# Flore Town Farmington Observer

Your hometown newspaper serving Farmington and Farmington Hills for 115 years

Sunday, February 10, 2002

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an't go a day without your PDA? Does it seem like a cell phone is surgically ettached to your ear? Do you hove TiVo? The Farmington Observer is tooking for tech-sawy residents to document how the microchip revolution has changed their ways. We'd like a volunteer to keep a week-long diary of high-tech habits for a story on the local impact of the internet and other technology on daily life. If you're interested in participating, e-mail Joni Hubred, Farmington Observer community editor, at: Observer community editor, hubred@oe.homecomm.net

For brides: Get ready for 'The time of your life.' See the Bridal

Show caseinside today's paper for help planning your wedding.



#### TUESDAY

Ambassadors: The Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce is planning an Ambas-sadors Committee Meeting: 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 12 at the Chamber office.

### INDEX

Apartments/EB Automotive/H1 Classified/E,G,H Classified Index/E4 Crossword/E8 Malls/C4-C5 Movies/C5

On-Line Dir./B4 Pastimes/C1 Real Estate/E1 Police Calis/A8 Service Guide/Q12 The Guide/A3







Filing: Librarian Tina Theeke browses through the Cook collection catalog. It has recently been reorganized into binders. Only a portion of the historical collection is shelved due to lack of

# Residents' help vital to preserving local history

processoe.homecomm.net

If the people of Farmington/ Farmington Hills aren't going to collect, record and fight for their communities history who will?

That's the question posed by senior librarian Tina Thecke at the Farmington Community Library on 12 Mile Road, who says the two communities served by the library won't have to worry about it any time soon.

The Farmington area has about 200 residents who are active in keeping the two cities' history alive and secure for future generations to enjoy.

enjoy. Brian Golden, vice president of the

Farmington Historical Society, noted the Farmington area has the most active historical society and genealo-

gy groups around.
Consider this fact: there are five groups devoted to the subject and each has an important role in preserving the area's history, which includes everything from its historic homes and sites to promoting and archiving the cities' pasts.
Golden said the local groups include the Farmington Historical Society and the three historical commissions of Farmington, Farmington Hills and the Hills Historic Datrict. Thon there's the Farmington Genealogical Society.
This is one of the oldest areas in Onkland County," said Golden. "It

Please see HISTORY, A5

## **Engler's** proposal surprises officials

Farmington school officials were surprised and pleased at the news of an unexpected windfall that could end up in their coffers.

Gov. John Engler proposed state spending of \$6,700 per pupil next year, a \$200 increase over this year's grant. With a slowing economy and anticipated state budget shortfall, school officials were expecting flat revenues for cials were expecting flat revenues for the coming year.

"It blew everybody away," said Farmington School Superintendent Bob Maxfield Thursday, "It's welcome news, assuming the legislature passes

it."
Engler's plan, which still needs to be approved by the state legislature, calls for moving up next year's December school tax collections to the summer. The plan also reduces the early tax collection for homeowners from 6 mills to 5 mills, which will result in a savings of \$266 mills are three play.

5 mills, which will result in a savings of \$265 million, one time only. Cheryl Cannon, assistant superintendent for business, finance and operations, expects the legislature will pass the budget about May or June. While additional money will offer some relief, the district still faces a difficult financial future.

the district still faces a difficult tinan-cial future.

"It will be three months before we know for sure," Cannon said. "It helps. We won't have to cut as deep as we thought we would have to go. We will try to take a two-year look at it. Every-thing is not OK now."

This represents an increase of \$2.4 million in additional revenue she said. The district projects a \$6.4 million bud-ret deficit.

The district projects a 303 minum observed the first the will continue to prioritize its aircady "fluid" budget document, Cannon said. "It's a welcome relief, but it is not a cure for the school districts' budget shortfall."

The change in per pupil funding is a

Please see BUDGET, AS

# Ready to roll

## Workshop teaches kids about living with disabilities

Helping hand: Chelsea Gale uses a white cane to find her way at Longacre. Julia Genna



STATE STEER
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To the able-bodied, the row of
wheelchairs along the wall at Longaere Elementary's gym loaked
like a cinch to maneuver.
Then the students jumped in
and started to roll.
The first challenge for Sarah
Fredericks, a fourth grader, was
trying to get in and out of the
rown.

room.
"Can you hold the door?" she

asked. "No," said parent Pam Healy, who like many parent volunteers were instructed on how to run the various activities. "Open the door and get around the sides," Healy said. "Use your hand to pull

had simply been instructed to help the children face real-life chal-lenges encountered daily by peo-ple with disabilities. Fredericks did better at the drinking foun-tain, where she learned pulling up sideways next to the fountain was the easiest way to get a drink if she had trouble moving her body.

#### A mile in their shoes

A mile in their shoes
Longacre Elementary fourth
and fifth graders took turns roleplaying at number of disability
stations during the Feb. 6 Disability Awareness Workshop.
"It is designed to help children
become more aware of the challenges that people with disabilities face every day," said Sharon
MacKay, a resource room teacher
who coordinated the program for
several elementary schools —Lon-

gacre, Beechview, Forest, William Grace, Kenbrook, Lanigan, Wood-creek and Flanders.

The program includes several hours of activities centered on developing empathetic under-standing of physical, speech, hear-ing, vision and learning impair-ments.

standing of physical, speech, hearing, vision and learning impairments.

"We want the students to remember that people should be respected no matter how they may look, act, walk or talk," MacKay said.

Carolyn Das, whose son Stephen has cerebral palay and attends William Grace Elementary, spoke from her experience when she told children about wheelchairs, braces and splints.

"We're helping kids understand

Picase see DISABILITIES, A3

# Officials prepare for Farmington Road II

Phase II of the Oakland County Road
Commission's Farmington Road project
will have motorists dodging traffic
cones again soon, and officials are
officing information to help them cope.
A public meeting is scheduled for
8:30 a.m. Feb. 13 in Farmington City
Council Chambers.
Crews will widen and reconstruct
Farmington Road from south of Nine
Mile Road to Grand River in the City of
Farmington. Last year, the stretch
from Eight Mile to Nine Mile Roads
was improved, so officials have a track
record by which to judge potential
problems.

problems.
"It will take three to four weeks for

people to adjust to it," said Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff. "It's not as problematic as everyone might think."

think."
Widening will be from south of Nine
Mile north to Slecum. Farmington
Road will be widened to five lanes.
North of Slecum, the read will be
reconstructed, not widened.

Reconstruction will involve the removal of the existing road surface and construction of a new concrete

road.

Work is expected to start on the project in mid-March. The section between Slocum and Grand River is expected to be completed by July 15. The entire project will be completed by Sept. 30.

During the work, access will be maintained to those businesses that

only have driveways on Farmington Road. Business with access via side streets should encourage their cus-

streets should encourage their customers to use those entrances. Some side streets will be closed at times at Farmington Road, officials said.
Beginning about mid-April, Farmington Road north of Nine Mile will be closed to southbound traffic. While traffic will be able to travel north on this section of Farmington Road, motorists should expect delays due to the construction.

Southbound traffic will be detoured from Grand River to Drake Road to Nine Mile Road and cast to Farmington Road,

ton Road.
Northbound motorists can also use

Please see ROADS, A3

