

Well-oiled Machines mix their music, 6B



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What's cooking in high school, 1B

# Farmington Observer

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Fifty Cents

## City, church try for settlement

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Attorneys for Farmington Hills and the Jesus Center — a church plagued with building violations — are trying to work out their differences as their next day in Oakland County Circuit Court draws near.

Costello is expected to get back with the attorneys today "with how long it will be to complete the outstanding issues," Donohue said.

The next court date — if no settlement has been reached — is Wednesday, when the city attorneys will ask Oakland County Circuit Judge Alice Gilbert to enforce an earlier order to correct all violations.

Costello, however, wants Gilbert's earlier order set aside.

IN FEBRUARY, the city filed suit in Oakland County Circuit Court to force the center to stop housing homeless people and to correct the documented violations.

The city and the church have been at odds since the end of last year when church officials applied for financing through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority to house the homeless at their two-story center.

When the city conducted its inspection of the premises they discovered about 27 building and fire code violations.

"There was also a zoning problem," said Lee Blizman, zoning supervisor.

The Farmington Hills Zoning Board of Appeals denied the center's request for a use variance to allow people to sleep at the center, which is zoned single-family residential. Unlike churches in the area, which are allowed to temporarily house the homeless for a week at

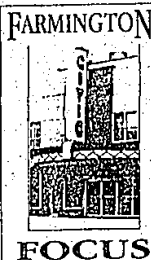
a time, the Jesus Center is in a different position.

"These people want to do it full-time. It becomes a principal use then, not an accessory use," Blizman said, adding that center officials were unable to show they had an unnecessary hardship, a requirement for a use variance.

"Once it becomes on a permanent basis, we've got a problem," Donohue added.

THE CENTER'S former attorney, J. Russell Hughes of Greenbush, Mich., said the church was being used "as a warming shelter, not a housing shelter."

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**H**EAR YE! Hear ye! State Rep. Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, will speak on Michigan automobile insurance at a meeting of the Commission on Aging at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 28, at the Farmington Hills City Hall, 11 Mile and Orchard Lake roads. The public is invited to attend.

**M**OST TELEPHONE customers have their new phone books by now. But what to do with old ones? Residents and business people in the Farmington area can help the environment by recycling their out-dated Ameritech Pages Plus directories at the PACE Membership Warehouse, 24800 Haggerty Road, Farmington Hills, through Tuesday, May 12. The old directories will be recycled into animal bedding. People bringing in directories will be eligible to enter a prize drawing.

**S**PEAKING of telephones, Farmington-area residents will receive a new area code early in 1994. The current 313 area code will become history for most Michigan Bell customers in north suburban Detroit, although 313 still will be used in most communities south of Eight Mile Road. Residents can speak their minds on the change — which splits the Detroit area into north and south regions — at an upcoming public hearing close to home. The meeting will be at 7 p.m. Thursday, May 14, in the Community Room of Orchard Hills Elementary School, 41900 Quince Road, Novi. People unable to attend may comment by calling 1-800-831-8989.

Telephone rates will not be affected by the change, phone company officials have said. Calls that are "local" today will remain so after the change occurs. Michigan Bell wants the code split because the existing area is quickly running out of telephone numbers.

**I**T'S WHITE Cane Week through May 3, and the Farmington Area, Livonia will be out in force soliciting funds at shopping centers. Some of the funds raised will benefit local agencies that fight substance abuse — Farmington Families in Action, Farmington Youth Authority and the Farmington Area Advisory Council. Other funds will go for diabetes research. Last year, the local Lions raised about \$15,000.

**M**EMORY LANE — From the May 1, 1992 edition of the Farmington Enterprise: Sgt. Stanley W. Packard Jr. of Farmington received the Silver Star, the nation's third highest combat award, at a ceremony in Korea. He won the medal for gallantry in action while serving in the 27th Infantry Regiment. For two hours he gave medical aid to the wounded under heavy enemy fire. Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21808 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336, or dropped off at the newspaper office.



Anita Poeppoff (center), deli manager at Kroger's supermarket at 11 Mile and Middlebelt roads, explains the difficulties of the striking workers as colleagues Lisa Jackson (left) and Patty Gabauber (right) listen.

## Life on the line Kroger pickets grouse, grumble — walk

By Susan Buck staff writer  
Cold-hearted. Indifferent. Hard to swallow. That's how Brenda McNeil, a Kroger union steward and assistant customer service manager at the 11 Mile and Middlebelt store, described what she said was her employers' "non-reaction" after Nancy Lang, a Livonia cashier, was shot Tuesday afternoon with a paintball gun in front of the store.

"No one from management came out," McNeil said. Lang could not be reached for comment, but McNeil said she was shaken by the incident. It's just one more facet of the two-week-old United Food and Commercial Workers strike that has upset local strikers as they continue their picketing shifts.

But Michael Layne, a spokesman at Kroger's corporate office in Livonia, said that he hadn't even heard about the incident. "We care and are sensitive to our employees, and want them to return as soon as possible," Layne said. "A strike is a difficult situation." A full-page ad in the daily newspapers Friday explained Kroger's position on the strike, Layne said. EIGHTY PERCENT of regular Kroger customers no longer shop at the store, and "some have brought coffee and doughnuts to the picket lines, strikers say. "Other unions, like Blue Cross and the Teamsters, have walked

with us," said Gail Trahey, a customer service manager. But, she added, the work stoppage is taking a toll on the strikers. "A lot of us are the sole support of our families. What little money we have in the bank we are using." "Some head cashiers have gone back to work, McNeil said. "If you have integrity and a purpose, you have to strike together." McNeil, who said he's paid \$10.37 an hour, claims he hasn't received a raise in 11 years. On Wednesday, Kroger management began advertising for temporary replacement workers. This ranks part-timers like Lisa Jackson, a Farmington Hills resident and Harrison High School junior who makes \$4.50 an hour as a clerk-cashier. Jackson's part-time replacement is paid \$7.50, she said. Jackson, who has been with the company for three years, works 24 hours a week. Her mother doesn't support unions and fears for Jackson's safety while picketing, she said. Part-time employees complain that a two-tiered system pays \$10.37 per hour for full-time employees but \$4.50 to part-timers who do the same kind of work. AS STRIKERS put in their picket time, they give up their personal lives. They'd like a little respect, they said. One temporary worker, turned

## Roof's rotten trusses revealed

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

There was sort of a slow realization that something was wrong. "The ceiling tiles were wavy, some were falling. When we looked up there, we discovered the trusses were broken in half," said Farmington Hills Fire Chief Richard Marinucci.

"The ceiling tiles were wavy, some were falling. When we looked up there, we discovered the trusses were broken in half."

— Richard Marinucci, Farmington Hills Fire Chief

Actually, 29 of the 31 trusses on the office part of the fire headquarters on Drake Road, between 12 and 13 Mile, were broken. That's not to mention a similar problem with the trusses in the roof over the apparatus bay where the fire engines are parked.

The culprit that is costing the city more than \$180,000 to fix is a fire retardant used to treat the wooden trusses when the building was built in 1978-1979.

With the help of heat and moisture, the fire retardant rots the wood. "They were designed right. A lot of this has been happening. The retardant was used in lieu of other fire protection means," Marinucci said.

Fire and city officials are just glad the problem was noticed before any of the broken trusses could no longer hold the weight of the roof. "That was right above the training room where we have classes," Marinucci said.

SNOWSTORMS in January and March seemed to have aggravated

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## Drug investigation ends; Hills businessman indicted

By Tim Smith staff writer

Even though West Bloomfield's Kenneth Christinas is being described by federal authorities as perhaps the biggest marijuana distributor in Michigan, it is not yet known to what degree he set up his drug shop within the township, police Chief Harold Brown said. But according to federal Drug Enforcement Administration spokesman Johnnie Granados, the two-year investigation of Christinas was the "most significant marijuana smuggling case we ever worked on" in the state. Assistant, the DEA in its probe was the criminal investigation division of the Internal Revenue Service. The 36-year-old Christinas, owner of C&O Construction in Farmington Hills, was named with 11 other indi-

viduals in a federal grand jury indictment — unsealed last Tuesday night — on charges of "conspiracy to distribute marijuana and other marijuana trafficking offenses," said U.S. Attorney Stephen Markman.

NUMEROUS ATTEMPTS THURSDAY and Friday by the Eccentric contact Christinas and his home — were unsuccessful. Calls to the business were met with telephone recordings; Christinas has an unpublished home telephone number. Meanwhile, the Detroit defense attorney, for Christinas, Dedyah Laitene, also could not be reached for comment Friday.

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