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FBI ponders investigation into house burning

By MARY GNIEWEK

The FBI may soon launch an investigation into the Nov. 3 arson which destroyed a Farmington Hills group residence slated for occupancy by five mentally retarded adults.

A preliminary investigation of a similar house-burning which occurred in Taylor on Thursday was launched by the FBI on Thursday. That home was to be occupied by six retarded adults in January.

The request for FBI assistance into the two arson was made by the state's Department of Mental Health, which places foster care homes for the retarded throughout Michigan.

Thomas Miller of the Macomb Oakland Regional Center, sponsor of the now-defunct Farmington Hills home, has been the prime contact between the FBI and MORC, a branch of the mental health department.

The FBI has had similar conversations with mental health workers at the

Southgate Regional Center for Developmental Disabilities, sponsors of the Taylor home.

"In Taylor, there seems to be a violation under the education section of the 1964 Civil Rights Act — denial of educational privileges," said John Anthony, FBI spokesman.

The department is still reviewing the Farmington Hills case.

"They will be treated as separate cases," Anthony said. "But we'll look at them under the same umbrella of the

'64 Civil Rights Act."

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF Justice will decide on the basis of the FBI's preliminary investigation in Taylor if there is any violation of civil rights.

If the Justice Department believes there is a violation, the FBI will launch a full-scale investigation.

Like subdivision homeowners in Farmington Hills, Taylor homeowners were also opposed to placement of the group home in their neighborhood.

Farmington Hills Police Det. James

Worthington, who is heading the investigation, said there are no three suspects, none from the immediate neighborhood.

Worthington and Sgt. Al Haver say the investigation should be winding down in a couple of weeks.

Farmington Hills investigators haven't been contacted by the FBI yet.

Haver called the basis of the FBI's involvement in Taylor "stretching the imagination."

"They (mentally retarded) would

receive educational training regardless of where they're living," he said. "I don't think they (FBI) have a case."

"We haven't dropped anyone from our investigation yet," Haver continued.

"It hasn't centered on one person. We have a few loose ends to tie up before I can say anything further."

The five residents who were scheduled to move into the group home near Farmington and 14 Mile roads last month are still awaiting placement.

Veto override debated

House battle looms on abortion

This story was compiled by Observer & Eccentric reporters and editors. It was written by Lynn Orr.

With pro-life buttons everywhere in Lansing and a rally planned Tuesday, abortion foes are beginning the countdown in hopes of winning their first victory in Michigan.

Their fight began three weeks ago when Gov. Milliken vetoed a bill to prohibit Medicaid funding of abortions except when the mother's life is endangered.

The abortion foes immediately began pressuring state legislators to override Milliken's expected veto. A two-thirds vote in both houses is needed to override a veto.

Milliken squeezed an override attempt by holding out on the veto until Friday afternoon, leaving the lawmakers only a few days until the end of the session to get an override through both houses.

Both backers and opponents of the bill agree that the Senate will override the veto but that the House vote is too close to call.

THE VOTE is critical to women in Wayne and Oakland Counties, who received about 10 percent of the abortions paid with state funds.

Between Sept. 1, 1979, and Sept. 30, 1980, Medicaid paid for about 38 percent of the 44,142 abortions performed in Michigan.

Medicaid paid for 16,200 elective abortions at a cost of \$4.5 million, and 640 therapeutic abortions for the treatment of a medical condition at a cost of \$316,000, according to Norm Charles of the Medical Services Administration of the Department of Social Services.

By comparison, there were 35,299 live births in Michigan during the last three months of 1979, and the Office of Vital Health Care and Statistics estimates

109,190 live births through Sept. 30, 1980.

In the suburban area, only one state Representative, R. McNamee, R. Birmingham, voted against the bill. Area representatives and senators are divided on whether they will vote to override Milliken's veto.

The majority of those who voted to discontinue funding back an override. Others, like Republicans Sylvia Skrel and Jack Kirksey of Livonia, voted for the bill but declined to commit themselves to an override vote.

"IT'S VERY likely that's a decision I won't have to make," said Kirksey, who predicted the votes aren't there for an override.

State Sen. William Faust, the Senate Majority Leader whose district includes Westland and Canton Township, voted for the bill but said he will not vote to override Milliken's veto.

"I haven't decided whether I will vote for it," Faust said. "I've taken a pro-life position my whole career, but I have a strong obligation to the institutions and traditions here as Senate Majority Leader.

"The maneuvers used to produce the bill were deplorable. The constitution spells out very clearly how a bill is to be enacted, and it was not enacted properly."

The content and intent of the home heating bill was changed to prohibit abortions, according to Faust.

"The constitution says we cannot change the intent of a bill. I certainly hope that the actions are contested, not on the grounds of abortion, but on the constitutional mechanics used."

Republican Wilbur "Sandy" Brotherton, who represents Farmington and Southfield, also predicted that the override vote won't come up.

"The problem we'll have in overriding the veto is getting enough bodies in each chamber to vote," said Brotherton, who added that an override would

not be a repudiation of Milliken's leadership by pro-life Republicans in the Legislature.

"Some issues are non-partisan, and this is one of them."

As an alternative, Brotherton supports the concept of private trust funds to pay for abortions so that persons morally opposed to abortion won't have their tax dollars paying for the operations.

REPUBLICAN State Sen. Robert Geake, who represents Redford, Livonia and Plymouth, voted for the bill. He will vote to override Milliken for the first time in Geake's eight-year career in the Legislature.

"I'm sending a letter to him (the governor) that my override vote will be because of my deep personal conviction on the issue and should not be interpreted as a repudiation of his leadership."

Asked about whether he considered it discriminatory to withhold funds for a legal operation, Geake said, "Just because its legal doesn't make it right."

Sen. Doug Ross, a Democrat representing the Farmington and Southfield areas and one of the lone opponents of the bill in the Senate, doesn't believe the issue should be decided by the government.

"Low-income women should have the same access to the same services as everyone else. We shouldn't be singling out poor women."

Skrel, who is a Roman Catholic and represents parts of Livonia and Westland, said her mail has been overwhelmingly in support of her vote and many constituents have urged her to vote to override. She doesn't believe there are enough votes to override and hasn't decided how she will vote.

She also doesn't view her vote as discriminating against poor women.

"Abortions are still legal and they

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Headlee blasts Gov. Milliken on veto action

State tax crusader Richard Headlee has lashed out at Gov. William Milliken for his threatened veto of a bill which prohibits expenditure of state funds for abortions.

The Farmington Hills insurance executive urged the Legislature to override the expected gubernatorial veto.

"Republican legislators should break with the governor over the tax-paid abortion issue and join state Democrats in providing the required two-thirds vote to override the Milliken veto," he said.

Headlee called Milliken's threatened veto "unconscionable gall" after going on television and telling state taxpayers he was cutting the state budget to the bone.

The bill would save taxpayers \$4 million in state expenditures if the expected veto is overridden.

"A legislator using party loyalty or respect for the governor as an excuse for sustaining the governor's veto and not voting his or her conscience won't wash," he said.

"A vote to sustain is unquestionably a vote for public-funded abortions and

more irresponsible public-sector spending."

Milliken has vetoed similar legislation in the past.

In 1979 Headlee shot off a letter to Milliken protesting his actions.

"With the many alleged needs and demands on the tax dollar, destruction of human life through abortions should not drain our public treasury," he told the governor.

While Milliken argues women should be financially able to make the decision herself with the aid of state aid, Headlee disagrees.

"If any woman makes the serious decision to terminate the life of an unborn child, she and whoever else is responsible should pay for such an abortion — not taxpayers," he said.

Headlee criticized Milliken for endorsing the \$4-million abortion expenditure while at the same time laying off state troopers, closing state parks and cutting \$20 million from the Department of Public Health.

"In light of the current economic crisis in our state, the governor's veto is clearly indefensible," said Headlee.

Riordan steps down

Tom Riordan, a 34-year veteran of the newspaper business, has resigned his position as executive editor of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

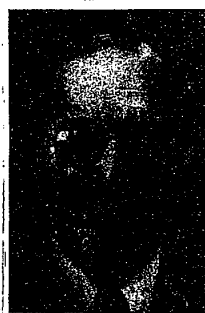
In January, Riordan will join his wife, Marilyn, to help her handle the increasing workload of her growing printing business in Garden City.

"We are sorry to lose Tom, who has been a member of the O&E team since January 3, 1978. We wish him and Marilyn the best of luck," said O&E General Manager John Reddy.

Riordan, 59, began his newspaper career in 1947 as a Michigan State University campus stringer for the old Detroit Times.

The MSU grad's career includes stints as a publisher of papers in Greenwich, Ohio, and Tecumseh, Mich., and managing editor of the Jackson (Mich.) Citizen Patriot. Prior to his arrival at the O&E, he conducted newsroom management

seminars for publications throughout the Midwest.



TOM RIORAN

Substitute teachers meet at first workshop

Labeled as the first of its kind in the Farmington Public Schools, a workshop for substitute teachers was held Nov. 27 at the Ten Mile Community School in Farmington.

Approximately 70 substitute teachers from the Farmington district attended.

Following a welcoming address by Superintendent Lewis Schuman, sessions were conducted by personnel director Robert Coleman on what substitute teachers should expect in the schools, and assistant superintendent Lynn Nutter on the middle school curriculum.

Teachers spent the remainder of the afternoon attending various seminars. Secondary teachers attended a seminar conducted by Norman Dickson, assistant principal of North Farmington High, regarding new student attendance policies for high schools.

A second session dealt with the Elementary Laidlaw Reading Program and SCIS Science Program.

Contributing speakers were Larry Freedman, assistant superintendent; James Nuttall, chairman of the district reading services; and Douglas Cooper, district science coordinator.



Christmas cheer

City worker Jerry Linhart is at it again. That is, he's decking the town with Christmas cheer. Residents will note as they go about their holiday shopping that more and more decorations and lights abound in the area. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

Educator predicts return to 3 R's

By MARY GNIEWEK

Stanley Kaplan predicts education will follow a conservative national trend over the next decade.

Kaplan, in Farmington Hills last week visiting one of 80 international education centers which bear his name, says the 1980's will make a comeback in the 1980's.

"There will be a retreat from experimentation," he says. "Businesses feel very strongly about it."

Kaplan, lifelong educator, textbook author and editor, founded his first tutoring center in his native Brooklyn, N. Y. in 1938.

Today the more than 80 centers specialize in preparing students for college entrance exams, graduate school admission tests and professional licensure exams.

Kaplan addressed Michigan educators Saturday at the third annual instruction and development conference sponsored by the Michigan Education Association. His topic was "The Great Test Debate."

"If a person is sick and a thermometer registers 104 degrees, you don't even spray the thermometer because it didn't register 98.6."

"Likewise tests aren't labels. Tests are identifiers. If a person is educationally disadvantaged, don't throw away the test. Use it to make the best of people's talents."

KAPLAN RECENTLY DEBATED consumer advocate Ralph Nader on the validity of standardized tests, which Nader opposes as biased citing the inequality of education.

"He believes in mediocrity. I believe

in meritocracy," Kaplan says.

Kaplan began his tutoring career before the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) was created. It's now a standard exam required for entrance to college and one of the many exams for which Kaplan courses prepare students.

"The test approach has remained the same," he says.

But lax school systems which promote students annually regardless of their ability to read or write bother him.

"Most people are grammatical illiterates," he says. "There are people in graduate school and law school who can't spell or write."

Feedback from corporations hiring these graduates has grown increasingly negative.

"The diploma has become a fraud," he says. "The necessity for competency exams for promotions is a sad commentary."

Kaplan's courses are designed to prepare students through long term study and are equivalent to two semesters of college coursework, according to staff at the Farmington Hills center.

Currently 120 students enrolled there.

"If coaching means cramming, it provides very little help," Kaplan says. "Over the long term as a supplement to education, it produces a better student."

"I encourage making the best of everyone's talents."

what's inside

