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THURSDAY
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FARMINGTON Observer

Local talent
 Artists and fans
 pack State Theatre
 for the Detroit
 Music Awards.
 Arts, B1



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Officials see lower water, sewer rate hikes

BY PAUL PACE AND JOHI HUDSD
 STAFF WRITERS

While water and sewer rates for Farmington and Farmington Hills are still being determined for the next fiscal year, officials say the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department is planning a relatively minimal increase in charges. Tom Bisell, director of Public Works for Farmington Hills, said Detroit is increasing its charge to the city for water

from the current rate of \$13.13 per 1,000 cubic feet to \$13.60. Detroit's charge for sewer treatment is currently \$8.50 per 1,000 cubic feet and is expected to rise to \$9.22. Bisell said that's good news; double-digit percentage rate hikes from Detroit in the past few years have brought about an outcry from city leaders and residents. Because the city has to maintain its water and sewer system and also is

charged for Oakland County drains, exact figures for how much residents will pay for water and sewer use in the upcoming fiscal year will not be known until sometime next month, Bisell said. Currently, Farmington Hills tags on \$13.25, a 61.26-percent increase over the initial charge for 1,000 cubic feet of water and sewer treatment from Detroit. The Hills city council typically votes on the water and sewer rates for the upcoming fiscal year in June.

Farmington City Manager Vince Pastue, who's taking his first dive into the DWSD rate experience, said his city's proposed rate increases are a "pass through" of Detroit rates, which account for most of the city's anticipated \$3,383,210 water and sewer budget. "The driving force behind it is the services we receive from the City of Detroit, since they are more than 50 per-

PLEASE SEE PAGES, A4

OUR TOPICS

'Hello, Dolly!'

An informational meeting for the ninth annual school district/community musical will be held at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 29, in the North Farmington High School auditorium. This year's musical will be "Hello, Dolly!" Participants must be adult residents of Farmington/Farmington Hills; a school district employee or family member, or a high school student beginning August 2003. For more information, call Sue Cobb at (248) 785-2009.

New driving range

A new driving range at the Farmington Hills Golf Club, a public golf course, is now open for business 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. seven days a week. The driving range, located on 11 Mile just west of Halsted, features 34

stations with multiple target greens, and offers lessons for golfers ages 9 and up.

The new driving range is part of an expansion of the former San Marino Golf Course from nine to 18 holes. The "new nine," as well as a new clubhouse with a restaurant and pro shop, are scheduled to open in July or August. In the meantime, the "original nine" located on the northeast corner of 11 Mile and Halsted, remain open for business. For information about the Farmington Hills Golf Club, call (248) 413-1800.

Care packages

The Great American Basket Company in Farmington Hills is now selling military care packages that family members can send to their loved ones overseas, and American-themed quilt baskets to give to people here at home. A percentage of all proceeds will go to the Family Readiness Group, a nonprofit organization that supports the 127th Wing at



Selridge Air National Guard Base. The organization gives 100 percent of the donations received, to help military personnel and their families during periods of normal military life and during times of separation due to military service. Assistance may include food certificates, phone cards, emergency assistance, morale visits, family briefings and events. The "Military Must Have" for the troops include an assortment of snack foods, toiletry items, and boredom busters (crossword puzzles, mini footballs, playing cards, etc.) and a 60-minute AT&T calling card. The Great American Basket Company is at 29594 Orchard Lake Road. Call (248) 626-9050.



BILL BRESLER / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Dance class
 Harrison High School's Dance Company performs "Coconut Campaign" during Tuesday night's Evening of the Arts celebration. The event combined talents from the Art, Language Arts, and Performing Arts departments. The dance company has been invited for the third year in a row to perform at the Michigan Youth Arts Festival, held during May.

Farmington schools make cut

BY SUE BUCK
 STAFF WRITER

All Farmington Public elementary and middle school buildings made Adequate Yearly Progress, a new state-wide yardstick for measuring school success. "The AYP is one of the cornerstones of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. In Michigan, it's a measure of year-to-year student achievement on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program test. According to NCLB, Michigan and other states must develop target starting goals for AYP and then the state must raise the bar in gradual increments so that 100 percent of the students in the state are proficient on state assessments by the 2013-14 school year. These buildings needed to make the cut based on 2001-02 Achievement Goals, considered the target of the

PLEASE SEE SCHOOLS, A6

'Soft' Tai Chi class helps ease stress

BY PAUL R. PACE
 STAFF WRITER

While most people think of martial arts as white, loose clothes and breaking boards, a "soft" form has been handed down for generations in China.

Genie Parker teaches Wu-style Tai Chi Chuan at Botsford Hospital in Farmington Hills and at the hospital's extension center in Novi. She's the first non-Chinese woman in the U.S. to reach the rank of Si-Fu or teacher of the Wu-style. She can now accept "disciples" who'll train to teach others.

The Royal Oak resident explained there are two styles of Tai-Chi, the soft and hard.

Parker teaches the soft side where the focus is to reduce stress, promote circulation and find a center between the mind and body. The hard side involves body contact and more self-defense.

Parker said only five families in China pass along the Tai-Chi meth-

PLEASE SEE TAI CHI, A12

Chamber dialogue identifies issues

BY PAUL R. PACE
 STAFF WRITER

The dialogue was the future of Farmington and Farmington Hills. The quest: How to make things better for business, students and families.

"We're not just going to leave this at the table," said Carleigh Flaherty, president of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, organiz-

ers of the Dialogue Among Leaders in Farmington FHHS Friday. "This is intended to be an on-going process." In the end, the 100 people in attendance agreed all entities have a vital role to play to maintain the area's well-being in a changing world.

The event, which took place at the Dana Corporation of Drake Road, replaced the annual State of the Cities Breakfast sponsored by the chamber,

where community and school officials discussed past accomplishments and upcoming projects. The dialogue was a pro-active approach, aiming to discuss issues and to devise ways to improve the community.

Farmington Hills Mayor Nancy Bates said focusing attention on the

PLEASE SEE CHAMBER, A4

Dunckel students host French auto show

BY SUE BUCK
 STAFF WRITER

The invitations were written in French, as were product brochures for the latest in automotive excellence displayed last week at Dunckel Middle School in Farmington Hills.

Hosts at each display spoke the language fluently. And even the videotaped promotions were done in French - all apropos for the French International Auto Show held last week in the school's media center.

Sandy Chamberlin, an eighth-grade language arts and history teacher, Mary Green, a modern language teacher, and Mary Beth SIKOM, a career teacher, helped organize the event.

"We worked on it all of March," Chamberlin said, noting 27

PLEASE SEE FRENCH, A9



BILL BRESLER / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Star families

Wally Christensen presents a two-star banner to Karen and John Rowland of Canlon. The Farmington American Legion Post has re-established the practice of giving the banners to families who have men and women serving in the Armed Forces.

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LOOKING AHEAD
 Easter Sunday's Taste section spotlights chocolate Easter bunnies and offers suggestions for celebrating the holiday.

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