

# FARMINGTON Observer



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Whimsical  
holiday  
accents.  
B1

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75 cents

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**Our Towns**

## Recycle the tree

Glen Oaks Golf Course in Farmington Hills will accept Christmas trees for recycling 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. seven days a week, Dec. 26 through Jan. 11. Trees must be free of all decorations, metal objects, string and plastic.

Large quantities of evergreens left over from commercial lots will not be accepted. The trees will be processed into wood chips and made available to the public in the spring on select Saturdays at Orion Oaks in Orion Township.

For more information, call (248) 858-0906 or visit the Oakland County Parks Web site at [www.co.oakland.mi.us](http://www.co.oakland.mi.us).

## Recycle cards

Instead of tossing your holiday greeting cards in the garbage, recycle them. Residents of Farmington and Farmington Hills can drop off their holiday greeting cards Thursday, Dec. 26, through Tuesday, Jan. 28, at six different locations throughout the cities.

Look for holiday greeting card drop boxes at both the Farmington and Farmington Hills City Halls, both branches of the library (downtown Farmington next to City Hall and 12 Mile west of Orchard Lake in Farmington Hills), the Costco Center at 11 Mile and Middlebelt in Farmington Hills and the Farmington Hills Division of Public Works on Halsted Road south of 12 Mile.

The Resource Recovery and Recycling Authority of Southwest Oakland County is coordinating the holiday greeting card recycling effort.

They will deliver the collected cards to the Keith Boysen School in Warren where they will be recycled into new greeting cards, gift tags, or book-marks. These items will then be sold to raise money for classroom items at the school for developmentally disabled children and young adults.

RRRASOC asks that residents drop off the whole card (not just the front) for recycling. All types of greeting cards will be accepted at the drop off locations. Questions about holiday greeting card recycling or any recycling issues can be directed to the Farmington Hills Division of Public Works at (248) 553-8580.



BILL BRESLER/OBSERVER

Lee Barthel and his wife, Floy, have traveled all the way around the world, making them part of an elite club.

## Couple has global view

Hills residents lead Circumnavigator Club

BY PAUL R. PACE  
STAFF WRITER

Lee and Floy Barthel of Farmington Hills never planned on traveling the globe. It sort of just happened that way. While in Thailand with a business partner and his wife, the Barthels decided to complete the circle rather than go back the way they came.

"We were half way around the world, so we figured why not finish it?" Lee said. "There was no master plan, it just happened."

But the feat enabled the couple to be members of the Circumnavigators Club, an elite group where membership is about 1,000 worldwide. It has 120 members in the Michigan chapter, which Lee leads as charter president.

The Barthels have gone on the last three global journeys with the club.

Lee is quick to point out the group is made of travelers, not tourists.

The difference?

Travelers won't let a late flight or an adverse situation keep them from enjoying the journey, he said.

"No matter how miserable (a situation is) it's not so bad when you have someone along to joke about it," Lee said.

"We like meeting and talking to other couples about going someplace and we can trade ideas with other couples," he said.

The group celebrated its 100th anniversary in New York City recently and held its latest trip this year by circling the world south of the equator.

Traveling north of the equator is easier, but the southern route involved a bit more of a challenge, Lee said. The group made up of about 13 couples traveled to

PLEASE SEE GLOBAL, A5

## What's closed for Christmas, New Year's

In honor of the Christmas and New Year holidays, local government offices and public facilities will have reduced hours.

### CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS

Tuesday, Dec. 24 and Wednesday, Dec. 25: Closed  
Tuesday, Dec. 31 and Wednesday, Jan. 1: Closed

### CITY OF FARMINGTON

Tuesday, Dec. 24 and Wednesday, Dec. 25: Closed  
Tuesday, Dec. 31 and Wednesday, Jan. 1: Closed

### FARMINGTON COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Farmington and Farmington Hills branches will be closed

PLEASE SEE CLOSED, A7

## C'ville catches students before fall

BY JONI HUBBED  
STAFF WRITER

By the time a teen-ager decides to leave school, it's almost too late to do anything about it.

Recognizing that reality, Clarenceville Schools staff set about developing a program two years ago to catch students before they dropped out.

High school Principal David Simowski says there's no

magic dust involved, but the SOAR program was highly successful — even though some parents didn't understand the methodology.

"We identified students who were potentially at risk in middle school," he said. "Then we identified their weakest area, and we took them out of it."

It was difficult for parents to accept the idea that removing a child from the source of

greatest frustration could be beneficial. Simowski said students would be placed in a SOAR class, where teachers would make sure they stayed current in all other classes.

Course work would address issues of self-esteem, and students would receive help in their toughest course.

How well did it work? According to Supt. Cheryl Leach, Clarenceville's dropout rate has plummeted, from 4.1

percent in 2001 to 1.27 percent over the past year.

"It's an area where we've done a lot of work," she said.

"We work with everybody involved, with the kids and parents."

Students drop out for many reasons; the majority do come back to try to give it one more go, she said. The district pursues every opportunity to

PLEASE SEE STUDENTS, A7

## PD stings target liquor served to kids

BY PAUL R. PACE  
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills Detective Ron Shanklin's cell phone chirps while he sits in an unmarked car and it means one thing: someone didn't ask for I.D.

Shanklin and Detective John Regorrah were matched up with two teenage decoys Wednesday and Thursday in Farmington Hills to help enforce the state's underage drinking law, right before one of the busiest times of the year for restaurants — the Christmas holiday week.

The department conducts stings twice a year, said Police Chief William Dwyer.

PLEASE SEE STING, A7



BILL BRESLER/OBSERVER

Farmington Hills officers enter Allocated to write a ticket for serving alcohol to minors.

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**LOOKING AHEAD**  
Trends  
In Thursday's At Home section:  
Values & well-being and comfort are likely to influence homeowners' decisions in renovations.



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