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SEAT

A position on Farmington's Downtown Development Authority board is opening. "City Approver Merrill Lillis is retiring in Farmington Hills. The city is seeking someone to represent the interests of residents on the DDA."

TRIO

This year will be a contest for Farmington's DDA. This will be the third year president Harry Wilson, vice president Greg Holter and secretary Robert Desman will hold the posts. They were re-elected April 1.

DID

Grand River and Grand River Road in the Farmington area used to be called Grand. The routes were slightly different in those days.

Memory lane

25 years ago
A Sgt. Robert Desman and officer Richard Miller of the Farmington Department of Public Safety were on duty on the 18-year-old Grand River coming in the morning of 1964. The Wayne State University Control Training Center sponsored the contest. A letter from an aunt brought in a photograph of a 4-year-old from Farmington. The photo was taken in 1964. Farmington Observer, April 6, 1984.

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Anthony Joseph Bonelli charged with murder

Charge upped to murder one in teenage drowning case

By James Radebaugh staff writer

An open-murder charge against a 17-year-old Farmington Hills man accused of drowning his teenage girlfriend was upgraded to murder in the first degree last week in 48th District Court.

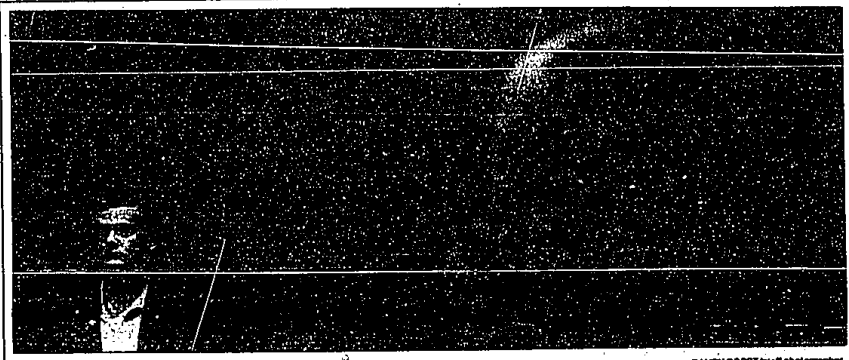
"We have evidence to indicate that he talked about this ahead of time that's all I'll indicate to you at this time," Miller said Friday.

Assistant Oakland County prosecutor Fred Miller said investigators have uncovered additional evidence indicating premeditation in the case against Anthony Joseph Bonelli, who is accused of taking the life of Kristina Marie Fracchia, also of Farmington Hills.

The court also approved a warrant to take hair, blood and saliva samples from the defendant to compare with evidence gathered at the scene. Bonelli was first arraigned in the case on March 18 on the open-murder charge. He pleaded innocent. Attempts to reach Bonelli's attorney, James Andary of Detroit, were unsuccessful last week.

CHIEF DAVID King of the Orchard Lake Police Department, which is aiding the investigation, said there

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Defendant Jon Vermeulen listens to Circuit Judge Fred Meester Friday morning before being sentenced for his second wife's murder. A jury convicted the Farmington Hills man March 23.

Vet gets life for killing wife

By Casey Hans staff writer

A 41-year-old decorated Vietnam veteran said Friday he will not appeal a first-degree murder conviction, which places him behind bars for the rest of his life.

Saying he was sorry for his wife's 1985 shooting death, but that it "was not murder, but a tragic accident," Jon Vermeulen of Farmington Hills was given life in prison without parole, a mandatory sentence for conviction on that charge.

Before handing down his sentence Friday, Oakland County Circuit Judge Fred Meester called Vermeulen's 39-month wait for trial in the Oakland County jail an "unacceptable" delay, but said he believed the

jury had reached the proper decision.

"The family is suffering today, and they will continue to suffer," Meester said, referring to the family of the victim, 24-year-old Urmie "Renee" Lewis, who had married the defendant one month before her death.

"There's no way we can remove the hurt, the sore that has been caused by this action."

Lewis was planning to leave the defendant, according to testimony.

MEESTER ALSO suggested Vermeulen "pay a little back to society" while serving his time, by helping other inmates better themselves and ultimately help society.

type of society you were fighting for in Vietnam."

Meester also told Vermeulen he had good qualities, including fighting for his country.

VERMEULEN ANNOUNCED, following his sentencing, that he did not intend to appeal. He has 56 days to do so.

Defense attorney Larry Kalunzy of Birmingham said he had encouraged Vermeulen to appeal the conviction, because of the lengthy delays in his trial. The issue of whether Vermeulen's first wife could testify against him was eventually decided by the state Supreme Court.

"He owes it to the system to pursue that. But that's his decision," Kalunzy said. "It doesn't really surprise me. He felt he was really being tortured these last few years."

Lewis, the victim, was Vermeulen's second wife, whom he married before a divorce from his first wife, Sharon Vermeulen, was finalized.

VERMEULEN WAS tried for shooting Lewis with a .44 magnum revolver Dec. 26, 1985, in their two-bedroom unit at the Mulwood Apartments in Farmington Hills.

He was convicted in March of first-degree murder and for using a firearm while committing a felony. The first count brought life in prison without parole; the second a mandatory two-year sentence to be served concurrently.

The defense contended the incident was a botched suicide attempt. Vermeulen will receive credit for the 1,192 days he spent in the Oakland County Jail.

Robbery attempt gunfire grazes 1

By Bob Sklar staff writer

A 35-year-old swimmer was bruised on the chest by a bullet fired through the pool window as a coin dealer and a masked gunman exchanged gunfire in a robbery attempt outside Mercy Center Sunday.

No one else was hurt by the gunfire, which broke out at 8:05 p.m., after the close of a coin, stamp and baseball card show at Mercy Center, 11 Mile and Middlebelt.

The gunman, armed with an Uzi 9mm semiautomatic handgun, was after \$10,000 worth of rare coins in the back of the coin dealer's van, Farmington Hills police said.

Two men were arrested soon after balling out of the suspected getaway car on Alden, a dead-end street southwest of Grand River and Middlebelt. Officers from Farmington Hills, Farmington, Livonia and Detroit had cordoned the area.

An off-duty Detroit police inspector at the hobby show as a coin dealer saw the gunfire and radioed Detroit police, who notified Farmington Hills police that the getaway car was going south on Middlebelt.

The suspects, ages 18 and 29, are being held in the Farmington Hills Jail, awaiting assault and robbery charges, Chief William Dwyer said late Sunday.

The teenage swimmer was on the pool ladder during a lifeguard class when he heard glass shatter, then felt a sharp chest pain. As the Sterling Heights youth looked down, he saw a slug fall into the pool. He dove in, recovered it and gave it to a security guard, Dwyer said.

ACCORDING TO police, the Taylor coin dealer had just loaded two cases of rare coins into his van after the daylong show ended when the gunman knocked on the driver's window with his Uzi.

Told he'd be killed if he didn't get out, the dealer complied but dropped his keys. Outside the van, he was hit on the side of the head with the Uzi

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No special treatment — Marks

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Farmington Hills city councilman Ben Marks says he's not getting special treatment as one of many building developers in the city with outstanding temporary certificates of occupancy, even though city policy prohibits such certificates.

"That I'm receiving special treatment is absolutely the wrong conception," Marks said. "It seems to be that the only selective treatment I'm getting is from the people out there (the public's attention)."

Farmington Hills resident Luella Hempel put the spotlight on Marks' temporary certificate a week ago after obtaining a copy of a memo from

City Manager William Costick, requested by Mayor Terry Sever, regarding the temporary certificate.

As promised at a study session in February, Sever said he intends to keep tabs on council members and other board and commission members who have any type of business with the city.

The 14-year-old temporary certificate of occupancy is on Marks' office building at 26103 Orchard Lake Road in the shadow of the city hall.

A final certificate of occupancy is pending completion of certain items, required by the city engineering department.

MARKS SAID this week that he

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Graham Lewis school superintendent

Schools say date wasn't falsified

By Casey Hans staff writer

The Farmington school board has denied charges that the district had falsified a date on a legal report made public in March.

Most trustees Tuesday said they were concerned that the school district's image had been tarnished.

Meanwhile, representatives from the Farmington Hills company that sought the report and made the charges, said in a letter to the district: "We accept . . . verification of the date and have no further questions on the matter."

based Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co of America.

"We have been impuned for our lack of integrity and honesty," he said, "and I feel it has tainted us to a degree. It hurts us in the eyes of the community."

Lewis cited the district's high bond rating and strong financial position, which, he said, is "based upon our integrity, our ability to handle our financial situation, our ability to put forth a very credible school program. That is the work of this district."

SEVERAL BOARD members also made comments. It was the first time the board had met since the accusation was made in a letter to board President Jack Cotton by economist Joel Wittenberg.

"I feel that this kind of an accusation is malicious, derogatory and an attempt in trying to destroy the integrity of this board," said trustee James Rolnick. She went so far as to suggest possible legal action.

"I share Mrs. Rolnick's outrage," added trustee James Abernethy. "I really am very, very offended at this accusation." He suggested the board might want to take a formal position, which it didn't.

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