



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LAMIERUX

Hard at work: At left, Sister Justine Sabourin works on a local version of her book "The Amalgamation" at the Mercy Center. Above, the chapel is reflected in a pond on the grounds of the Mercy Center.

Sisters from page 1A

land and founder Catherine McAuley, who founded the order in Dublin to help the poor and came to Pittsburgh, Pa. to begin work in the United States 150 years ago.

Kreft lives with six Mercy sisters in Detroit who have different social, educational and health-care missions.

"Everyone has a different personality and mission," she said. "That allows me the freedom to be myself."

The order recently agreed to sell 27 acres of its Farmington Hills campus to the city, which plans to continue using a wing of the building for senior programs, cultural, educational and social events. For many years the sisters rented the space to the city for \$1 a year.

Although the order has extensive holdings, including the University of Detroit Mercy and Mercy High School, the number of new nuns coming into the order has declined over the years. "I think a lot of people look at

the numbers of nuns who came into the order in the '40s and '50s and see the numbers are down," said Sister Marian Schultz, an administrator of the order. "But that is really a blip on the screen. We're an aging and diminishing order by all external standards."

Fewer sisters; no panic

But there is no panic. "The sisters attribute part of the drop-off to Vatican II, in the fall of 1962. That change made it possible for people to be affiliated directly with the Catholic Church and its missions without becoming priests or nuns. The Sisters of Mercy are bolstered by associates and Mercy Corps members who are not clergy."

Most sisters do not choose the habit, but more conventional clothing. And each regional ministry is run by an elected leadership team of five nuns, not a mother superior.

Sister Justine Sabourin, 83, and one of many retired sisters living at the McAuley Center on

campus, recalls when she was mother superior during the building of the present facilities.

"I think it was more monastic in tone," she said. "The title mother superior gave it a bit of panache."

Sister Sabourin, like many of her generation, became a nun out of high school in Saginaw, much to her mother's delight.

About Jenny Kreft

Kreft is probably more typical of the experience of women joining the order these days. She is college educated and had a career before becoming a candidate. And her parents, especially her father, had a difficult time at first accepting her decision.

"Dad had a hard time," Kreft said. "We were close and I was the youngest daughter (12 children). Now they're (parents) my cheerleaders."

Sisters of Mercy seldom live in cloistered surroundings, but live where their mission is called to be in the inner city of Detroit or in

the La Plata region of Argentina. They often pursue more than one college degree and help support each other in many ways, including financial.

"We no longer have a lifestyle of being secluded from the world," said Sister Rita Valade, vocational coordinator at Mercy Center.

Perhaps surprisingly, the sisters have provided a training ground for women in leadership roles. Because they have founded hospitals and educational institutions, they have had to administer those affairs and have learned to lead and train other women to lead.

At a recent conference in Washington, D.C., a group of six congresswomen all said they had been educated at Catholic schools.

And yet, with all of their success, the Sisters of Mercy realize their mission to the poor and needy can never rid the world of poverty or loneliness.

But despite lay people partici-



Brief encounter: Jenny Kreft talks with Sister Mary Ignatius as they meet in a hallway of the Mercy Center. Ignatius taught at Mercy High School.

pating in the order's missions, those who have taken the vows find a fulfillment they say they'd otherwise miss.

"Growing up, I always wanted to be as close to God as I could be," said Sister Schultz. "Since at that time I couldn't be a

priest, I wanted to be a sister." Sister Schultz becomes misty-eyed as she explains that joining the order was the most profound way of "exploring her relationship with God."

"It's worth a lifetime's attention."

POLICE/FIRE CALLS

Listed below are some of the Farmington area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week.

FRAUD

A 27-year-old woman who lives at the Independence Green Apartments on Jefferson Court in Farmington Hills reported charges of more than \$1,000 on her Visa and Michigan Bell credit cards. The cards had been lost along with her husband's wallet. The charges came from 900 exchange calls between April 15 and Oct. 19.

THEFT

Four deep dish wheels and tires worth \$1,451.16 were stolen from a white 1994 Ford Explorer wagon parked at Tom Holzer Ford on 10 Mile in Farmington Hills Oct. 15-19.

A man's gold Longines watch (\$2,800) and a man's diamond ring (\$1,700) were stolen from the Copper Creek Golf Course on Copperwood in Farmington Hills Oct. 18.

A Panasonic video editing mixer (\$2,200), its case (\$200), two VCRs (\$600) and a stool (\$200) were stolen from Star Trax on Northwestern Highway in Farmington Hills between Sept. 15 and Oct. 15.

Two cordless drills (\$280) were stolen from the House of Botsford Apartments on Botsford Drive in Farmington Hills Oct. 17-19.

Two wire wheel covers (\$200) were stolen from a maroon and silver 1983 Olds Cutlass Sierra Oct. 10-15.

A cassette radio (\$400) was taken from a 1992 Ford Taurus parked on Grand River in Farmington Oct. 20.

A purse containing \$2 cash and credit cards was taken from an unattended shopping cart at Kmart in Farmington Oct. 20. The purse was later found in the store with the billfold missing.

Wheel covers (\$150) were stolen from a 1987 Plymouth Sundance parked in front of Little Caesar's Pizzeria on Grand River in Farmington Oct. 19.

Four wheel covers (\$640) were stolen from a 1988 Olds Cutlass

More crime, 5A

parked near Jo Ann Fabrics in Farmington Oct. 20.

A 10-speed Huffy's bike was stolen from a garage on Chestnut in Farmington Oct. 20.

An IBM computer (\$300), keyboard (\$600) and monitor (\$900) were stolen from the Farmington Area Advisory on Middlebelt between July 20 and Oct. 2.

Four wheel covers worth \$240 were stolen from a gold 1993 Buick Roadmaster parked at the Fairmont Park Apartments on Hampton Court in Farmington Hills Oct. 20-21.

Four wheel covers (\$350) were stolen from a 1992 Oldsmobile parked on Dover Hill in Farmington Hills Oct. 20-21.

Costly totaling \$892 was stolen from an unlocked desk drawer at an office on Indoplex Circle in Farmington Hills Oct. 16-18.

Four wire wheel covers (\$400) were stolen from a maroon 1989 Buick Century parked on Branside Circle in Farmington Hills Oct. 18-21.

BAD CHECKS

Six checks totaling \$766 paid to a 27-year-old Warren man to cover advertising costs for Unimac Automotive on Grand River in Farmington Hills Aug. 16-25 came back marked "Account Closed."

Wheel covers (\$400) were stolen from a maroon 1989 Olds Cutlass on Kingsgate in Farmington Hills Oct. 18-20.

Four wheel covers (\$800) were stolen from a blue 1992 Olds 98 on Fox Grove in Farmington Hills Oct. 19-21.

VANDALISM

The front fender of a residence on Arden Park Circle in Farmington Hills was run over with a vehicle, leaving tire tracks and causing \$300 in damage Oct. 19-10.

A window was shot out by a pellet gun causing \$200 damage at Bhaecle on Grand River in Farmington Oct. 20.

The passenger door was kicked in causing \$200 in damage to a red 1979 Chevy pickup at Harri-

son High School on 12 Mile in Farmington Hills Oct. 20.

BREAK-INS

Computers, copiers and other office equipment (more than \$4,000) were stolen from Personnel Management on Orchard Lake in Farmington Hills Oct. 19. The front door had been pried open.

A cellular telephone (\$800) was stolen from a green 1993 Jeep Grand Cherokee parked at Lochman's on Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills Oct. 20. The lock had been punched out, causing \$200 in damage.

An AM/FM stereo cassette worth \$300 was stolen from a green 1994 Dodge Caravan parked at the Executive Plaza on Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills Oct. 20. The dashboard sustained \$300 in damage.

The break-in of a blue 1991 Olds Cutlass parked at Jenny Craig on Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills Oct. 20 resulted in damage of \$500 to the dashboard and the theft of a \$600 AM/FM cassette stereo system.

SHOPLIFTING

An 82-year-old Farmington Hills man was ticketed after a shoplifting incident at ACO on Grand River in Farmington Oct. 20. An anti-theft alarm went off when the man tried to leave the store. Found in his pocket were a fan and light pull chain worth at \$3.69, a pack of flashlight batteries worth \$2.49 and a tube of instant super glue worth at 77 cents.

FLEEING

Farmington police called off a chase after a motorcyclist sped away from a patrol car on Freedom Road Oct. 20. Police chased the cyclist south on Drake and east on 9 Mile before breaking off. Farmington Hills and Livonia police were notified. The chase started when the patrol car approached the cyclist to check its registration plate. The cyclist sped off at nearly 80 miles per hour.

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