

OCC students in Hills will help homeless, 1B



Cunmulaj places, 1D

Haggerty congestion gets a hearing, 10A

# Farmington Observer

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## farmington FOCUS

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**D**RIVERS beware. The Farmington Hills City Council approved a traffic control order lowering the speed limit along Northwestern Highway, a state artery, from 55 to 50 mph. The change will be effective once new speed limit signs are posted.

Councilwoman Jean Fox thinks the speed limit should be lower — 45 mph — the same as on Orchard Lake Road. Roads of similar character should have a similar speed limit, she told fellow city council members Feb. 13.

**T**WO Farmington Hills-based employers are among Oakland County's largest employers. According to Crain's Detroit Business, Michigan National Corp., with 1,980 full-time employees in Oakland County, is ranked ninth. Botsford General Hospital, with 855 full-time county employees, is ranked 21st. General Motors tops the rankings with 30,000 full-time workers in Oakland County.

### Quote of the week

“It was unbelievable. At 10 to eight in the morning, you don't expect those things to happen.”

— Polo Club Apartments resident manager Trudy Moegelin after a tractor-trailer truck left I-275 and crashed into her garage and kitchen Tuesday morning (see story this page).

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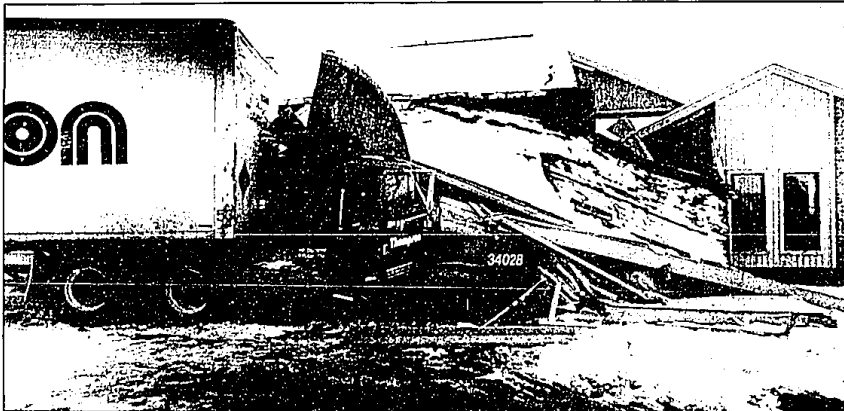
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# Runaway truck slams apartment

## Charges pending

By Bob Sklar staff writer



THOMAS ARNETT/staff photographer

A semi truck left northbound I-275 Tuesday morning and crashed into the garage and kitchen of the resident manager's unit at Polo Club Apartments, about 50 yards away.

Trudy Moegelin was getting ready for work at the Polo Club Apartments Tuesday morning when she and her son, Bill, heard a crash, looked outside and saw a tractor-trailer truck propped against the kitchen window.

“It was unbelievable,” the resident manager said. “At 10 to eight in the morning, you don't expect those things to happen.”

Miraculously, no one was seriously hurt. The truck driver faces a misdemeanor charge of operating under the influence of intoxicating liquor.

From his bedroom, Bill, 22, could hear the truck coming through the woods from I-275, two-tenths of a mile to the west.

“He thought it was coming into his bedroom so he jumped up and came and got me. The whole building just shook,” Moegelin said.

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# Alkateeb quits as councilman

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

After weeks of threatening, Farmington Hills city councilman Joe Alkateeb resigned Monday, a little more than a year after his re-election to a third four-year term. “I guess I have had enough. Time to concentrate on my growing business,” Alkateeb said in his brief, handwritten resignation letter to Mayor Terry Sever.

The council Monday unanimously accepted Alkateeb's resignation with “regret.” Alkateeb was not at Monday's meeting.

“I enjoyed serving the city. I don't see that we're going anywhere,” Alkateeb said Tuesday.

“I feel relieved. I really do. I'm leaving very proud of what I did for Farmington Hills. I left a mark in Farmington Hills that will be there until the end of time.”

Sever said Alkateeb's resignation “was one that comes as a surprise but yet not as a surprise.”

The mayor described Alkateeb's year as mayor in 1986 as a “very exciting and rewarding one for us all.” Future planning marked Alkateeb's mayorship. He encouraged the city



Joe Alkateeb 'I feel relieved' departments to develop five-year plans.

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# Process begins to fill vacancy

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

The appointed replacement for veteran Farmington Hills city councilman Joe Alkateeb must run for election in November to fill the remaining two years of his four-year term.

After accepting Alkateeb's resignation Monday, the city council agreed to accept applications from potential nominees and appoint a replacement Monday, March 27. Applications are due in the city manager's office by 4 p.m. Wednesday, March 15, at 31555 11 Mile.

Basically, the same process will

Alkateeb's replacement should be appointed by March 27. Applications are due March 15 to the city manager.

be used that was followed in the appointment of councilman Phillip Arnold in December, who filled a vacancy left by the November election

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# Attorney denies breaking 'spirit' of new tree law

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Farmington Hills city attorney Harold Larson says he didn't violate the spirit of the city's new tree protection ordinance a week before it went into effect when he had 19 trees cut down on six acres along 12 Mile, east of Halsted.

“I believe we have recognized the ordinance because we were careful about what we cut down,” said Larson, of Larson, Harms & Wright, Farmington Hills. “This is a site that consists of hundreds and hundreds of trees.”

To the surprise of many of his colleagues, councilman Ben Marks Monday publicized the week-long rumors about Larson having trees on his vacant property cut down just before the new ordinance went into effect Feb. 13.

“I'm disappointed. I'm shocked that somebody would do that. It's immoral,” Marks said. Others agreed. “He doesn't have the right to cut down those trees when the tree ordinance was written in his own office,” councilwoman Jean Fox said.

Mayor Terry Sever, who said he would have preferred publicizing the matter after he had all the facts, said he will ask Larson for a written explanation of why he had 19 trees, some of which were large landmark trees, cut down, when he knew the ordinance was about to take effect.

provide a letter for the next council meeting Monday, Feb. 27, explaining his actions.

The ordinance was enacted by the council Jan. 23. Though the city is about 80-90 percent developed, the ordinance was drafted to save what trees remain, particularly in undeveloped sites.

The ordinance, which also applies to single-family residential property, prohibits removal or destruction of certain trees in the city without a permit from the Department of Planning and Community Development. The permit does not require a fee. A survey of trees is required on non-residential property or to remove fewer than three trees.

“Obviously, I knew the ordinance was going into effect. This was a situation where thinning out the trees would allow the flourishing of numerous landmark trees standing there,” Larson said.

Larson's firm became the city's legal representatives last year when long-time city attorney Paul Bibeau disbanded his firm, Brennan, Bibeau & Poehlman, and joined Larson's.

Larson said the tree cutting began about two weeks before the ordinance went into effect and was completed about a week before the effective date. “If we tried to do it later (after the ordinance became effective), we would have incurred additional costs, a tree permit, a tree survey. But it's not a matter of making money,” Larson said.

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PAUL ERIK INTO

Kathleen Lois Brennan of Farmington Hills was thrown from her northbound Toyota Corolla (above) after it was broadsided by an eastbound car at the intersection of Eight Mile and Orchard Lake Road Sunday. Above, Farmington Hills firefighters assist police and paramedics at the scene.

# ‘A terrible shock’ Woman, 42, dies in multi-car crash

By Bob Sklar staff writer

A close friend remembers Kathleen Lois Brennan, killed in a traffic accident at Eight Mile and Orchard Lake Road Sunday, as “very outgoing, very active.” “She put her heart and soul into everything she did,” said Doris Gruber, who last saw Brennan at the laundromat Saturday at Flamingo Trailer Court in Farmington Hills.

“She had a lot to offer,” Gruber added. “She was very industrious. This is a terrible shock.”

Brennan, 42, was killed when her northbound car was struck on the driver's side by a westbound car that police believe ran a red light, said Sgt. Ray Cranston, Farmington Hills Police Department Traffic Section supervisor. Police will seek criminal charges against the driver of the other car. The 34-year-old Plymouth man was

admitted to Botsford General Hospital, Farmington Hills, with head and abdominal injuries, Cranston said.

District Judge Michael Hand of Farmington signed a search warrant to let blood be drawn for toxicology testing to determine if drugs were in the man's bloodstream, Cranston said.

Brennan died of multiple injuries. Please turn to Page 3