

Your hometown newspaper serving Farmington and Farmington Hills for 113 years

Sunday, June 18, 2000

hometownnewspapers.net

Volume 113 Number 77

75¢

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Farmington, / Farmington Hills, Michigan



Farmington celebrates summer with the Farmington Area Family Festival this week. Check out our special section inside this issue.

## WHAT'S AHEAD

### MONDAY

Meet: The Farmington City Council meets at 8 p.m. at city hall.

### THURSDAY

Fun, fun, fun: The Farmington Area Family Fest gets underway June 22. See page A6 in this issue for the event's schedule.

**Prosecutor forum:** The five candidates for Wayne County prosecutor will debate the issues 7:30-10 p.m. June 22 at Livonia's Civic Center Library. The forum is co-sponsored by The Observer Newspapers and The Northville Record; Time Warner; and the Community Democratic Club.

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### HomeTown Classifieds WORK!

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Livonia

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## More congratulations



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL BEEZER

On the way out: Students cheer as their classmates receive their diplomas.

## Diploma marks new beginning

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
tsmith@oe.homecomm.net

Graduations aren't just for high schools anymore, as they are proving in the Farmington district.

Nearly 100 students, who attend either the Farmington Adult Education, Farmington Alternative Academy or William E. Miller School, received their diplomas during commencement ceremonies Thursday, June 8, at the Farmington High School auditorium. Seventy-one of those were adult ed grads, who attended classes at Farmington Community School.

All of the students either dropped out of or left their traditional high school, but returned to work toward their diplomas.

Please see GRADS, A7



Good job! Kevin Warr receives his diploma from school board president Priscilla Brouillet.

## Vandals target florists

■ It has area police baffled, but someone is vandalizing florists in some unusual ways.

BY JONI HUBBARD  
STAFF WRITER  
jhubbard@oe.homecomm.net

The Case of the Mysterious Floral Shop Vandals landed in Farmington Hills Friday night, with a can of red spray paint and a vulgar message.

The owner of a florist shop on Orchard Lake Road arrived at work last Saturday morning to find the words, "Little B---- IV" scrawled on the side of his building in red spray paint. Detectives believe "Little" was a misspelled version of "Little."

They also believe this case may be related to other incidents in Livonia, Redford, Garden City, Dearborn and Southgate, all of which occurred between June 16 and June 17.

"Red spray paint was used in the six we know about in different cities," said Hills Detective Matthew Koehn. "That leads us to believe they are related."

As far as Koehn knows, the florists whose businesses have been hit don't have any idea what the connection might be. Investigators have looked into the possibility of a disgruntled customer or ex-employee, but so far have come up empty.

"It's really kind of puzzling," said assistant chief Chuck Nebus. "Especially in such a wide area. It's a mystery why someone would travel that distance...but obviously, there has to be a connection."

Please see VANDALS, A4

## Miss Farmington crowns the festival

BY MARY RODRIGUE  
STAFF WRITER  
mrodrigue@oe.homecomm.net

The Miss Farmington/Oakland County pageant moves west along Grand River to the city-owned Civic Theatre Wednesday after 25 years at Vladimiri's. It will be the kick-off event for the annual Farmington Area Family Fest, formerly known as the Founder's Day Festival.

At 7 p.m. June 21, the curtain will rise on 10 contestants vying for the title.

■ It will be the kick-off event for the annual Farmington Area Family Fest, formerly known as the Founder's Day Festival.

title that is the first rung in the Miss America scholarship process. The winner advances to Miss Michigan next June.

The theme is "Cruising the Grand

2000" and vintage cars and 1950s style clothing will prevail. Following the pageant, the contestants will cruise in classic cars from the theater to the parking lot east of Farmington City

Hall where a 1950s-style sock hop will be in progress.

"The cars will include some GTOs and '67 Chevys," said Dennis Page, owner of Page's Food & Spirits in downtown Farmington.

Page and his friend, Roger Ratkowski, owner of the nearby Pita Stop, will offer food and beverage service in two large tents in the parking lot. Steve King and the Dittlites will play live music reminiscent of that era.

Please see MISS, A6

## Remembering

### Memorial helps family, friends with healing

BY TIM SMITH  
STAFF WRITER  
tsmith@oe.homecomm.net

Four months have come and gone since Farmington High School student Christopher Horton died, and the hurt hasn't gone away for his family and friends.

But a lasting memorial built by a family friend in the school courtyard at least is a start to healing. Horton, a 17-year-old senior at FHS, died unexpectedly on Feb. 23.

The memorial was built — and donated — by Kirk Vogler, owner of West Bloomfield-based Brickmasters. He and several employees assembled the patio and circular planter in one day during the high school's spring break. They also added petunias and a Japanese maple tree, along with benches. Vogler said the project cost \$6,000-\$7,000 to build, including labor.

But it was a labor of love.

"I'm happy with the way it turned out," Vogler said last week, after

unveiling the memorial. "... I wanted it to represent Christopher. (With) the flowers and the trees, as long as the tree keeps growing, so does Christopher's memory. It's just a lasting memorial I felt like building for him."

Attached to the planter is a plaque

donated by Christopher's parents, Troy Horton and Mary Williams, and their families. The memorial patio and planter is in one corner of the courtyard near the high school media center. Vogler, Horton and Williams are all

Farmington High School graduates and longtime friends.

Praising Vogler's beautiful gesture

were Horton and Williams, who both live in Farmington, and Christopher's grandmother, Farmington Hills resident Diane Horton. All still are visibly

Please see MEMORIAL, A3

Home Delivery: 734-591-0500

Newsroom: 248-477-5450