

# Farmington Observer

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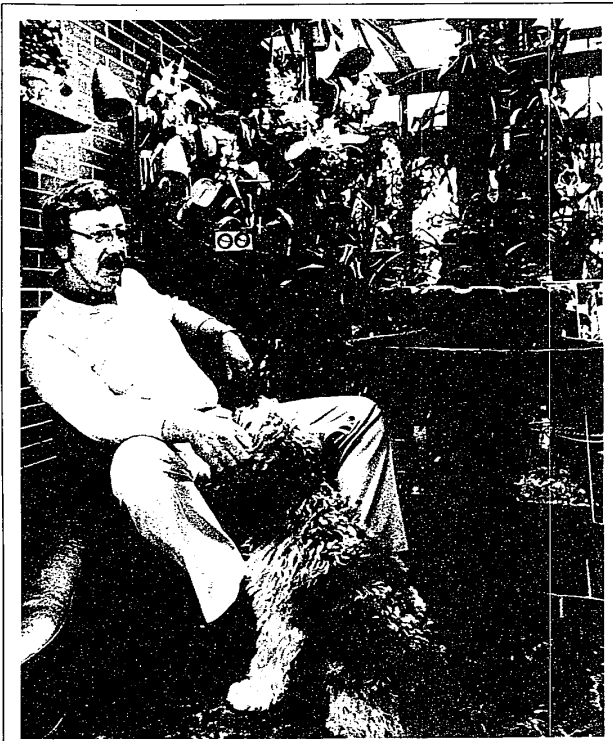
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## Flowery retreat

Relaxing with his dogs and his orchids, Dr. Richard Wagner finds his greenhouse to be a welcome escape from the hectic life of a physician. To read more about this getaway haven, turn to 3A.

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

## Schools re-examine sex education plan

By Craig Plochura  
staff writer

An opinion issued Tuesday by Michigan Attorney General Frank Kelley will make sex education an elective course in state public schools unless the opinion is overturned by the courts or Legislature.

The current practice of Farmington Public Schools has been to allow students whose parents are opposed to the teaching of sex education to sign a waiver excusing their child from required classes whenever the subject is taught.

In interpreting Michigan Public Act 226, which became effective Nov. 30, 1977, Kelley said legislators who wrote the law stipulated the class "shall be elective and not a requirement for graduation."

Another section of the act says students "shall not be enrolled" in any class in which family planning or reproduction is taught until their parents are notified in advance of the course, its content and materials used and advised of their right to excuse their child from the class, Kelley said.

An assistant to Kelley explained Thursday that many school administrators had contended there was a difference between the words "class" and "course" mentioned in the act.

Administrators thought they were following the law, said Assistant Attorney General Paul Zimmer, by requiring students to take a required course in personal hygiene, for example, as long as students were given the right to "opt out" of the class when sexual matters were discussed.

STUDENTS WHO wish to receive information regarding family planning, human sexuality, reproduction and the recognition, prevention and treatment of venereal disease will now have to take the class as an elective course, Zimmer said.

Superintendent of Farmington Public Schools Lewis Schulman doesn't envision any big problems in following Kelley's recent directive.

"At first blush I'd say it's really not required now," Schulman said. "It's included in (health and physical education) courses but kids can opt out."

After Kelley's opinion was read to the superintendent, he admitted the school district may have to revise its current practice of including sex education instruction in required courses.

"Such instruction may become part of a health course that is not required (for graduation)," Schulman said.

Only a handful of students in the district have ever exercised the option to

be excluded from class when sex education is taught, said the superintendent.

While students were previously allowed to "opt out" of sex education instruction, Schulman said now students who want the information will have to "opt in" to receive it.

"I don't see any great problems," Schulman said. "We'll just have to see that it (sex education) isn't coupled with a required course."

Kelley was asked by State Rep. Francis Spaniola, Democrat from Corunna, to interpret the law and give his legal opinion. The opinions of the state attorney general carry the weight of law unless they are struck down by the courts or the Legislature.

## Fred Steinkopf, nurseryman, dies

By Craig Plochura  
staff writer

Frederick I. Steinkopf, a Farmington Hills nurseryman for the past 50 years, died April 16 in Botsford Hospital after a lingering illness.

Mr. Steinkopf was 74 years old and the owner of Steinkopf Nursery of Farmington Hills. A stroke in 1977 forced Steinkopf into retirement but the business is still being run by his son, Frederick L. Steinkopf.

"My dad, he just loved people," said the younger Steinkopf. "He liked to converse with people and he loved plants so much. He had to. To get rich, he'd certainly have picked another profession."

The younger Steinkopf said his father would point to various trees he had planted, as far back as 1925, when they drove around surrounding communities. In the city of Farmington, for example, Steinkopf said his father planted a row of trees on Alta Loma Street and in Livonia, trees in the Coventry Gardens neighborhood were planted by his father's hand under a \$1.75-per-tree contract with the city.

Thousands of trees planted in Farmington and Farmington Hills by the beautification committee came from his nursery.

"He brought us up to treat every customer the same," said Steinkopf. "Whether it's something small or something large, you gave everybody your due respect."

Mrs. Myrtle Steinkopf worked alongside her husband at the nursery until her death in 1971. The couple's two sons, Fred and David, followed their father's example by joining the nursery business. Fred runs the nursery and David wholesales trees at a farm in Sanilac County, said the family.

"This nursery was everything to him," said Fred. "He liked sports but never had time to play. He pretty much kept busy around here. It takes a full part of your life to do it right."

Steinkopf was born in Orchard Lake Nov. 1, 1906, and was touched by the green thumb through his father, Louis, who worked as a groundskeeper at the Ward Estate on the lake.

The Steinkopf Nursery was founded in April 1931 but Steinkopf had previously worked as an employee at Fred's nursery in the Detroit area.



Frederick I. Steinkopf nurseryman

Steinkopf says his father's first nursery stock came in lieu of wages by his employees during the Depression.

"I guess he thought he could possibly earn \$12 a week on his own," explained the son.

In the early days of the nursery, business was often conducted "with bartering and a firm handshake," said Steinkopf's son.

"Dad always said 'A man's word is his bond.' That was one of his favorite sayings," said Fred.

Funeral services were at the Farmington Hills Christian Center Church and burial was in North Farmington Cemetery. The Rev. John Walasky officiated at the church ceremony and the Rev. Fred Gerhardt conducted the cemetery service. Arrangements were handled by the Heeny-Sundquist Funeral Home.

Mr. Steinkopf is survived by sons Fred L. and David I.; daughter Dolly Jean; brother L. Earl; sister, Mrs. Violet Bahlman; 13 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

## Schools property vandalized during Easter holiday break

Several Farmington Hills schools were hit by vandals last week during spring break. Minor damage was reported.

Three windows were broken at Shiawassee School. Easter Sunday but nothing inside the building, now used as a recreation center by the city, was missing.

East Middle School reported \$350 in

damages when vandals pried a plywood cover from a window Monday.

Several lockers were forced open, but it's not known what was taken since students were on spring break.

Yellow paint was thrown against the south side wall of the school.

Someone broke into North Farmington High School over the weekend and entered the auto shop. Several tool boxes and cabinets were opened. It's not

known what was missing.

Someone entered Lutheran High Northwest, 30175 Highmeadow, by pushing out a window frame. Nothing was reported missing.

FARMINGTON HILLS police arrested a 16-year-old youth Thursday for doing a lawn job at Larkshire Elementary School.

Officers patrolling the area saw the

car stuck in deep ruts in front of the school. Several hundred feet of damaged lawn, with two- to four-foot-wide furrows, led from the car.

The youth, who was accompanied by two friends, told police he entered the property from behind the school and then drove in circles on the grass until he got stuck.

He was released to his parents.

## A quick tour

## Police capture teen after chase

An 18-year-old Walled Lake man pleaded guilty on Friday to charges of driving on a revoked driver's license and fleeing from police after leading police from three communities on a lengthy chase early on Thursday morning.

John J. Babon, 18, of 1427 Sunset,

Walled Lake, was arrested in front of a trailer at the Country Cousins Mobile Home Park in Novi. A Farmington police officer's squad car that was in pursuit slid on the grass in front of the mobile home and had to be towed away.

On Friday Babon paid a fine of \$105 at his hearing before 47th District

Judge Margaret Scheaffer on misdemeanor charges of driving on a revoked license and fleeing and eluding police. The latter charge carries a maximum penalty of 90 days in jail and a \$100 fine. Babon was ordered by the judge to serve three separate days in Farmington City Jail.

No charges were brought against a juvenile who was a passenger in the car Babon was driving. The juvenile, however, complained that police struck him after the car was stopped. Photographs were taken of the young man's split lip, and officers advised him of his right to file a complaint.

THE CHASE began at 2:32 a.m. when Farmington Police Officer Charles Lee said he spotted a car headed east on the Grand River Expressway (M-102) at speeds in excess of 70 miles per hour. Officer Lee said he was on patrol heading east on Freedom Road and the suspect's car was traveling alongside him on the expressway.

Babon exited from the freeway at Farmington Road, and police subsequently pursued him down Farmington, Nine Mile, Cloverdale, Power, Grand River, Freedom, Howard and Haggerty roads before the chase ended in the driveway of one of the homes at the mobile home park. At Farmington Road, police said, Babon turned south and jumped the curb damaging two re-

cently planted trees and the decorative ironwork that surrounds them.

The patrol car that was damaged was driven by Officer James Madigan. The car Babon was driving belonged to his parents, who police said were unaware that the car or their son was gone when notified of his arrest.

## Don't mess with chief

Aggressive drivers who like to tailgate and make obscene gestures, beware.

Your next victim could be the chief of police.

A 20-year-old Livonia motorist got more than he bargained for Tuesday evening when he chose to aggravate Farmington Hills Police Chief John Nichols.

According to Nichols, Thomas Wheeler annoyed and insulted him by tailgating him on Orchard Lake between Ten Mile and Eleven Mile.

Wheeler also made an obscene gesture.

The chief responded by arresting Wheeler on the spot. He was issued a citation for annoying conduct.

## what's inside

Agenda	8A
Community Calendar	8A
Editorials	7B
Inside Archives	3A
Obituaries	4A
Shopping Cart	Section B
Suburban Life	5B

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