

Farmington Observer

VOLUME 103 NUMBER 70

MONDAY, JUNE 1, 1992 • FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 40 PAGES

FIFTY CENTS

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IN THE PAPER TODAY

Taking shape: Contenders plot Oakland County executive plot their campaign moves./5A

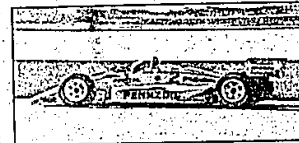
What are friends for: County Executive Dan Murphy would like to retire quietly, but his friends say no way./7A

TASTE

Dairy month: Chef Larry Janes learns a lot about milk while visiting dairy farmer Sarah Gill in Canton Township./1B

Punchinello's: Mark Davis celebrates 10 years of good food and entertainment at Punchinello's in downtown Birmingham./1B

STREET SCENE



Varoom: The roar of the engines and the smell of the grease will permeate Belle Isle this week-end when the Indy cars come to town for the ITT Automotive-Detroit Grand Prix. And getting there and getting a good view will be half the challenge of the event./5B

Different strokes: What do you call a band that would rather stew in contempt of reality and leave the answers to someone else? A band that sees the world as a ridiculous place and music as a way of dealing with and commenting on that? Call it Cop Shoot Cop./5B

SPORTS

Athletic honors: Mike Sullivan of Notre Dame University and Farmington Hills Mercy senior Kathleen Berrigan received post-season awards in their respective sports./1C

CABLE TV WEEKLY

Local access: "Transition" is a program featured on local access channels. Check your cable TV guide for time and date.

INDEX

Classifieds . . . B-D Police, fire . . . 3A
Entertainment . . . 6-7B Sports . . . C
Obituaries . . . 12A Street Scene . . . 6B
On the agenda . . . 12A Taste . . . 1B
Opinion . . . 10A Travel . . . 11A

OUR PHONE NUMBERS

Newsroom: 477-5450
Newsroom Fax: 477-9722
Sports: 953-2141
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Veteran driver dies in school bus crash

By JOANNE MALINZEWSKI and CASEY HANS STAFF WRITERS

Nile Piltz will be remembered for her years of greeting little faces as they got onto the bus in the morning, and for her many years of volunteer service with the Farmington Area Goodfellows at Christmastime.

The 58-year-old Farmington Hills bus driver died in a traffic accident Thursday morning after she had dropped off a load of students at Warner Middle School.

At about 7:30 a.m. Piltz was traveling southbound on Middlebelt, south of 14

There is no indication of anything (in the bus) defective. It was driver error.

Sgt. Ray Cranston Hills police

Mile Road, and with a small broom was trying to sweep the floorboard by her feet when she dropped the broom while driving. She then unbuckled her safety belt and lost control of the bus, said Sgt. Ray Cranston of the Farmington Hills Police Department traffic section.

The bus crossed the center line, left the road and traveled under a low-hang-

ing tree, which shattered the windshield and frame. The bus continued to travel across the lawn of the Wyndham Place Condominiums and struck decorative boulders, which ripped open the undercarriage of the bus.

Piltz fell partially through the hole in the undercarriage. She was dead at the scene, Cranston said.

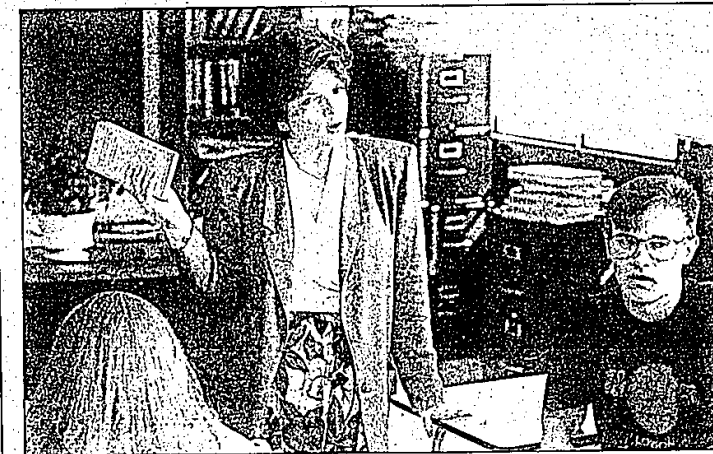
"There is no indication of anything (in the bus) defective," Cranston said. "It was driver error."

Also injured in the crash was a 42-year-old aide, who was treated and released from Botsford General Hospital, Farmington Hills. "She tried to get up and control the bus, but was unable to," Cranston said.

Piltz, a 23-year veteran driver with the district whom school officials called a leader, had just dropped off special education students at Warner and was driving south on Middlebelt when the accident occurred.

See CRASH, 2A

Teacher one of nation's elite 66



STANIS LAMBERT/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Flying high: Harrison High School English teacher Mary Brown was recently named a 1992 Christa McAuliffe Fellow, one of 66 in the country and the only one in Michigan. Here, she shares her insights with students, including Jeremy Teachman.

Harrison English teacher Mary Brown, one of just 66 Christa McAuliffe Fellows picked this year, will spend half her working days this fall attempting to motivate students.

By CASEY HANS STAFF WRITER

Mary Brown is one happy teacher. She was chosen to do something special for students at Harrison High School and for kids everywhere.

As one of only 66 Christa McAuliffe Fellows named throughout the country this year, she will spend half her work-

EDUCATION

ing day this fall studying how to motivate students.

"Motivating is one of the toughest things," she said. "You can get into such a cycle — you don't step back and see how you can motivate them. It's something that troubles teachers."

"We need to make it more of a priority in our thinking."

This fall, the 23-year veteran English teacher plans to spend half her day in-

See TEACHER, 3A

School candidates back choice concept

By CASEY HANS STAFF WRITER

All three candidates running for the Farmington Board of Education support the concept of choice in public education, but have concerns over the current "choice" movement.

Helen Prutow believes the choice movement could divert public money to private schools. Joseph Svoek said the choice issue raises more questions than it answers, and Richard DeVries said

ELECTION

the best choice is simply a good neighborhood school.

The race for the Farmington school board is in its final week, as these three candidates vie for two seats on the non-partisan board. The two top vote-getters will win four-year terms.

Running are longtime incumbent Prutow, 51, who is trying for a fifth

term; challenger DeVries, 42, a Ford Motor engineer who is making his third attempt at a board seat; and Svoek, 48, operations manager, with Southfield-based Devenir Corp. who is making his first run at public office.

Election day is Monday, June 8.

"It appears that the president (George Bush) and the governor (John Engler) are supporting proposals that would divert public dollars to private enterprises," said Prutow. "I do not be-

lieve that would be in the best interest of our community."

Prutow said she supports Farmington's approach to choice, which includes special programs, and also the concept of specialized magnet schools.

Svoek believes choice programs will work if parents and students are given an active say in development of programs, and adds that any such program

See CANDIDATES, 2A



Frank Blair: Withdraws guilty pleas and is headed for trial

Restaurateur retracts guilty plea

By JOANNE MALINZEWSKI STAFF WRITER

The 30-year-old co-owner of a Farmington Hills restaurant has been ordered to stand trial after withdrawing his guilty pleas on two felony counts Wednesday in the sexual assault of a 15-year-old female employee in July 1991.

"There is a disagreement over what sentence was promised," said Robert Igrisan of Farmington, who is representing Frank S. Blair, co-owner of Gourmet To Go in the Muirwood Square shopping center, Drake Road and Grand River.

Blair will stand trial on one count of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and one count of second-degree criminal sexual conduct. He faces up to life in prison if convicted on the first-degree count, and a maximum 15 years in prison on the second-degree count. A trial date has not been set.

Blair was to be sentenced by Oakland County Circuit Judge Robert Anderson Wednesday on his guilty pleas in May to the lesser counts of second-degree criminal sexual conduct.

An Oakland County probation report recommended a sentence of five years

probation and one of the years spent in the Oakland County Jail, said Lisa Green, Oakland County assistant prosecutor.

But Igrisan told Anderson that was not the sentence promised when Blair pleaded guilty in May. At that time, Blair told Anderson he was willing to plead to two second-degree counts, to reduce the sentence from the original charges of first-degree and second-degree criminal sexual conduct.

"Judge, he just doesn't like the sentence," Green said.

See PLEA, 4A

Help rescue the Rouge

Dig out the old clothes, waders, gloves and other protective gear. Rouge Rescue '92 is coming up.

The annual Rouge Rescue will take place in several locations in Oakland and western Wayne counties on Saturday, June 6.

In the Farmington area, the cleanup will be held 9:30-11:30 a.m. just off Tuck Road, north of Eight Mile, adjacent to Botsford Continuing Health Center, 30405 Folsom Road. Registration will start at 8 a.m.

Volunteers will help remove debris and smaller log jams from the branch of the Rouge River which flows through the area. City workers and equipment will do the heavier lifting and hauling.

T-shirts, gloves and a free lunch will be provided.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

by the city of Farmington, Jean Barrett, assistant to the Farmington Hills director of public services, said 250-300 volunteers are expected if past cleanups are any indication.

The idea behind the cleanup, usually done in areas where there is room to get in and work, is to remove obstructions and keep the water flowing. In past years, volunteers have taken tires, sleds and even office chairs from the river.

Farmington-area residents who live along the Rouge are urged to remove debris from the stream in their areas.

For more information, call Barrett at 473-9320.

Memory Lane

From the June 2, 1952 edition of the Farmington Enterprise:

Item from the Around The Block column: "A lot of 'way back when' chatter was tossed around by old timers last week down near the Post Office as workmen pulled up part of the old D.U.R. track that ran across South Farmington Road. The old D.U.R., long named from the Farmington scene, came up along Farmington Road, crossed near the Post Office, came up to where the Farmington Dairy now stands and then extended along Grand River to the LoSalle Wines Building and then went north on Orchard Lake road with the other line continuing down Grand River."