

## IN THE PAPER TODAY

### OPINION

**Strange trip:** Not everyone is happy, but even the most strident critic has to admit the city has bent pretty significantly in the direction of citizens' wishes for the 11 Pines/San Marino Golf Course project. /A6

### ENTERTAINMENT

**Hate crime:** The Jewish Ensemble Theatre presents the Michigan premier of *The Laramie Project*, a play about the brutal murder of Matthew Shepard, a gay college student. /B1

### AT HOME

**Daring look:** From bold color on big walls to subtle touches of crimson on the rubber end of a spatula, daring homeowners are welcoming red into their homes. /C1

### HOMETOWN LIFE

**In love:** Happy Valentine's Day and congratulations to Bill and Barbara Rutecki of Plymouth, winners of the Observer's Lessons in Love contest. Thanks to Barbara's winning entry, she and Bill wined and dined at Café Cortina, received roses and chocolates, and were transported to the Red Wings game in a limousine. /C5



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## Hills council inks 11 Pines contract

BY JONI HUBRED  
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After four years and countless, contentious public hearings, Farmington Hills city council members finally set in motion the wheels to develop 80 condo units and a golf course expansion on city-owned property at Halsted and 11 Mile Roads.

The 11 Pines/San Marino project has been mired in controversy from the beginning, when officials first looked at development proposals that called for hundreds of housing units, including an assisted-living facility. After public

■ **'This project turned into a labor of love. It's certainly not about the money. I'm not leaving it.'**

Albert Ludwig  
Construction manager

outry, they scaled back the project — and anticipated revenues that would cover development costs.

"We bought down a lot of density," city manager Steve Brock said in a study session prior to Monday night's regular council meeting. "We have pro-

tested 100 acres that could have been IRO or very dense housing."

In addition to the condos, the entire project will include an additional nine holes of golf, connected by a tunnel under Halsted to the existing San Marino Public Golf Course, a rain or shine driving range, new club house and a parks and recreation maintenance building. The city also plans to install bike paths and sidewalks.

While they discussed some details of the actual construction, officials seemed most concerned about financing. A proposed revenue list was initially included with the draft Planned

Unit Development agreement reached with Centox Homes/The Selective Group; it was removed after a discussion about possible revenue sources.

Officials talked briefly about using \$2.2 million in general fund revenues, but were uncomfortable with the idea. Brock presented some suggestions that would involve using the city's portion of taxes captured by designating the area as a "brownfield."

State law allows local governments to designate certain areas and capture state, school and local taxes in order to

Please see **CONTRACT, A3**

## They're on a roll

Local women enjoy non-traditional jobs at MGM

BY PAUL R. PACE  
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Managing the ins and outs of a big-time casino is typically portrayed in the movies as a job suited only for the most macho of men.

But in real life, plenty of women work behind the scenes.

Three Farmington area residents are testament to that fact, as they have risen through the ranks of the MGM Grand Detroit Casino.

Take, for instance, Barb Kucala of Farmington Hills. She is cage operations director.

The cage is the "heart" of all financial operations at the casino, where money is deposited, withdrawn and transferred. Kucala is responsible for making sure it all runs smoothly, said MGM spokeswoman Yvette Monet.

Originally from Chicago, Kucala, 48, has been in the casino business 20 years. She started at Caesars in Lake Tahoe as a count clerk and worked her way up to director of cage operations at MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

Shortly after MGM Grand Detroit opened in June 1999, she was asked to come to Detroit on a temporary basis to train cage personnel. A short time later, Kucala was named permanent director of cage operations for the Detroit casino and has been here ever since.

She bought a home in the Hills and said she likes her neighbors a great deal, because they don't mind helping look after her two dogs when she has to work late.

"They're a great help," she said.

Tricia Jepsen, 41, marketing director, lives in Farmington. She has a background in advertising and has been promoted from marketing manager to her current position. Managing a staff of five, Tricia oversees the



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL DREZLER

**Career women:** Detroit MGM Casino employees Tricia Jepsen, Barbara Kucala and Susan Randol are Farmington Hills/Farmington residents.

creation of all of those MGM casino billboards that people see on the expressway, and all casino advertising, which numbers into the millions of dollars.

Two of her bosses were women, she pointed out.

Jepsen grew up mostly in Livonia and found the marketing manager job at the casino through an ad. She said she's proud to be a part of the resurgence of downtown Detroit.

"I've always enjoyed the down-

Please see **MGM, A3**



**Cash on hand:** Director of cage operations Barbara Kucala and cage cashier Joan Carpenter look over reports.

## City creates a unique commission

BY JONI HUBRED  
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Farmington city officials are looking for residents willing to serve on a unique commission that will combine beautification and environmental protection.

City council members approved a resolution and by-laws to create the Commission on the Environment at their Feb. 4 meeting. The commission will take on some of the responsibilities held by the former Beautification Commission, which was largely responsible for annual awards that recognized home and business owners for keeping up the appearance of their neighborhoods.

"I really think the time has come for us to create this," said council member JoAnne McShane. "It's going to encompass a lot more. It's going to be very different than in the past."

Council member Bill Hartscock said the city has found this kind of commission may be a first of its kind. "We've discovered there isn't anything like we've created. Perhaps this will be a model for other communities. The varied responsibilities are unique."

Those include increasing awareness and participation in environmental issues by residents, businesses and students; tree preservation and reforestation; historical grounds and gardens preservation; identifying blight and recommending measures to eliminate it; overseeing awards and citations; placing large pieces of art in the community; and overseeing the Rouge River watershed.

Seven members will serve; city manager Frank Lauthoff said some residents have already expressed interest. Each commissioner will serve a three-year term, except that with the first commission, terms will be staggered so that all won't have to be replaced at the same time when their terms expire. Meetings will be open to the public, and will be held once a month.

"Our hope is that this is going to be a very innovative and participating commission," McShane said.

The city's Beautification Commission was disbanded a year ago, because officials had trouble recruiting members. They hope the environmental group's broader mission will attract new interest.

For more information, call city hall 248-474-5500.

## City approves Cowley's OVI renovation plans

BY SUE DUCK  
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The family-operated Cowley's Old Village Inn, 33531 Grand River, will go upscale by fall with renovations that include a second floor entertainment venue, valet service and an enhanced menu.

The improvements are estimated at \$1 million, according to Mike Cowley who is overseeing the construction. "This has been a long-time dream."

The entire building will be renovated creating a "building in a building," Mike said.

His parents, John and Marie Cowley, Farmington residents, founded their restaurant in 1972. They make yearly trips back to Ireland and celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary there last year. News of their anniversary celebration was reported in The Nationalist, an Irish newspaper.

The couple, who both grew up in Ireland, have three sons, Greg (Maureen), Mike (Pam) and Pat (Lis) and eight grandchildren.

"We're proud to bring the plan to fruition," Greg Cowley said.

The family contracted with Sonas Design, Inc. of Dublin Ireland. "They are a preferred Guinness supplier and they will be shepherding the design phase, both interior and exterior," Greg said.

The company has designed establishments in Chicago, Seattle, in Europe and Japan, Mike said.

The Farmington Planning Commission approved plans Monday night. Construction will begin about May with completion targeted for September or October. Commissioners Patty Keim and Bill Ingalls were absent.

Capacity is expected to increase from 140 to 200 patrons. The downstairs

Please see **OVI, A3**

## Trading places



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DREZLER

**Switch:** Friday Night's basketball fans were treated to North Farmington High School's Guy-Girl Pom Squad. The role reversal provided high entertainment to the crowd as guys, decked out in pom skirts and makeup, tried to keep up with the fancy moves of the girls. Sarah Nicholas and Justin Cook shake it for the fans.

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