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Suicide is top killer among middle class teens

By MARY GNIEWEK

Two Farmington Hills teenagers, residents of the same subdivision, died last week of the second leading cause of death for persons between 15 and 24 — suicide.

Although there was no connection between the two deaths and police have ruled out foul play, the deaths occurred just four days apart in the same park.

In the first incident, a 16-year-old high school junior shot himself with his father's rifle. The second victim, described by his high school principal as an excellent student, hung himself. He was 15.

Suicide is a major problem in the United States and statistics bear this out.

In 1978, there were 101 suicides of 10 to 19-year-olds in Michigan. That's a rate of 5.4 suicides per 100,000 teens. The figures are running close to that number for 1979 and 1980, according to Glenn Copeland, chief of vital statistics for the Michigan Department of Public Health.

For 15 to 24-year-olds in Michigan, accidents are the leading cause of death followed by homicide, then suicide. But for the subgroup of white youths in this age group, suicide is the second leading killer.

SUICIDE IS on the rise nationally in this age group," said Jim Patton, clinical supervisor of the Farmington Area Advisory Council (FAAC), the local crisis prevention center.

Patton says such youngsters feel futility and frustration. "They feel they don't fit in, there's no outlet for them," he said. "They feel the home situation isn't open to them."

Parents should be on alert for certain behaviors:

- Overt social change, such as withdrawal by a usually outgoing person.
- Feeling of inability to solve problems. Yet the problems cited are not insurmountable.
- A drastic change in school grades.
- A loss of sense of competence.
- Signs of depression — moping around the house, becoming less verbal, showing lack of interest in things which previously sparked interest.
- A single, dramatic event that

seems to threaten the person's happiness.

"The very mention of suicide, a preoccupation with it or the apparent searching for ways it can be accomplished."

• Expression of a lack of emotional support.

"Suicide is very cultural," says Patton. "White middle-class males and females aren't used to having to cope with survival. Rather they are concerned with the maintenance of lifestyle."

"There's a lot more isolation in that group within families."

TEEN YEARS are recognized by mental health experts as a time of

sharp and rapid emotional ups and downs:

"An unsuccessful attempt in many cases is a call for help. A successful attempt will happen regardless of who tries to intervene."

"Everyone from parents to neighbors to clergy having contact with that person feels like they should have been able to identify the problem and stop the attempt but that's not necessarily true," Patton said.

"Most of the reason is futility — not seeing anything worthwhile anymore. Suicide becomes a logical step."

Reasons older persons commit or attempt suicide aren't that different. They also feel a sense of futility about

their lives. Patton said. In 1979, there were 1,014 suicides in Michigan, a rate of 11 per 100,000 persons.

"It all boils down to that helpless feeling," Patton said. "Suicide is a very emotion-based act."

Some theorists identify a "suicide crisis" period, a very specific time period that may last only ten minutes during which a person will attempt to kill himself. If a person can survive the crisis period, he may be back on the road to shaping his life.

Help is available through clergy and through local crisis prevention centers. The number in Farmington is 477-8767. Common Ground in Birmingham offers a 24-hour crisis hotline: 645-9677.

White set to expand in the Hills

By MARY GNIEWEK

White Motor Corporation is planning an expansion of its world headquarters in Farmington Hills despite a petition filed in Federal Bankruptcy Court Sept. 4 to allow reorganization of the company.

The plan includes purchase of five acres adjacent to the 20-acre complex on Grand River between Drake and Gill and some new buildings, according to Craig Thompson, company spokesman.

"We have some plans down the road. We've made the necessary inroads but I can't be more specific at this time," Thompson said.

The corporation filed its plan two months ago with the Farmington Hills Economic Development Corporation (EDC), which passed a resolution of intent to issue bonds for financing the expansion.

The EDC adjourned the project plan last week until reorganization plans become clearer. White Motors pays close to \$18,000 a year in city taxes.

"We want White Motor to identify priorities but we have full faith in their survival and hope for their continued strength in Farmington Hills," said Robert McConnell, EDC chairman.

Thompson said the plan will undergo more examination within the company. "We have made no commitments although we have laid the necessary groundwork," he said.

AN EXPANSION would mean consolidation of other segments of the company, which does \$1 billion annual business, Thompson said. The company employs 7,000 workers in five U.S. plants, two in Canada and one in Australia involved in the production of heavy duty trucks and farm equipment.

"The problem is truck sales aren't moving well," McConnell said. "Once they're sold, there won't be a cash problem."

White Motor filed a petition under Chapter 11 of the Federal Bankruptcy Code in Cleveland with the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Ohio.

Under the provisions of Chapter 11, a company continues its business operations while the management works with creditors under court supervision to develop and implement a plan of reorganization.

"White Motor's Board of Directors has authorized this action in the belief that it is the most effective way to implement the changes necessary to assure a strong, vigorous and competitive company," said Cruse W. Moss, chairman of the board.

This action has the effect of relieving the company of its heavy interest burden and deferring unsecured liabilities in excess of \$300 million pending reorganization making current assets — which totaled \$389 million as of June 30 — available to continue to pay employees and suppliers during the period of reorganization.

"This means we will have the ability to meet customer requirements, satisfy our on-going needs and improve our position in the market place," Moss said.

"This board and management have voluntarily taken White into Chapter 11 proceeding and it is our intention to bring the company out of it sound and vigorous."

White said that it was terminating discussions previously announced with Guardian Industries Corporation regarding a possible acquisition by Guardian of an equity interest in White's credit subsidiary.



Theodore Mann, an instructor at Oakland Community College, will tell students the perils of being a rock and roll star. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

Classical buff sets site on pop in music class

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

If the tune is catchy enough to whistle and the lyrics are relevant, a new song might make the top of the charts.

And then again, it might not, according to Theodore Mann, music instructor at Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge campus.

Mann teaches courses in writing pop songs and the history of rock 'n' roll and jazz. His courses have received mention in Billboard magazine, which charts the progress of music's trends and fashions.

A successful song doesn't guarantee its writer a lifetime of notoriety. Today's performers and songwriters could become tomorrow's has-beens.

"People have forgotten Fabian, Bobby Vee and Bobby Rydell. There are quite a lot of names like that," said Mann.

Buddy Holly used to be on the lists of the forgotten along with the likes of Bill Haley and Fats Domino. But after the movie, "The Buddy Holly Story," and the use of his songs by Linda Ronstadt and Willie Nelson, a former member of the "Crickets," Holly's back-up group, the young rocker's name has returned to popular recognition.

"It raises the interesting question if 10 years from now anyone will remember someone like Elton John?" Mann mused.

"OF COURSE, it helps if you die at the peak of your career," he said in reference to Holly's death in an airplane crash at the age of 21.

"I'm surprised they've managed to make as much out of his career as they've done. I wonder why Holly is remembered and someone like Chuck Berry isn't."

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Key to personality traits rests with frowns, smiles

Jim Murray's a man who takes things on face value.

A lecturer with "Do Something Different" at the Farmington Community Center this fall, Murray, 38, says the physical structure of the face can betray a person's emotional makeup.

Murray's lecture, "I Know You Love Me By Your Eyebrows," details the philosophy advocated by Symposium International which stresses that attitude affects a person's physical appearance.

The method divides the face into

three zones of equal proportions.

The top portion, extending from the hairline to the top of the nose, deals with the person's intelligence, according to Murray.

The middle portion, extending from the top to the bottom of the nose indicates emotions. The chin area acts as an indicator of the physical and sensual aspects of the personality, he said.

The spacing of each characteristic indicates a facet of the personality. Eyes which are far apart indicate a person easily diverted from a specific

goal but one who probably possess a social grace and charisma. Murray uses Jacqueline Onassis and actress Carol Channing as examples of this type.

IN CONTRAST, persons with closely spaced eyes are less likely to be distracted from their goals. They're high achievers like Barbra Streisand, according to Murray.

The shape of the face also serves as an indicator. A narrow face betrays a person who lacks a sense of self-worth. A wide face indicates a person with an overabundant supply of self-worth, according to Murray who uses Adolf Hitler as an example of such a type.

Wide cheek bones indicate that the person values a sense of adventure, he said.

Using the system, Murray rated the trio of presidential candidates.

• Jimmy Carter: Deep vertical lines down his forehead indicate a very intense person, a high achiever who goes overboard in pursuit of a goal.

"He means well, but his reactions are radical. He considers you either good or bad."

"But he can quickly change his mind."

• Ronald Reagan: The way he holds his body and presents himself indicates that, unlike Carter who can be changeable, Reagan thinks things through carefully.

"He has all his ducks in a row before he moves on anything," Murray said.

• John Anderson: His three facial zones are well balanced indicating someone who is careful yet a doer.

"He's probably the most well-balanced of all the candidates," Murray says.

MURRAY DENIES that the system channels persons into dealing with others as racial and ethnic stereotypes.

"These are general rules, not specifics," he argued.

"I advise persons not to stereotype. The rules are not too specific. But you

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Fountain, fountain who wants to care for the fountain?

Remember the photograph of the lackluster fountain in downtown Farmington pictured on our Aug. 25 editorial page?

The Dodge Fountain it isn't.

City officials agree. Merchants agree that it's less than spectacular, but no one claims sole responsibility for its upkeep.

If you talk to merchants, it's the city's responsibility. But city officials say it's a joint responsibility with the merchants.

The fountain and park island in the downtown center parking lot was designed by architect John Allen and donated to the city by the Farmington Center Company. It was formally dedicated in 1972.

"I think it had proper maintenance. It wouldn't be in such a sad shape of disrepair today," said John Clappison, managing partner of the Farmington Center Company.

City Manager Robert Deadman said the fountain would cost \$4,000 to repair — money the city just doesn't have.

Pumps and other parts are worn out and need to be replaced.

"The Beautification Commission raises some money with annual flower and shrubbery sales," Deadman said. "Even so, we've got a bigger question to address — the long-term maintenance."

Deadman said that at the time the fountain was donated, there was no understanding as to how it would be maintained.

"We feel that although he (Clappison) built it, he built it because it was part of a property exchange deal he made with the city."

"The fountain has a combination of benefits for the city and merchants. It makes the shopping center more attractive."

Deadman thinks the Farmington Center Company should share maintenance costs.

Hills inspector is FBI graduate

Inspector Mirl J. Spencer of the Farmington Hills Police Department was among 248 officers who graduated from the 122nd Session of the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Va., Friday.

The ceremonies concluded 11 weeks of management level training for officers from 48 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Canada, Egypt,

England, Lebanon, Singapore and Taiwan.

Also graduating were representatives from five military organizations and six federal law enforcement agencies.

Benjamin R. Civiletti, attorney general of the United States, was principal speaker.

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ANOTHER HARVEST

Some folks look upon farming as a science left up to the agri-businessman. But we've found an old-fashioned farmer — an urban farmer — right in our midst who relishes the harvest. To read about him, turn to Page 3A.