

Fathoms of adventure
Great Lakes style 6B



Softball
results, 2B

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olive oil, 3B



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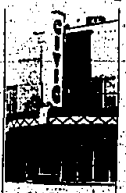
Farmington, Michigan

38 Pages

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FARMINGTON



FOCUS

Convicted killer loses appeal

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Asked reversal because of 38-month trial delay

A decorated veteran convicted more than two years ago of shooting and killing a woman he claimed was his wife at the Mulwood Apartments in Farmington Hills in 1985, has lost the appeal of his case.

The Michigan Court of Appeals ruled Wednesday, July 31, that the conviction for first-degree murder and the life sentence for Jon Vermeulen, now 43, should stand.

Vermeulen, who served as a weapons specialist and a Green Beret in Vietnam in the late 1960s, remains housed at the State Prison of South-

ern Michigan-Jackson. He had appealed his case, saying he had not received a fair and speedy trial and that he was unjustly denied bond.

He was convicted of shooting 24-year-old Urime Lewis, a naturalized citizen from Yugoslavia, at their home at Mulwood Apartments at Grand River and Drake on Dec. 26, 1985. Although Lewis believed they

were married, Vermeulen was actually still married to his first wife when he wed Lewis in early November 1985. The shooting occurred one week after Lewis left Vermeulen and the day she was scheduled to file for divorce. She was reportedly six weeks pregnant when she was killed, according to court testimony. He also shot himself at the same time

and was hospitalized for three months.

VERMEULEN WAS held in the Oakland County Jail for 38 months waiting for his trial to begin. He was tried and convicted of murder in March of 1989 and sentenced to prison in April of that year.

State appellate court judges Gary McDonald, Thomas Brennan and Kathleen Jansen all affirmed Wednesday that delays in the case were caused by the defense.

An insanity defense was used, the court said, which required extended



Jon Vermeulen
appeal rejected

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WIERDEST SPEED LIMIT

That's the headline in the Detroit Monthly magazine above a few words about Heritage Park in Farmington Hills.

The topic is the park's 16 mph speed limit. "What's even stranger is that we find ourselves obeying it," according to the magazine.

PRIMITIVE PARK

Kay Briggs of the Farmington Hills Historical Commission suggests that as the new name for the city-owned Peltz-MDOT land, south of I-696, west of Farmington Road: Now is the time, Briggs said, to stop calling it the Peltz-MDOT and give the acreage an identity of its own.

She suggests another contest to name the park land, as was done with Heritage Park and Pioneer Park on Farmington Road, north of 13 Mile. "In keeping with the history-minded appellations of 'heritage' and 'pioneer' — and with the planned concept of keeping the property in its natural state — I propose 'Primitive Park.'"

NIGHT OUT.

Don't forget to turn on your porch lights 8-10 p.m., Tuesday, and join your neighbors outside to send a crime prevention message to burglars.

The national program is designed to heighten awareness of drug and crime prevention, and to send a message to criminals letting them know you are organized and fighting back.

For more information, call Kim Kemake, a crime prevention technician at the Farmington Hills Police Department, 473-9640.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES.

Bloomfield Hills attorney and Farmington Hills resident Paul Sowers will donate his legal services 1.5 p.m., beginning Aug. 7, on the first and third Wednesdays of each month to Farmington Hills senior adult services at Mercy Center, on 11 Mile, east of Middlebelt.

"Anyone who is a senior adult and has something they want to talk about, that's the time," Sowers said.

Sowers said he will not take a wage and will not accept clients. If a senior adult needs an attorney, Sowers will refer them.

MEMORY LANE

From the Aug. 9, 1991, Farmington Enterprise: Warren Piche, a former minor league baseball player, gave a few tips to boys in the Farmington Area Recreation Commission's junior baseball clinic at Farmington High School. Piche was formerly with the St. Louis Cardinal chain.



SHARON LAMIELLO/staff photographer

Renovating the old Westbrook Elementary school on Oamus is the focal point for John White and his three sons, Jim, Bruce and Jeff. That's John White in the wheelbarrow. His sons did all the physical labor.

Westbrook Place

Once housed students, now it's home to young at heart

By Susan Buck
staff writer

Westbrook Elementary, which once housed the inquiring minds and hearts of Clarenceville students, now is home to the young at heart.

Livonia resident John White and his three sons, Jeff, 31, James, 32, and Bruce, 26, all Livonia Franklin High school graduates, are completing renovation of the school-turned-senior housing unit, which was renamed Westbrook Place.

The 19-unit building is designed for independent living and features both one- and two-bedroom apartments.

The property was purchased in May 1985 for \$47,555, according to Sue Smitha, a Farmington Hills commercial and industrial appraiser.

The school was built in 1952 with additions as late as 1987. The building is 32,000 square feet and sits on eight acres of land.

Phase I is completed with 13 units. Ten units already have tenants. By December, John White expects another six units to be completed.

"Pets are welcome, which is not the norm in senior apartments," John White said. "We have three dogs and two cats. Each classroom is converted into an apartment size 810 square feet. The walls between each unit are about two feet thick, 21 inches."

THE WHITE brothers, who previously worked on The Winery building in Farmington learned that family ties combined with teamwork produces results.

"We had an architect involved but we worked with our own ideas also," said Jeff. "It involved a lot of after-hour thought. I never anticipated some of the work that was involved. A lot of hard work was put in. I had to count on my other two brothers to help me. When one of us got down, the other two picked him up. It was a good working team. We leaned on each other."

The brothers had to contend with water that was shut off, and plumbing problems in the school that was closed to students during the mid-1970s and used for storage until 1985.

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Ethnic diversity a priority item in local towns

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Members of a 2-year-old cultural awareness group are spreading the word that ethnic diversity is here to stay in Farmington and Farmington Hills, and they want the community to develop a healthy understanding of it.

The 18-member Multicultural Community Council is comprised of top city and schools officials, religious leaders, representatives of the business and parent communities, and three students from each of the three public high schools who each bring a different cultural perspective.

The council was formed two years ago, and members meet about seven times each year to share information and talk about cultural changes in the community.

"We need to bring about a community consciousness, a community awareness," said Farmington Hills city manager and council member Wilm Costick. "But it's going to take a long time. It's not going to happen overnight."

"The more you do it, the more you talk about it, the more opportunities we create and the more understanding we'll have."

"We need to stay with it."

COUNCIL MEMBERS see their role as advisory in nature, encouraging agencies to foster an overall un-

derstanding. They are taking a different approach than did a group formed in 1987 to specifically address ethnic problems among youths frequenting the Orchard Lake Road corridor. That group met to discuss specific problems and ways to address them.

This group is taking a broad approach.

"Our role is to point out our weaknesses (as a community) and try to give some direction to how we can overcome those weaknesses," explained Farmington city manager Robert Deadman, also a council member. "With the mayors, city managers, school superintendent and others, this is the highest level of political participation that's available — we think (the issue is) that important."

The council's mission statement says it will attempt to: "enhance the basic human dignity of all people, and to assure that all residents of Farmington and Farmington Hills feel welcome and comfortable in their city, schools and neighborhoods." Goals for the 1991-92 year include: a cable program and other community recognition of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday and the civil rights movement, encouraging more activities and speakers with a greater focus on racism, and expansion of the school district's multicultural events.

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New \$35 million water main gets county OK

By Helen Niemiec
staff writer

Thirsty edges of Oakland and Wayne counties are nearer to getting Port Huron water pumped through their mains, following the Oakland County Road Commission approval of the project. The Village of Franklin, however, still opposes the plan. The plan is to build a 6-foot water main, threading through Troy,

Bloomfield Township, Birmingham, Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms and Franklin.

The commission vote on Thursday came four years after talks with affected communities began. Extending Port Huron water to the western end of Oakland and Wayne is part of the Detroit Water and Sewerage Board's master plan that was developed in the 1980s.

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Underground wire fire knocks out power for 2,600 in Hills

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

A failed underground electrical circuit that caught fire just before 8 p.m., Thursday, plunged about 2,600 Detroit Edison customers in isolated pockets near 12 Mile and Drake roads into darkness for a couple of hours.

Power was restored to the area about 10:30 p.m. after crews arrived at the scene and fixed the problem, said Edison spokesman Scott Simmons.

"An underground circuit failed.

It's a circuit we have been having problems with. Hopefully, there should be no more problems with it."

Power was restored within 2 hours and 21 minutes, Simmons added. To be on the safe side, firefighters smoke coming from a manhole on the eastbound lanes of the thoroughfare, west of Drake.

Kase stopped to investigate the smoke and a moment later the manhole cover popped off and propelled itself through the air, according to a Farmington Hills police report. Several other small explosions also occurred at the site.

Farmington Hills patrolman James Kase was patrolling near 12 Mile at about 7:50 p.m., when he saw

several other small explosions also occurred at the site.