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SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

Civic to close for 2 days

The Farmington Civic Theatre will be closed for two days, Monday, Oct. 25 and Tuesday, Oct. 26. The closing will allow concrete construction work in front of the theatre to be completed. The theatre will re-open for business at the regularly scheduled time Wednesday evening, Oct. 27.

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Perform: The Farmington and Harrison marching bands bring home plaquettes. /A7

Jury: An Oakland County jury found a former Farmington Hills woman guilty in a murder-for-hire scheme. /A9

COMMUNITY LIFE

Pray: Students in Farmington area schools are being prayed for by moms in *In Touch, International*. MITT's goal is to have groups praying for every school in the country by 2002. /B1

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House fire believed to be arson

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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Fire investigators believe a fire that destroyed a home on Middlebelt Road Saturday night was deliberately set.

At 10:49 p.m. Farmington Hills firefighters arrived to find flames coming from two northwest windows on the one-story home at 21708 Middlebelt.

FARMINGTON HILLS

District Chief Bob Rehtoy forced open both doors that were locked in order to get inside. The fire started in a sleeping room, fire reports said.

No one was home when the fire started. The home, which was being remodeled, sustained \$20,000 damage.

"We're asking anyone who saw anything or who knows anything about the fire to call the Farmington Hills police or the arson hot line," Farmington Hills Fire Marshal Stephen Hume said.



Award prompts MEAP interest

Seventy-nine students from the three public high schools qualified for scholarships during last spring's MEAP testing.



BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER

The chance of receiving a \$2,500 scholarship is proving to be an incentive for Farmington Educational Assessment Program test, according to guidance counselors at the three high schools.

A total of 79 students from the three schools qualified for scholarships during MEAP testing last spring, scoring a level 1, exceeding Michigan's standards.

Here's a breakdown of how many qualified from each school:

- Farmington: 43
- Harrison: 22
- North Farmington: 14

If students didn't qualify during the test round, they can register to take the test, being offered this fall.

Amy Mantyla, a Harrison guidance counselor, said she expects about 30 students to sign up for the retake, a higher number than usual. As of Friday, about 25 had signed up. The registration ran through Monday.

"I believe (the scholarship money is a factor) because they didn't take the MEAP in the spring," Mantyla said of the students requesting the retake.

Debbie Eason, a Farmington guidance counselor, said 10 students had signed up to retake the test as of Friday morning. Students had until the end of last Friday to sign up.

Qualifying students must have taken the MEAP test in all categories and must have met or exceeded Michigan standards. In addition, students must have met the following criteria:

- Score in the top quarter on a nationally recognized college entrance examination, including either the American College Test or the Scholastic Aptitude Test.
- Or perform well on a nationally recognized job skills assessment test. This option is still being developed.

Beginning with the class of 2005, or current seventh graders, there will be an additional award of up to \$500 for students who perform well on the seventh- and eighth-grade MEAP tests in mathematics, reading, science and writing and meet other eligibility requirements.

The state has strict guidelines as to how the scholarships can be used. They are intended to cover tuition and fees.

Please see MEAP, A5



Get ready: Rocky, who works for the West Bloomfield Police Department, is ready to search Officer Larry Mifsud gives him the order. Rocky and Mifsud showed Eagle Elementary students how they work together.

Going to the dogs

BY TIM SMITH
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Police pooch smooches aside, Eagle Elementary School pupils Monday saw a whole different side to man's best friend.

They witnessed "Rocky" of the West Bloomfield Police Canine Unit, who demonstrated how he fervently sniffs out drugs or tracks down a suspect. Rocky was accompanied to the Farmington district school by his partner on the unit, Officer Larry Mifsud.

One particularly interesting segment of the assembly was when Mifsud slipped a thick-padded training sleeve onto his arm and prompted Rocky to jump up and bite away at it. The device is used to train a dog to help arrest someone.

"Will a police dog bite a kid?" said Mifsud, replying to a youngster's question. "Never. The only way we'd use a police dog (would be) to arrest an adult."

According to Mifsud, police dogs such as Rocky are invaluable in tracking down a person, even in a dangerous situation such as a fire.

Canines also accompany human officers on police department drug searches and other crime-prevention efforts.

Please see DOG, A5



Welcome: West Bloomfield police officer Larry Mifsud prepares to fit Rocky with his working harness.

All but one candidate says no thanks

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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A Farmington Hills mayoral candidate has said thanks, but no thanks to a \$500 contribution from Lieutenant Governor Dick Posthumus' political action committee.

But Hills council candidate Chris McEneaney said he intends to keep a \$100 donation from the same PAC.

In a polite letter to Posthumus, Nancy Bates expresses gratitude but reminds the lieutenant governor the race for

mayor and council members is non-partisan. Bates is running against George Sarkisian in the election Nov. 2.

Mayoral challenger Sarkisian didn't receive a PAC donation.

Bates also points out in her letter she's endorsed by the Farmington area Republican Club as well as outgoing Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi, who is a Democrat. The Democratic Club doesn't endorse in local elections, she said.

Please see CONTRIBUTION, A5

25 years later, Hartsock is still rarin' to lead

BY TIM SMITH
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When Bill Hartsock first ran for the Farmington City Council, he wasn't even old enough to vote.

"I had to get my nominating petition OK'd by Attorney General (Frank) Kelley," Hartsock said. "I was just 20 when I turned it in."

Hartsock lost that time. But two years later, in 1973, he was elected to the city council, and he hasn't left the panel since.

"When I first ran, my platform was 'young, inexperienced, but with good ideas.' Now it's 'middle-aged, experienced ... but still with a lot of good ideas,'" said the now-49-year-old, with a



hearty laugh.

"That kind of good humor and down-to-earth manner augment Hartsock's tireless dedication to the council job. And it's a job he wants to keep on doing - provided voters re-elect him on Tuesday, Nov. 2."

Three council seats will be decided, with the top two vote-getters receiving four-year terms and the third-place finisher receiving a two-year term. Hartsock, incumbents JoAnne McElhane and Jim Mitchell, and challenger Steve Dierl are competing for the spots.

"Honest to God, someone has to

remind me how long I've been on council because it doesn't seem that long," said Hartsock, originally elected the same day Coleman Young was voted in as Detroit's mayor.

He's big on local

Including this summer's acquisition of the Civic Theatre by the city, Hartsock confidently stands by his council record over that long span. He also defends the approach to government always taken by him and his 15 colleagues on the city council during his tenure.

"If you're respectful and explain what's going on, you can have a disagreement and be on opposite ends,"

Please see HARTSOCK, A6



Bill Hartsock