

CARRIER OF THE MONTH: FARMINGTON

Jon Bogorad has been named Farmington Observer's Carrier of the Month for February. Jon is the son of Steve and Anita Bogorad of Farmington Hills. An honor roll student at North Farmington High School, Jon's favorite subjects are math and science. He enjoys sports and plans to attend college at the University of Michigan. Jon likes getting paid for his work and feels that it has helped him to develop good people skills.



Jon Bogorad

If you want to be a Farmington Observer carrier, please call 810-901-4718

'Book Parade 2000' to broaden literary horizons for school kids

BY TRACEY BIRKENHAUER STAFF WRITER

Through March 20, many local children will expand their literary knowledge, exploring the likes of Harry Potter and Malcolm Murtaghroy.

Book Parade 2000, a public school program for fourth- and fifth-grade students, promotes pleasurable reading for children at all reading levels. The six-week incentive program was established by the Farmington Public School District Instructional Technology and Media Department.

District media specialists selected 14 books from which children can make reading choices. Students can get books at the media centers, check them out of local libraries or purchase them at local bookstores. The Farmington, Farmington Hills and West Bloomfield libraries stocked each book on the list to ensure children will have access to them.

Prizes are awarded to students after they successfully complete their third, sixth and 10th books. There are no special awards for early completion or for reading every book on the

list.

"It gets the students reading, first of all," said Anne Albaun, a media specialist at Forest Elementary in Farmington Hills. "The program exposes children to good, solid children's literature. It's fun, too."

The selected books represent a variety of genres, subjects and authors. The program can be customized for children reading at lower levels. After a student completes a book, he or she must meet with a media specialist to discuss it. Students must answer from 10 to 20 questions about the book to prove they read and understood it.

While that might sound intimidating, Albaun said the children learn to enjoy the conferences and look forward to them. "The questions aren't posed to stump them," Albaun said. "They're designed to start a discussion and, hopefully, self expression. It's really a confidence builder."

Since their classmates are also reading, Book Parade 2000 creates a climate ripe for reading acceleration.

"It makes reading seem really cool," Albaun said.

New look OK'd for flower garden

BY TRACEY BIRKENHAUER STAFF WRITER

The Farmington Downtown Development Authority on Tuesday approved a proposal to revamp the downtown flower garden near the Masonic Temple.

The planting area at the intersection of Farmington Road and Grand River was first constructed in 1994. DDA executive director Judy Downey said the group wants to update the area, "so it would be like people can spot it from a distance."

While the garden provides an impressive display of flowers, the authority wanted to make some additions.

The board approved a proposal from Jackson Lawn Maintenance for more than \$26,000. This includes almost 100 boxwoods, 15 yews, eight hydrangeas and some half-ton boulders dropped from a crane.

The boulders alone will cost the city \$3,100.

"Now, there are a million angles on that box," said Bill Wilson of Jackson Lawn Maintenance. "With the boulders,

FARMINGTON DDA

there will be soft, flowing curves. "We're trying to eliminate the birthday-cake look."

The city's landscape architectural firm had recommended against boulders. Grissim/Metz Associates of Farmington Hills had wanted the city to remove the top layer of brick to create a curb effect.

The DDA asked Willson to examine changing the color of the bricks currently installed. Willson told the board that was nearly impossible, because paint would only chip over time. He also examined lowering the wall, but he said that would create other problems with water and electric lines, which would have to be rewired.

"If you drop that wall down, all of that is exposed," he said.

The city decided to keep the wall as it is and add the boulders.

The DDA approved Willson's recommended Vista lighting system, with new spotlights on the signage, pathways and walls.

Dubin says she'll leave DDA

BY TRACEY BIRKENHAUER STAFF WRITER

If you have a financial interest downtown, are business savvy and like to speak your mind, the Farmington Downtown Development Authority wants you to apply for a recently vacated position on its board.

Susan Dubin of the Dubin Optometric Clinic is leaving her post on the DDA for health reasons.

"We're very sorry to have her leave," said DDA executive director Judy Downey. "She was a dynamic businesswoman and this will be a considerable

loss to the board."

Downey would like to fill the vacancy within the next couple of months.

"We're entertaining any ideas," she said. Potential members don't have to own a business, but they must have a financial interest in the downtown district.

"We're looking for a very capable replacement," Downey said.

Applications are available in the city manager's office at Farmington City Hall.

The city council makes the final decision.

Grissim/Metz also recommended a shade tree for the area. Willson said he'd try to add a small shade tree, but he couldn't guarantee it.

"Right now, I doubt the shade tree would work," he said.

The key to this proposal, Downey said, is that Jackson

Lawn Maintenance will maintain the area, including weed control, fertilizing and pruning. The company offered a one-year guarantee on all plant products.

The DDA will present the approved proposal at the Farmington City Council's March 20 meeting.

Protesters, PSC to meet on utility problems

BY PAT MURPHY STAFF WRITER pmurphy@oe.homecomm.net

Utility bill protesters from Oakland County are scheduled to meet with the Michigan Public Service Commission (PSC) in Lansing this week as they pursue efforts on behalf of more understandable monthly statements.

"We're meeting privately with the PSC staff on Wednesday," said Robert Kachadourian, a retired history teacher from the Waterford School District who hopes to convince state regulators and utility officials that monthly statements need simplifying.

While meeting with the PSC staff is important, Kachadourian and other utility bill protesters are equally enthusiastic about a public hearing scheduled for March 20 at the Commissioner's

Auditorium at the Oakland County Complex at 1200 N. Telegraph Road.

The hearing — called by Oakland County state representatives — is important in terms of raising public awareness of the problem, said Kachadourian, "and convincing customers they can do something about this problem."

The problem, according to Kachadourian, a Bloomfield Township resident, is monthly utility statements that are difficult to comprehend. He became personally involved in seeking a remedy, Kachadourian said, after trying more than an hour to decipher his mother's telephone bill.

"It shouldn't be that hard to understand your bill," said Kachadourian, who has a doctorate in history.

Kachadourian is convinced

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Robert Kachadourian

Utility bill protester

utility companies will cooperate in making utility bills more understandable once they realize the number of customers who find them difficult to comprehend.

"We're focusing on problems in Oakland County," he said, "but we've heard from dozens of people in Wayne County and elsewhere who have similar concerns."

"This isn't a county problem," Kachadourian insisted, "this is a statewide problem."

A spokesman for Consumers

Energy, formerly Consumers Power said utility companies are indeed concerned about complaints from customers. "We are always looking for ways to simplify bill presentation," according to Dan Bishop, the utility's director of public information.

In a telephone interview last month, Bishop said bill presentation will become more of a problem as more and more utilities are deregulated.

Kachadourian said the meeting with the PSC staff is scheduled for 1 p.m. More details are available at (248) 325-0901.

AGENDA

Farmington Planning Commission
8 p.m. Monday, March 13
Farmington City Hall
23600 Liberty Street

■ Consideration of new site plan for building addition at 34000 Nine Mile Road.
■ Site plan request for outside sales, Kmart, 37175 Grand River.

■ Consideration of development at Mayfield and Grand River, 32663 Grand River.

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Are You Depressed?
Answer the following questions based on the last 2 weeks or more.

YES NO

1. I feel sad, unhappy, self critical

2. I feel tired and have little energy

3. I have trouble sleeping or eating (either too much or too little)

4. I don't enjoy activities that I used to

5. I feel uneasy, restless, irritable or guilty

6. I have trouble concentrating, remembering things or making decisions

If you answered "yes" to 3 or more statements, you may be suffering from depression, a serious condition affecting millions of Americans. The Institute for Health Studies is currently looking for individuals experiencing the above symptoms to participate in a research study of investigational medication for depression. If you are selected, all research related costs and study medication are provided or no cost. Get answers and information about depression.

INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH STUDIES
(517) 349-5505 1 (800) 682-6663
Robert J. Biedki, M.D.

March 12 to March 18
Celebrate AMERICAN BEAUTY
influenced, inspired, collected from legendary sources around the world

Today through Saturday, meet the experts and explore the latest looks from the top names in beauty.

With any \$50 cosmetics or fragrance purchase, receive this signature bag filled with deluxe samples* from our exclusive new 5148 Bath and Body Collection.

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OFFER GOOD MARCH 12 TO 18, 2000 ONLY. ONE GIFT TO A CUSTOMER, PLEASE. WHILE SUPPLIES LAST.
Fairlane Town Center, Dearborn (313) 326-3070. Monday through Saturday 10 to 9; Sunday 12 to 6.
The Somerset Collection, Big Beaver at Coakley, Troy (248) 643-9000. Monday through Saturday 10 to 9; Sunday 12 to 6.