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SLEDGING concerns Farmington Public Schools officials are asking residents to find another place to sled after a rash of injuries on the district-owned sledging hill at Shilawassee and Farmington Road this year.

"We've had some serious accidents, and we're concerned about them," Superintendent Michael Flanagan said at a recent school board meeting, speaking on behalf of trustees.

Injuries have included broken limbs and others requiring trips to the hospital.

Flanagan suggested residents check out the newer, nearby Heritage Park sledging hill for winter fun.

BETTER late than never. The Farmington Education Association, which represents teachers in the Farmington school district, is offering support for the recent appointment of Michael Flanagan as superintendent of Farmington Public Schools.

"I'm impressed, not so much with what one calls credentials... but he's a person who listens to people," said Jim Miner, FEA president. Miner said he was speaking for the full FEA board, as well.

QUOTE of the week

He's darn lucky he wasn't hit.

— Police Lt. Gordon Ross, about a 25-year-old man, who was inside a Farmington Hills house sprayed with gunfire in a driveway shooting early Sunday.

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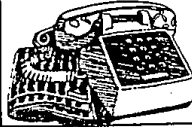
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Gunfire peppers house; 4 charged

Hills shooting victim escapes unhurt

By Bob Sklar
staff writer

Four young adults face assault charges in a shooting incident in which the home of a 25-year-old Farmington Hills man was sprayed with gunfire early Sunday.

The man was watching TV in the living room at the time, but was not hurt. "He's darn lucky he wasn't hit," said Lt. Gordon Ross of the Farmington Hills police.

Investigators believe the shooting

may have stemmed from a dispute between the man and his brother's ex-girlfriend.

Police aren't saying if the suspects knew anyone was inside the darkened, one-story house when the shooting started at 3:35 a.m. on the 20700 block of Inkster, just north of Eight Mile.

Five small-caliber bullets hit the front of the house and entered a bedroom. Two rounds lodged in a bedroom dresser.

A car parked in the driveway an

hour earlier, during a related felonious assault, was gone by the time the shooting started. The car belonged to the 25-year-old man's brother, Sgt. Charles Nebus said.

Charged in the incident were Robert Larry Jaber, 19; Gary Robert Meldrum, 23; and James Scott Meldrum, 21, all of Detroit, and Maria Victoria Knes, 19, of Southfield.

WHEN THE gunfire erupted, a police officer had the house under surveillance because of the earlier inci-



R. Jaber



G. Meldrum



J. Meldrum



M. Knes

dent, in which the 25-year-old man was nearly run down near the front porch.

The man, whom police won't identify, was watching TV in the living

room when "he heard bang, bang, bang and crawled to the window by the front door," detective

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Erin Nutt (left), Jennifer Reeve and Laura Giovannini work on a class project honoring the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Behind the Flanders second graders is a wall dedicated to King's achievements.

photos by RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Sharing a dream

Flanders students celebrate Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy

Related stories, 7A, 8A

They had a dream at Flanders Elementary.

And Monday, Shirley Michelotti's second graders made it come alive.

They dreamed that "people won't do drugs," that "people won't kill other people" and that "the poor will be treated fairly," among other things.

These student wishes and other activities were part of the local and national celebrations of Martin

Luther King Jr. Day.

Students worked on biographies, did artwork and creative writing, watched filmstrips and sang songs all relating to the life and times of the slain civil rights leader who would have been 61 times old Monday.

Michelotti, who has been teaching for more than 30 years, watched the group of well-behaved youngsters, busy with their lessons. "They're living their dream," she added.



Jason Barragato writes his dream on a paper doll, which will later become part of a chain of dreams of his classmates at Flanders Elementary. Jason's dream was for people "to stop murdering each other."

Games marred by fights

By Casey Hane
and Don O'Weera
staff writers

In the wake of fights at two high school basketball games Friday night, Farmington Public Schools officials are taking action to ensure that such incidents won't happen again.

The fights involved either students or alumni from all three Farmington-area public high schools: North Farmington, Harrison High and Farmington High.

At North Farmington — where North was playing cross-town rival Farmington — at least two Farmington students were reported injured in a fight. They were treated at Providence Hospital in Novi for facial cuts and bruises, according to a Farmington Hills police report.

No injuries were reported at an unrelated incident at Harrison, where several incidents involving students and alumni erupted during the game and at a post-game dance, which ended early, said principal Clayton Graham.

Farmington Hills police were called to North at 9:30 p.m. and Harrison at 11:30 to handle separate altercations, said Lt. Richard Murphy. But school officials said the fights were broken up by parents and others present before police arrived.

"We're all very embarrassed by it, and we'll do everything we can to ensure it doesn't happen again," said Don Cowan, director of student services/operations for the district and outgoing principal at North. "We've been fortunate to have very little of this. We take a lot of pride in our schools."

"Thank God no one was hurt permanently."

COWAN SAID school officials met this week with students involved and their parents in an effort to find out what prompted the violent behavior, and to try and mend any rifts that may have developed. He said the district may also involve members of the student councils and the Student Round Table as resources to avoid future problems.

In the incident at North, several students apparently became upset.

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City panel will work to solve noise conflict

For a related opinion, see Page 18A

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmingington Road resident William Shortt welcomes a third party to try to solve a conflict between the Community Center of Farmington-Farmington Hills and nearby neighbors tired of loud noise.

"A third party — if we could get to the truth, I think that could be very beneficial," Shortt said.

The third party will be an ad hoc committee of two council members and two city administrators, who will try to find a way for the center

and neighbors to coexist peacefully. "While you can say there's no jurisdiction (for the city council) on this... it is well within the range of the city council's interests and concerns to address problems like this when they arise," Farmington Hills Mayor Jean Fox said at a council study session Monday.

The committee was approved at the regular city council meeting Monday.

Councilman Lawrence Lichtman didn't necessarily agree with the council's role in the conflict. "I think the burden is on the Community Center to come up with a proposal. They are, after all, the party that wants something."

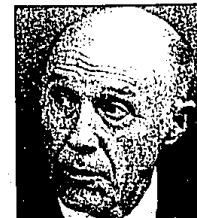
CITY ATTORNEY Paul Bibeau cautioned council members that it's illegal to attempt to change or overturn the planning commission's one-year ban on amplification at the center.

"... our aim is to find a way for the center to continue to add its gifts of grace and culture to our community, while still not infringing on the ambience of one of our finest residential areas in the city," Fox said.

Complaints about loud noise from neighbors near the Community Center on Farmington Road, between 10 and 11 Mile, finally culminated dur-



Larry Lichtman
Hills councilman



William Shortt
Farmingington Road resident

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