years in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine with no chance of probation.

## Suspend from page A1

On April 28, a freshman told other students he had a bomb inside a brown paper bag.

The bag actually contained a toaster, but the student was suspended anyway. Barrett said he was in back at school, but only after taking a letter of apology to the rest of the students and staff. That student still could

face charges in Oakland County Family Court.

Another student was suspended May 10 for writing the word "bomb" on the back of a test.

Barrett emphasized that a new security plan recently was implemented, with the school and police working together, and that all staff members are on

"heightened alert" to any suspicious student behavior.

He said total security is hard to attain in buildings such as Farmington and North, where extensive construction is taking place. Harrison is slated for major construction during 1999-2000 and will face the same problem.

## How to take the confusion out of

## Alzheimer's disease.

The beginning stages of Alzheimer's can be challenging — for everyone involved.

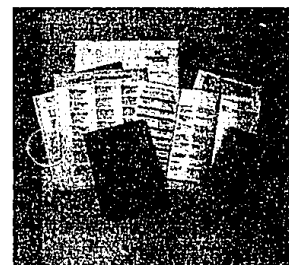
This free information kit helps you understand the particular needs of people in the early to middle stages of the disease, and offers you advice on how to choose an Alzheimer's residence that is right for you. It was created by Arden Courts, part of ManorCare Health Services, a company with 40 years of experience caring for seniors and their families.

**Arden Courts**  
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1-800-587-CARE, EXT. 3408

Openings in Bingham Farms, Ed. 1999 and Livonia, Summer 1999

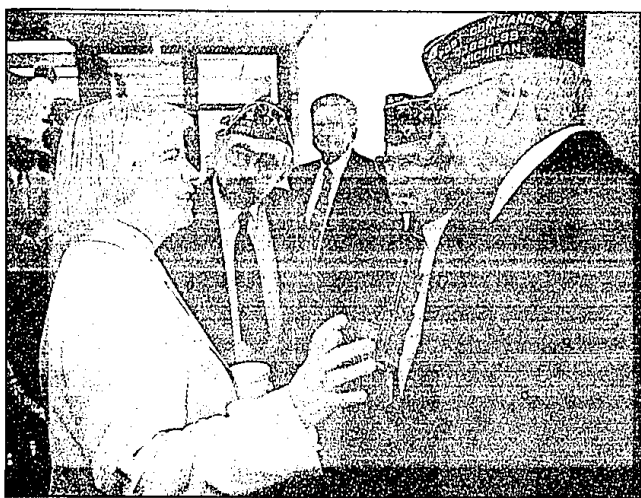
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STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DRESLER

**Ceremonial:** Secretary of State Candice Miller talks with VFW post 2269 members Tony Mallia, Sy Simonson and John Love. They presented the flag for the ceremony dedicating the new office.

## Now open Secretary of State branch moves to new location

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER  
loconnor@oe.com

Customers who strolled into the Farmington Hills Secretary of State branch were bemused if not slightly confused.

On last Monday morning, folk guitar strumming and jazz horns greeted those looking to renew driver licenses or get new tabs.

With much pomp and circumstance, state and city officials officially dedicated the new Secretary of State site in Muirwood Center on Grand River and Drake.

Their new digs is two doors down from the previous spot but is 1,000-square feet larger. Additional space was sorely needed, a state official said.

"It allows us to serve people in a more expedient manner," said Secretary of State Candice Miller. "... We can move people in and out of there very fast."

That's welcomed news to regular visitors, who are used to taking a number and sitting in unforgetting plastic chairs. The Farmington Hills branch is one of the busiest in the state, han-

**■ 'We're not boring bureaucrats; We are very creative. We have our own traveling road show here.'**

**Candice Miller**  
—Secretary of State

dling 200,000 transactions annually.

Under a new configuration, a horseshoe-shaped desk allows four clerks to serve people at the same time. A separate area allows handicap access.

To avoid snarls, a person stationed at the door directs customers to the proper area.

Auto dealers like Bob Saks across the street and Bill Cook down Grand River can drop off transactions in separate boxes, which are then processed by two clerks in the back.

At least 20 percent of Secretary of State business deals with automotive sales and registration transfer.

"This is a very busy branch," Miller said.

Especially when crowded with elected officials and well-wishers. State Senator Bill Bullard,

R-Milford and state Rep. Andrew Raczowski, R-Farmington Hills; attended the dedication along with Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi officials.

Miller received a 25th anniversary commemorative plate from Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi, who joked about the Secretary of State's office need to improve driver's license photos.

The state redesigned driver licenses to include holograms and other security features to prevent fraud.

A Secretary of State branch manager strapped on an acoustic guitar and sang a self-penned ode, "Great Lakes Splendor: Michigan Department of State."

"We're not boring bureaucrats; We are very creative," Miller said. "We have our own traveling road show here."

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