Your hometown newspaper serving Farmington and Farmington Hills for 115 years

Sunday, December 16, 2001

www.observerandeccentric.com

75¢



Il boys and girls, naughty or nice, know Santa Claus will soon be checking his Christmas list – and checking it twice. That means Farmington and Farmington Hills youngsters need to get their letters to the Jolly Old Ell written and headed to the North Pole. Once again this year, the Farmington Observer is asking youngsters to send us their letter to Santa along with their school photo to appear in the Sunday, Dec. 23, edition. To make sure we have time to forward the letters to the North Pole, get the letters to us no later than Monday, Dec. 17. Send your letters to Santa, care of the Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington, MI 48335.

### THE WEEK AHEAD WEDNESDAY

Christmas Cheer: The Farmington Hills Eco-nomic Development Corporation will host its annual holiday dinner on Wednesday, December 19 at Vladimir's.

#### THURSDAY

Chamber party: The Farmington / Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce will host its Christmas holiday cocktail party on Thursday, December 20, at Ginopolis in Farmington Hills. For information or reservations, call the Chamber office, (248) 474-3400.

#### INDEX Apartments/E6 Arts /C1-C3

Automotive/G5 Classified/E,G,H Classified Index/E4 Cop Calls/A4 Crossword/EB Jobs/G1

Movies/C2 New Homes/E1 Real Estate/E1 Service Guide/G5 Sports/R1





### Council supports partisan ballot

Share Warrian Companies of the Market Should a simple method of voting that people have enjoyed for the past 110 years be taken away?

The Farmington Hills City Council vehemently opposes such a change. In a unanimous voto, members sent their opinion to state officials this week regarding Senate Bill 173 that proposes to eliminate the option to vote a straight party ticket on ballota. The bill that has passed the House and Senate. Gov. John Engler is expected to sign the bill, which also addresses several small changes to voting procedures.

addresses several small changes to voting procedures.
Council members said taking away the right to pull a straight party ticket would discourage votors.
According to City Clork Kathryn Dornan, in November 2000, 45 percent of the city's voters used the straight party method. And in November 1998, 43 percent used it.
Councilman Barry Brickner said the straight ticket option is a convenience to voters.

to voters.
"We don't want to frustrate them," he said. "I think this is a terrible thing for "Il voters."

"We don't want to frustrate them," he said. "I think this is a terrible thing for all voters."
Council woman Vicki Barnett said there are no attempts to encourage voting in the bill and that the confusion of not having the option would likely result in spoiled ballots.
State Rep. Andrew Raczkowski (R-Farmington Hills) told officials Monday he supports the bill, because it forces people to examine the candidates.
"What is most important is to elect individuals and not the party," he said adding if a person wishes to vote a straight party ticket, the option is still available.
"It doesn't take that much longer," he

anable. "It doesn't take that much longer," he id of selecting a candidate for each

office.

He also said Illinois recently eliminated the straight party method and their recent elections ran smoothly under the change.

Since such a large number of voters choose the straight party method, offi-

choose the straight party method, offi-cials wondered whether elections

Santa visits seniors





Believers: Santa made a grand entrance during the entrance during the senior citizens' pot luck holiday lun-cheon held this week at the Farmington YMCA. About 50 people attended this first-ever event, which was geared 12/16 toward adults 55 and older. Isabel Johnson snuggled with Santa Claus during his visit.

# District finishes construction projects

BY SUE BUCK STAFF WATER Subck@oo.homecomm.net Seniors who graduate next year will leave schools that look different from the ones where they started as fresh-

man.
"The kids have seen a major transfor-mation in their facilities," said Farm-ington School Superintendent Bob Maxfield.

Maxifield.

As the district finishes up the final construction projects initiated by a voter-approved 1997 bond, Maxifield recalled what influenced the decision to

quest tax dollars for the improve-

wents.

We asked. What did we need to have to match what we were teaching?? he said.

That meant more sophistication, like applied technology labs - not cosmetics.

ics.
A citizen finance committee met and 300 people showed up at a town hall meeting. "We created a template of what each elementary should have, each middle school, and so forth." Max-

in April 1997, later approved it in Sept. 1997.

Not all of the \$93 million came through taxpayer-financed bonds. Instead, the district used funds from the Durant lawsuit and the general fund to defray costs, which reduced the

amount borrowed.

"It was a pretty significant reduction which came from the lawsuit," Maxfield said.

"The alass action lawsuit (Durant va

field said.

The class action lawsuit (Durant vs State of Michigan) was filed in 1980 by various districts in Michigan, claiming under-funding of programs violated the

Headlee Amendment. This constitutional amendment requires the state to
fund mandated programs at the same
proportion of the state budget as when
the amendment was adopted in 1978.
The mandated programs included
special education, special education
ransportation, school lunch program
and driver education.
In July 1997, the Michigan Supreme
Court ruled that districts were harmed
by the under-funding and ordered payment for three of the 17 years claimed.

Please see CONSTRUCTION, A5

## Library plans new reading programming after expansion

STATE WHITES

Parents with young children in the Farmington/

Parents with young children in the Farmington/

Farmington Hills area will enjoy some exciting new

learning programs once the Farmington Community

Library is remodeled next year.

While workers are busy making the 12 Mile facility

nearly twice as big, Director Bov Papai is lining up a

permanent learning activities center for preschool

children. That means programs will be ready for

action when the library opens.

Plans call for expanding the current children's

area by more than 5,000 square feet – which equates

to mger room for reference materials, a study room,

computer stations and the ability to install perma
ment handson learning tools for preschoolers to help

them in their reading, math and cognitive skills,

Papai said.

Please see PROGRAMS, A4



Under construction: The library expansion is now fully enclosed. Windows, insulation, electrical and heating and cooling are being installed. This view is from the south side of the main room look-ing toward the existing library structure.

### Library provides a way to honor loved ones, note achievements

The expansion of the Farmington Community Library on 12 Mile will offer people a permanent way to remember loved ones, make acknowledgments and mark personal achievements.

The planned pathway leading to the new entrance will be made of paver tiles that can be engraved with permanent messages.

There are 1,600 tiles for sale, starting at \$100 each. Each tile is 12-by-12 inchess. The cost of the tiles are tax deductible and 65 percent of the preceds will fund the library's newly enhanced Children's Department.

Please see Library, A2

Home Delivery: 734-591-0500

Newsroom: 248-477-5450