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Farmington Observer

Volume 99 Number 2

Monday, October 12, 1987

Farmington, Michigan

56 Pages

Twenty-Five Cents

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Headlee gains new lease on life



Richard Headlee heart transplant recipient

By Joanne Malliszowski staff writer

The day after Richard Headlee received a new heart, he got the bad news. The Detroit Tigers lost a second time to the Minnesota Twins in the American League Championship Series.

"He's getting concerned. He's an avid season ticket holder," said William McMaster, spokesman for Headlee, president of the Farmington Hills-based Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co. of America.

The condition of the well-known Farmington Hills resident and unsuccessful 1982 Republican gubernatorial candidate was upgraded from critical to serious early Friday — two days after he underwent a successful heart transplant operation at Latter-day Saints Hospital in Salt Lake City, according to a hospital spokeswoman. Headlee was diagnosed with congestive heart failure in late August.

'One condition of being accepted into the heart transplant program at LDS is that you have to maintain an active interest in your work . . .'

— William McMaster Headlee family spokesman

"He's recovering appropriately," said Robert Young, executive vice president and chief operating officer for Alexander Hamilton.

"We here at the company are very, very encouraged by the progress he has made," said company Vice President Thomas Ritter. "The 600 or so employees here — we are absolutely elated at the good news that is coming from LDS Hospital."

AWAKE, ALERT and conversant, Headlee, 57, watched the Tigers take

a trouncing at the hands of the Twins Thursday night.

"It is a good way to pass the time in that intensive care unit," said McMaster, of McMaster Communications of Bloomfield Township, who spoke with Headlee's wife, Mary, early Friday. "It really is a mark of a man who isn't introspective. He takes an interest in everything around him."

Ritter said the perfect Christmas gift would be Headlee's successful return to his Farmington Hills off-

ice. "We would like to confidently say we would have him back here by the New Year," Ritter said.

Headlee was beeped to come to the LDS Hospital at 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 7 to be prepped for surgery in case the donor heart — the third heart tested for Headlee — passed the battery of cross-match tests.

"Within three minutes of its (the donor heart) arrival, they (physicians) determined it was sufficiently preserved and viable to complete the operation," McMaster said.

The donor heart, from an unidentified person in New Mexico, was flown on a private jet to Salt Lake City, where it was put on a helicopter and flown to LDS hospital. "The hospital has an agreement with the family of the (heart) donor that no details be released. But I suspect Dick will say it all himself when he's asked," McMaster said.

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Farmington FOCUS

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CARRYING the torch. Ralph Miesel of Farmington Hills will serve as food and drug group chairman in the 1987 United Foundation Torch Drive Renaissance Unit.

That's one of six chapter campaign units that together raise 90 percent of the Torch Drive total.

The reporting phase of the 39th annual Torch Drive is Oct. 12 to Nov. 5. The drive raises operating money for 153 charitable groups in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.

NOTE this corrected time. The League of Women Voters of Farmington/West Bloomfield will host a candidates night Tuesday, Oct. 13 for the nine contenders for Farmington Hills City Council.

The meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. in the Farmington Hills City Hall Council Chambers, 31555 11 Mile.

The incorrect time was given in Thursday's paper.

REMINDER: Today is Columbus Day, a federal holiday.

Farmington Hills City Hall and the 47th District Court are closed. Farmington City Hall is open. Banks are closed. There will be no mail delivery.

FOOTNOTES: One year ago this week — Renovating, upgrading and buying continues as the second phase of capital improvements in the Farmington Public Schools begins. Project estimates range from \$900,000 to \$1.4 million.

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CREATIVE LIVING REAL ESTATE GUIDE

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They felt the earth shaking

By Joanne Malliszowski staff writer

"Home Sweet Home." It has never meant more to Alex and Lilli Keurejjan.

The Farmington Hills residents are delighted to be on Michigan's steady ground after a few shaky moments in one of Los Angeles' earthquakes last week.

"They can have their beautiful California. I'll take the tornadoes," said Lilli Keurejjan, glad to be home and away from the earth-shaking tremors.

An aftershock, following Los Angeles' earthquake that killed at least six people Oct. 1, that measured 5.5 on the Richter scale welcomed the Keurejjan family to California.

Before they left Detroit Metropolitan Airport the day of the worst earthquake since 1971, the Keurejjan family relatives in California to be sure it was safe.

"There was no sign of any damage," Alex said, recalling the moment they landed at Los Angeles International Airport.

'I thought a train was running through my room.'

— Alex Keurejjan Farmington Hills

But at 3:59 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 4, the Keurejjan family were rudely awakened. Their 11th-floor hotel room was shaking.

"At first I heard a rumble. I thought I was dreaming. I grabbed my wristwatch. I thought a train was running through my room," Alex said.

LILLI NEVER had any doubts about what was happening. "You absolutely knew what it was. But where do you go when you're on the 11th floor? I have never dressed so fast in my life."

Yet there was no time for panic.

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Lilli and Alex Keurejjan — in the comfort of their Farmington Hills home after their return to Michigan from a few shaky moments in Los Angeles.

Holiday spirit is building

By Casey Hens staff writer

Deck the halls . . . and the windows and the doors! Downtown Farmington merchants are gearing up for holiday festivities, as they launch the season with decorating contest and plans for a "Christmas Walk" in the city's central business district Sunday, Nov. 22.

In addition to these activities will be the annual Farmington Area Jaycees tree lighting on the same day, and installation of holiday decorations and lights sponsored by the Downtown Development Authority.

"We want it to be an open house kind of thing," said Wendy Strip Sittsamer, DDA director. "It's a chance for people to be downtown and see what it has to offer. Each store will handle it in its own way."

Downtown businesses have until Nov. 2 to enter the DDA-sponsored decorating contest, which involves

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Dancer beats cancer — and the odds

By Janice Brunson staff writer

For years, Barry Douglas, 33, said he danced to live, to escape the streets of Detroit where he grew up and, later, to cope with the traumatic aftermath of a divorce.

Five years ago, while dancing professionally at the Sahara Hotel in Las Vegas, he realized the opposite was true. "I lived to dance."

Today, Douglas, of Farmington Hills, is simply happy to be both alive and dancing.

Sixteen months ago, he was diagnosed as having a form of cancer, squamous carcinoma. He was told that, should he be lucky enough to

people

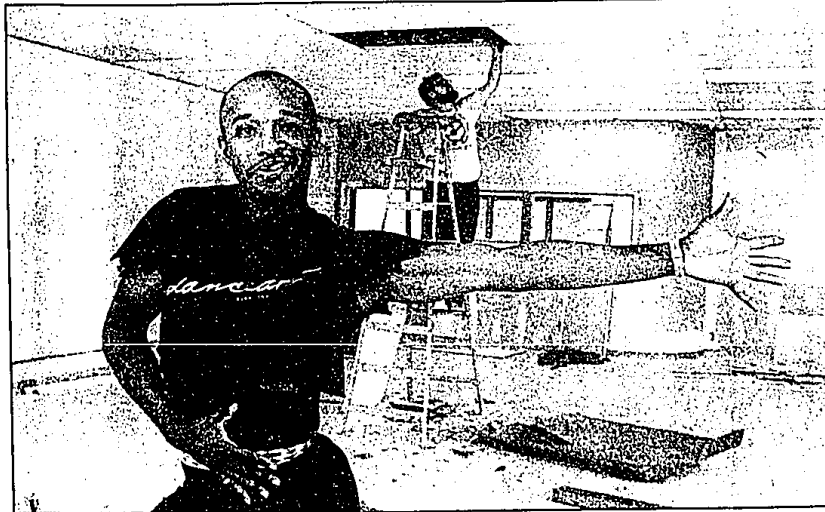
live, he would probably lose at least partial use of the right side of his upper body because major surgery involving delicate nerve endings was necessary.

Fully recovered, Douglas is busy launching Danceart Dance Studio in Keego Harbor.

"I guess you could say I'm lucky," said the muscular dancer with a lopsided grin, the final vestige of surgery which threatened his life and mobility.

"I WAS told it would affect the right side of my face and my shoulder."

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STEPHEN CANTRELL/staff photographer

Barry Douglas can hardly wait to launch his newly completed dance studio in Keego Harbor. "I guess you could say I'm lucky," said the muscular dancer with a lopsided grin, the final vestige of surgery that threatened his life and mobility.