

Farmington Observer

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Fifty CENTS

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IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Condom-wear: Safe sex has taken to the T-shirts — and they're made in a Farmington Hills home./3A

COUNTY NEWS

Under siege: What's next in the offing for the Oakland County Sheriff's Department?/5A

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Heartfelt gifts: You won't want to miss what columnist Linda Bachrach has ferreted out as romantic ways to celebrate Valentine's Day./9A

OPINION

Friends in deed: Numerous calls have poured into Observer & Eccentric offices following Phil Sherman's first report of a young girl facing Christmas without his one wish — a wheelchair. This week, Sherman follows up on the story on today's Points of View page. / 8A

TASTE



Winner Dinner: Planning healthy vegetarian dinners for her family keeps dancer Deborah Chase-Carroll on her toes. You'll love her spinach crepes./1B

CABLE TV WEEKLY

Local access: "Salon Glamour" will be presented on Channel 12. Check your cable guide for time and date.

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Mother of twins questioned



ART EMANUELE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Off to the station: Farmington Hills Police Sgt. Chuck Nebus follows Gloria Hanna out the door of her Oak Forest home Friday. Hanna's 6-year-old twins were found home alone.

Tots alone; mom questioned

BY TOM BAER
STAFF WRITER

The children were home alone — but it was no movie and there probably won't be a cute ending to this suburban saga.

A Farmington Hills woman may be charged with child abuse or neglect after her twin 5-year-olds were found alone in their expensive home on Oak Forest in the Colony Park West subdivision Friday afternoon.

The tots, a boy and a girl, were locked in separate upstairs bedrooms behind chained doors, according to police, with a bowl of cereal and a children's potty chair in each room.

The mother, Gloria Hanna, apparently had gone shopping, leaving the children locked up for a total of about three hours. She returned home about 4 p.m. Friday to find police waiting for her.

The twins — who showed no signs of injury, according to police

— were taken to the Oakland Children's Village in Pontiac. A Saturday hearing determined that the children will stay temporarily with an aunt.

Hanna, a former Detroit police officer, was questioned and released Friday without charges being filed, although the investigation continues, police said.

Police Sgt. Chuck Nebus, who talked to Hanna in her home for several hours Friday, said the woman told police she locked her children in their rooms to keep them from her ex-husband, a Lebanese businessman.

"The mother states that at times she felt threatened by an ex-husband," Nebus told a crowd of reporters Friday night. "She has been very fearful of her ex-husband, taking the kids out of the country."

Nebus added that Hanna told police that she left the twins at home because she "had various errands to run and packages to carry."

But Hanna is cooperating with police, Nebus said, and "she knows what she did is wrong."

Neighbors contacted Friday described Hanna, a beautician who hosts a public access cable TV program on beauty and grooming, as a good neighbor and caring mother.

"She's really polite and nice and protective of her kids," said Sean Hurwitz. "Something must have happened. I can't see her just leaving her kids."

Added neighbor Harry Kezerta, "When they (the twins) are out, she is out with them. She's very protective."

The twins were discovered home alone when a man delivering a package heard them crying and pounding on the upstairs windows. Police and fire department personnel climbed a ladder and forced their way through the window.

The incident drew heavy media coverage and was the lead story on Friday's TV newscasts.

Expert pushes arena

■ "Do your homework and know your community," an expert on recreation facilities told a group of Farmington Hills residents who are thinking about building an ice arena in the city.

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER



If you build it right, they will come.

That's the message the Farmington Hills Ice Arena Committee heard from Jack Vivian, an expert on ice sport and recreation facilities and an assistant professor in the Department of Sports Management and Communication at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

Vivian, who also scouts for the New York Islanders of the National Hockey League, told committee members to "think big, then downsize." Vivian gave a presentation that resembled one of his classes and was like a crash course in ice arena construction.

"You really have to do your homework," he said. "You have to have a vision of what Farmington Hills will be like in the year 2010. You can get that kind of information from state projections and from your own survey."

Although Vivian had plenty of ideas on how to go about designing, building and operating an ice rink, he gave fair warning that mistakes now could prove costly later.

"If at any point something doesn't look feasible, you have to drop it," Vivian said. "If the whole project doesn't look feasible, you drop it."

But with that caveat, Vivian gave committee members some ideas on how to find out if an arena is realistic, if it should be private or publicly owned and run, and if it should be a local or regional facility.

Vivian said the committee must first find out what the demand, cost and return on investment would be for any project before thinking about a site, the size or other specifics.

A demand analysis would include the demographics — breakdown of sex, income and age of city residents.

It should also include the "psychographics" of the city. The wants, needs and likes of residents. Other ice or recreation facilities should be looked at to see what they are doing, how much they are charging and how successful they have been, Vivian said.

The committee must then do a cost analysis, something a good survey of demand would help decide.

"If you've heard what citizens have told you, then they've almost designed it for you," he said.

See ARENA, 4A

Assessment rule could mean sticker shock

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills property owners should be thrilled with the news that property assessments are only up 5 percent in two years — but city assessor Dean Babb isn't celebrating.

True, Hills property assessments will increase on average only 5 percent, the lowest increase in Oakland County after last year's freeze. Farm-

ington assessments will go up an average of 9 percent and several communities will see double digit increases in assessments — Pleasant Ridge leads the way with a 19 percent increase. Hills increases averaged 9 percent in 1990 and 5 percent in 1991.

Millage rates are applied to property values to determine taxes due. The Headlee Amendment to the state constitution limits tax increases to the

rate of inflation with a public hearing at the board level. Increases beyond inflation must be approved directly by voters.

But because of a new method of basing property assessments, mandated by the state, there will be some wide disparities from one home to the next in the same subdivision or neighborhood.

"Some of these people were expect-

ing double-digit increases, and we're going to disappoint them," Babb said. "But some residents are going to find that their neighbor had a much lower increase. They're not going to like it."

Babb said the new state assessing rules differentiate between different types of construction, such as ranch,

See ASSESSMENTS, 2A

Neighborhood Watch

The public is invited to attend a Neighborhood Watch orientation meeting at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 10, in the city council chambers of the Farmington Hills City Hall, 11 Mile and Orchard Lake roads.

For more information on Neighborhood Watch programs, call Kim Kemeke, a crime prevention technician with the Farmington Hills Police Department, at 473-9640.

In the cards

The team of Harry and Margie Weinhaus won the Farmington Hills Recreation Division's first euchre tournament of the season Jan. 29 at the Heritage Park Visitor Center. They beat the team of Jim Hubble and Tim Emmitt by a score of 7-6 in the finals. Both teams

FARMINGTON FOCUS

received dinner at a local restaurant as a prize. Another euchre tournament is scheduled for Feb. 26. For more information on this activity, call 474-6115.

Smile, seniors

Smile, senior citizens of the Farmington area. A photographer from the Oakland Livingston Human Services Agency wants to snap your picture.

The photographer will be at the Farmington Hills Senior Center, 28500 11 Mile Road, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 19. Call 473-1822 for a reservation.

Photos will be used for identification cards needed for participation in the OLHSA senior discount program. County residents at least 60 years of age may apply for the cards, which show photograph, name, address, birth date, Social Security number and signature.

Memory Lane

From the Feb. 12, 1953 issue of the Farmington Enterprise:

Two 15-year-old Detroit boys in a stolen car led police on a wild chase that ended in a shower of bullets at a road block at the Grand River cut-off near Farmington Road. Police fired at least eight shots at the car, a new Nash station wagon that was reported stolen in Grand Rapids. Both 15-year-olds were injured when the car was forced off the road.