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FARMINGTON Observer

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Our Towns

Sprit award

Grant Weber (pictured) was recently awarded the Martin Luther King Spirit Award for excellence in service, leadership and commitment at the University of Michigan. He is a third year mechanical engineering student from Farmington Hills and a graduate of Farmington High School. Weber serves as president of Pi Tau Sigma, the mechanical engineering honor society that participates in various campus and community service events, such as cooking dinners at the Ronald McDonald House and tutoring sessions for first and second year students. He also serves on the Mechanical Engineering Student Leadership Board and is a coordinator of the Dance Marathon, the student-run organization that raised over \$168,000 last year for pediatric rehabilitation programs. Weber also won U of M's Mr. Engineer contest. He is the son of Ron and JoAnn Weber of Northville.



BY SUE BUCK STAFF WRITER

Some of the protesters recited the rosary as students left the Mercy High School parking lot.

Protesters show no Mercy

Critics assail Granholm's public stand on abortion

BY SUE BUCK STAFF WRITER

Marin Hoeflein stopped by Mercy High School on Thursday to drop off a letter from her daughter Andrea, expressing displeasure over reinstatement of the controversial "Lunch With Jennifer Granholm" item for the Feb. 22 auction.

Hoeflein, a Farmington Hills resident, saw a group of about two dozen picketers from the Stop Granholm Church and Truth Project and decided on the spur of the moment to join them.

Andrea is a 1997 Mercy graduate. "I just drove to school to see one of the sisters," said Hoeflein, a clinical microbiologist who now does wellness training. "I felt very insulted when I read in the paper that it was a small group of fanatics who were protesting. I put in so much volunteer time at this school. I am a professional woman and an involved parent."

If Mercy was a secular school, that would be one thing, but as a Catholic institution, Hoeflein felt certain rules must be followed. "It's a hypocrisy of what the school stands for," she said. "Don't call yourself one thing and then brainwash the kids."

Granholm has been under fire since last year's election campaign over her Catholic faith and views on abortion. While she personally opposes abortion,

PLEASE SEE GRANHOLM, A7

State deficit tops list of community challenges

BY PAUL R. PACE STAFF WRITER

The three centers of power in Farmington and Farmington Hills convened Tuesday night to discuss how best to work together for the better of the community.

Part of their concern was how to make citizens understand how the state deficit may affect their lives in coming months and years.

The annual meeting brings together top administrators and elected officials from Farmington, Farmington Hills and Farmington Public Schools to discuss upcoming issues and how to work them through as a team.

This year, Farmington Hills hosted the event at the Spier House in Heritage Park and invited Joseph Ohren, a professor at Eastern Michigan University in the department of Community and Regional Development, to discuss ways of working together more productively.

Ohren has held similar seminars with other communities. He said the common sensibility is for a community to look out for

PLEASE SEE CHALLENGES, A6

Officials question proposed smoking bans

BY PAUL R. PACE STAFF WRITER

Proposals to ban smoking in public places and in restaurants and bars are making their way among county and state lawmakers.

Oakland County Commissioner Eric Coleman, a Southfield Democrat, introduced a resolution recently that would ban smoking in public places in the county, but allow it in bars and restaurants.

Then there's a bill in the state House that would ban smoking in all bars and

restaurants in the state.

County Commissioner David Moffitt of the 15th District in Farmington Hills said Coleman's proposed ban good intentions to protect the public's health from exposure to secondhand smoke.

"But with my lawyer hat on," he said, "we'd need to figure out what is a public place. There may be public places with food service in them, so how do we deal with that?"

Moffitt wonders what "public" could mean in legal terms.

"Does that mean you can't smoke in a

public park in the open air? It may require a small catalog to explain what is public."

Moffitt said private companies are already allowed to ban smoking or designate smoking areas.

"It's difficult to determine how effective this would be (if passed)," Moffitt said. "We don't have the means to enforce this. There is a limit to what government can do and what government should do."

In the House, a bill that aims to ban

PLEASE SEE SMOKING, A7

FHS kids face food Fear Factor

BY SUE BUCK STAFF WRITER

Some people say teenagers will eat almost anything.

A group of Farmington High students did just that on Feb. 20.

During their SMART period, an audience watched as classmates took a real "Fear Factor" challenge, patterned after the reality TV show. The event was held, appropriately enough, in the school cafeteria.

Foreign language teacher Jennifer Michaels led several sounds of gastronomic surprises, which started with Bleu Cheese



Michael Garlepy tosses back a handful of squid.

BY SUE BUCK STAFF WRITER

PLEASE SEE FEAR FACTOR, A5

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INDEX

Apartments	E7	Movies	D2
Automotive	F8	Obituary	A4
Classified	E7	New Homes	E1
Classified Index	E4	Service Guide	F7
Crossword	E5	Sports	C1
Jobs	F3	Travel	D4

LOOKING AHEAD

Change in years
In Thursday's AI Home section: The Michigan Design Center is the venue for this year's Orchestrations for the Home: A Design Showcase.



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