

# Farmington Observer

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## Councils kill independent library drive

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Farmington and Farmington Hills officials have decided residents will be denied the chance this year to determine whether the Farmington Community Library should be reorganized as an independent authority capable of levying operating millage.

At a joint meeting Wednesday, both city councils voted 4-0 to deny the request of the nine-member library board of directors to ask voters in November whether the district library system should become an independent governmental body.

Farmington Hills council members Jody Soronen, Charles Williams and William Lange were absent as was Farmington council member Bayard Tupper.

As an authority the library board would have been capable of asking voters for operating millage instead of receiving money annually from both Farmington and Farmington Hills to run the system.

In denying the request to be placed on the November ballot, council members indicated that an independent authority would only be another layer of government as well as another taxing jurisdiction with which taxpayers would have to contend. They also indicated that based on Farmington Hills attorney Paul Bibeau's review of state library organization laws, they could not find overwhelming advantage in the library's reorganization.

"My attitude is if it's not broke, why fix it?" said Farmington Councilman William Miltchell.

"There is a need for a fixed level of spending," responded library director Gordon Lewis.

HE TOLD council members that library officials wanted only the question of creating an authority on the November ballot. Library officials preferred asking voters for operating millage, to replace direct funding from the cities, to be placed on the November 1984 ballot. Because of the presidential election there would be greater voter turnout, Lewis said.

"The library board is not suggesting this is something (asking voters for op-

erating millage) they wish to pursue this year," Lewis said.

But Farmington Hills Mayor Fred Hughes said it seemed pointless to separate the issue of reorganizing as an authority and asking for operating millage.

"I think the legal definitions and the ambiguity about the legal status of the library is really transparent to the community," Hughes said. "I think it is an issue of funding."

Hughes told Lewis that while he is opposed to creating an authority with independent funding, he was not opposed to letting voters react to the question. But he insisted that voters recognize the purpose of reorganizing the library, "so they know right off the bat what they're voting for."

Hughes said, if anything was going to be on the November ballot, it should be two questions, one about the reorganization and another asking voters to pay operating millage. A one-mill levy has been mentioned previously as the amount most likely needed to fund library operations.

"I think Mr. Hughes hit the nail on the head," said Farmington Hills councilman Dean Wolf. "What we're doing is creating another taxing authority."

Also willing to let voters decide whether the library should become a financially independent authority, Wolf nevertheless said he would work for the proposal's defeat.

A LIBRARY reorganization question was debated in 1978 when library board members first requested the change. While Farmington voters approved the request, Farmington Hills voters opposed the issue so it was put on hold.

In denying the library board's request this time, however, council members said that if library officials wanted to wait until the presidential election to ask voters for operating millage, then the board of directors should offer another reorganization and request for operating millage in 1984.

Please turn to Page 4



Marguerite Jaworsky, who lives on Alta Loma, holds an umbrella over Farmington policeman Mackey. The boy had just been struck by a car Joe Schornack and paramedics who are placing white crossing Alta Loma

## Young bicyclist breaks leg after collision with auto

An eight-year-old Farmington boy will be spending much of the summer with a cast on his left leg after being knocked from his bicycle by an automobile on Alta Loma during last Wednesday's rain storm.

According to Farmington police, Scott Mackey, who lives on State, was riding his bicycle across Alta Loma about 50 feet west of Farmington Road about 2 p.m. Wednesday when he was struck by an eastbound auto driven by Linda Mills, 38, of Farmington.

No ticket was issued, and the driver was not at fault, police said.

Farmington police and paramedics from Novi Ambulance arrived at the scene. While Marguerite Jaworsky, who lives nearby, held an umbrella over police and paramedics, an air splint was placed on the boy's left leg.

He was then transported to St. Mary Hospital in Livonia. Bob Mackey, the boy's father, said Thursday that his son suffered a broken femur.

"He's going to be in there (the hospital) for at least a month," Mackey said. "Then they'll put the cast on. He'll have that on for another month or five weeks."

"He darted across the street, I guess. I don't know too many of the details. Maybe reading this will make kids be more careful on their bikes."

Scott, who was returning home from swimming at the Farmington Glen aquatic club, missed the last day of the third grade at Our Lady of Sorrows last Thursday.

## Public cable dawns

If you've ever dreamed of producing a television show, your opportunity is closer than you think with the help of 15 public access cable television channels soon to be available through the MetroVision cable firm.

"An individual doesn't have to be part of a group to program," said Lark Samouelian, who represents Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi as executive of the tri-city Southwestern Oakland Cable Consortium (SWOCC).

So if you have any ideas, such as producing a how-to show on gardening or fashion, or a show featuring ideas for entertaining party guests, contact Samouelian at the Farmington City Hall on Liberty Street. An liaison between the recently organized citizen public access committee, Samouelian will pass on your ideas to the group of tri-city residents who are responsible for coordinating the use of the public access channels.

The 16-member public access committee, Samouelian said, now is developing its by-laws and procedures of operation.

The idea behind the 15 public access channels, she said, "is to provide information and entertainment for local communities. The public access committee's job with Samouelian's help is to inspire long-term programming." Filling up 15 channels with good, informative and entertaining programming is more difficult than it appears, she said.

BUT AS SOON as the public access committee puts itself in order and MetroVision becomes more firmly implanted in the three cities as more residents hook up to cable television, the firm, with Samouelian's help, will offer a workshop for people interested in local programming.

The lessons will cover the technical aspects of cable television and programming, as well as developing an idea into a television program.

"Our responsibility is to make sure individuals have enough information (concerning cable television)," Samouelian said. "Civic and community organizations also are expected to produce local shows."

In fact, she said, the local school districts, library systems, police departments and community hospitals have shown an interest in programming with some already forming advisory committees.

Because the SWOCC, which Samouelian works for, is the decision making arm of the cable franchise, her duties include monitoring and reporting on the status of MetroVision's 15-year cable television franchise with the intergovernmental consortium. Representatives from each of the three cities sit on the SWOCC.

Although residents who have questions or problems with their cable service or MetroVision should first contact the cable firm, if they still are unsatisfied, Samouelian should be contacted at 474-5500.

## Group home residents lose to sewer problems

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

A Farmington Hills group home was closed earlier this month after Oakland County health officials declared that the septic tank's seeping sewage was a health hazard.

Although the closing forced four residents from the home, mental health officials say they could be back as soon as the problem is repaired.

The home at 2845 Rollcrest, was voluntarily closed June 1 after the county social services department, on the board of health's recommendation, asked Macomb-Oakland Regional Cen-

ter officials, who monitor the home's operation, to relocate the four mentally retarded and disabled residents.

"They had a sewage problem that could not be repaired," said James Rothschild, a supervisor for the county health department's environmental division in Southfield.

In May, health officials investigated the home's failing septic tank, Rothschild said, and found it was irreparable and was located in an all clay case that is unsuitable for such a system.

"At first we cited him for a failing system," Rothschild said, referring to the home's owner, Robert Utlick, who leases the site to Alpha Nova Inc. of

Clawson, the non-profit corporation which operates the home.

BUT AFTER realizing that the system, which had been repaired once before in 1980, could not be fixed, health officials voided the violation, Rothschild said.

There evidently were problems (with the septic tank) in that area before," said Barbara Smalley, an Oakland County Department of Social Services (DSS) area supervisor who monitors the licensing of group homes.

DSS officials withheld issuing Alpha Nova's original operating license because the septic tank was failing when

the corporation first leased the home, Smalley said. After health officials approved the septic tank repairs in February 1981, DSS officials then issued a temporary license. In August 1981, DSS officials renewed the license for two years.

Because Alpha Nova officials voluntarily closed the group home when the board of health declared the septic tank a health hazard, Smalley said, it was unnecessary to take any type of action against the operators.

"We could have stayed there but then DSS would have taken action to have them removed," said Ron Cornelison, MORC's director of community placement. "Why fight it. If it is a health hazard we don't want to fight it."

In fact, Cornelison said, the owner is attempting to connect the home to one of the city's sewer lines located about 1,000 feet from the site. If city officials approve the proposed sewer tap-in, then the home can be reopened, Cornelison said.

But because the home is now closed, with a condemned sign posted in its front yard, Alpha Nova is essentially a defunct corporation, he said. But if the home eventually is tapped into the sewer system and the four residents returned, DSS officials assured Cornelison that the license would be returned to operate the home, he said.

## what's inside

- Community Calendar . . . 5B
- Editorials . . . . . 9A
- Inside Angles . . . . . 2A
- Obituaries . . . . . 2A
- Oral Quarrel . . . . . 6A
- Shopping Cart . . . . . Section B
- Sports . . . . . Section C
- Suburban Life . . . . . 3, 4, 5B

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This group home found itself empty after its residents were forced out when sewage problems were discovered.

RANDY BORST/staff photographer