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New officer: The latest to join the Farmington Public Safety Department had to overcome adversity along the way./A7

OPINION

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COMMUNITY LIFE

Young cooks: The culinary arts students at Oakland Community College are cooking up a storm./B1

SPORTS

State swim finals: Farmington Hills Mercy will attempt to defend its Class A championship in girls swimming and diving this weekend at Oakland University./C1

Football playoffs: Farmington Harrison faces a rugged challenge Saturday when it plays Monroe Jefferson in a Division III semifinal football game./C1

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Police suspect arson in Hills fire



Aftermath: Farmington Hills firefighters look through the rubble of a house on St. Francis in the city's southeast corner. The blaze began around 10 a.m. Monday and destroyed the home.



■ Farmington Hills firefighters and police are conducting a joint investigation into a blaze at a house on St. Francis. No serious injuries were reported.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
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Fire investigators have labeled a blaze that gutted a St. Francis Street home Monday as suspicious.

At 10:12 a.m. Farmington Hills firefighters arrived to find heavy smoke and flames coming from the roof and two upstairs windows of the tri-level house near Eight Mile and Inkster roads in the city's southeast area.

The fire caused \$160,000 damage. There were no serious injuries reported.

Police and fire personnel are conducting a joint investigation, said Hills police Assistant Chief Chuck Nobus.

On Tuesday, authorities were seeking a search warrant to enter the house, which had been boarded up.

On initial reports, firefighters believed two 3-year-old children and a grandmother were inside the home.

"They weren't," said Farmington Hills fire Lt. Michael Garr, "and thank goodness they weren't."

At least 10 people lived in the one-family dwelling, Garr said. Firefighters found three mattresses in one bedroom.

Fire investigators did not find smoke detectors in the two-story home, Garr said.

"Potentially, if (the fire) happened at 10 o'clock we lose lives," Garr said. "It's a wake up call that not everyone is getting the fire prevention message."

Firefighters used an ax to force their way in through front door where they

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New-look Cornucopia Ball a winner



Auction action: Roger Weber and Paul Gross auction hot items like a day spent with Farmington Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer.

BY TIM SMITH
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There was a different venue, different ticket price and different attire requirement for this year's Cornucopia Ball. But the most important element wasn't changed - the spirit of community goodwill.

On Friday, more than 230 people came out to enjoy the fifth annual dinner dance/auction, held for the first time at Glen Oaks Country Club in Farmington Hills.

And, said Cathy Webb, secretary of Farmington Hills/Farmington Community Foundation for Children, Youth and Families, generosity from the community was evident many ways: a significantly greater number of corporate and individual sponsors; plus double the number of auction items. Meanwhile, because donations continued to be made after the Cornucopia Ball program had been printed, a special insert was added.

Webb, also event chair for the ball and a long-time member of the Farmington school board, said a "very conservative" preliminary estimate was that the black-tie optional event generated in excess of \$80,000, equal to or above past years. All



Party talk: Honorary host Carolyn Clifford-Taylor and her husband Frank Taylor chat with Dr. Robert and Sara Maxfield.

proceeds will be earmarked to help support programs offered through the Farmington Hills/Farmington Community Foundation for Children, Youth and Families.

"We wanted to show them a good time and give them a quality event for a quality cause," Webb said.

After-school teen centers stand in line to benefit from the Cornucopia Ball.

Todd Lipa, supervisor of Youth and Family Services for the city of Farmington Hills, was ecstatic about this year's event, enthusiastically smothered by community members Paul Gross and Roger Weber from WDIV-TV Channel 4 and Carolyn Clifford, from WXYZ-TV Channel 7.

"This again proves that this is a community that truly cares," said a beaming Lipa, hardly able to

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Ready to bid: Del Cornwell and Sandy Maczko check out some of the silent auction items at Friday's Cornucopia Ball.

FHS play opens



Starts tonight: Farmington High School presents "The Miracle Worker," a play about Helen Keller. The play opens tonight, Thursday, and runs through Saturday evening. General admission tickets for the 8 p.m. show are \$8 for adults and \$7 for students, and are available at the door. In this scene, the young Helen Keller, played by Sarah Van Buren, signs into the hand of her teacher Anne Sullivan, played by Lindsay Mer-

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BERGLER

Mayor Hartsock hopes to pick up where Bush left off

BY TIM SMITH
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A sweet transition for the Farmington City Council began Monday, complete with flowers and flowery compliments.

Mary Bush concluded her two-year reign as Farmington mayor, but not before reciting a long list of accomplishments made in the city since her stint began in November 1997. Then she turned the helm over to Bill Hartsock. Elected Monday to the office of mayor pro-tem was Jim Mitchell.

"Local government works well here in Farmington," said Bush, who presented carnations to her council colleagues and later received roses. "And we all have our local leaders to thank."

This council and this community is made up of people who make things happen. I'm proud to be part of it."

Also at the start of the meeting, city clerk/treasurer Patsy Centroll administered the oath of office to recently re-



At the top: Bill Hartsock is the new mayor of the city of Farmington. He took over from Mary Bush on Monday night.

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