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'Tender soul' mourned



Those who knew Jackie Ponke well are struggling to understand why "the sweetest person in the whole world" was brutally murdered.

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Friends and relatives say Jackie Ponke would often put others' needs before her own. Her selflessness, though, is something her killer would use to his advantage.

Ponke, 36, who was bludgeoned to death Jan. 8 in the Farmington dental

office of Dr. Alan Bredin, had been receiving threats from her husband, Raymond Ponke.

Bredin even suggested she take a month off, but Jackie Ponke wouldn't hear of it.

"We take the week off between Christmas and New Year's; there was a lot of work piled up," Bredin said.

"I said several days ago, 'My wife Judy says give you a month off, Jackie.' She goes, 'Oh yeah, and then this pile would be twice as high.'"

"At lunch with the girls (other office employees)... she said, 'Ray and I cannot exist together on this earth. If I take a month off, he'll be here, my work will be here. I'm not taking a month off.'"

Her husband Raymond Ponke is charged with first degree murder and is being held without bond in Oakland County Jail. Preliminary exami-

See MURDER, 8A



Jackie Ponke

IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Beechview meeting: The Farmington Board of Education met in special session Tuesday in an attempt to solve some problems brought up by parents. /4A

Pipe problems: Freezing water pipes can be costly — especially if they're part of a fire sprinkler system. /6A

OPINION

Hills agenda: What we think about some of the important issues that Farmington Hills faces in the new year. /14A

Reaching out: Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer and Wayne/Oakland county executives must resolve regional problems together. /14A

Guest column: Richard Rothrock of Farmington Hills thinks that censorship won't solve the world's problems. /15A

SPORTS

Swim meet: Farmington and North Farmington competed against West Bloomfield Tuesday. /1B

Hoop results: Farmington-area basketball teams took a break from Western Lakes competition Tuesday to challenge non-league foes. /1B

ENTERTAINMENT

Theater: Meadow Brook Theatre's "Shirley Valentine" is funny, insightful and big-hearted. /6B

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Go fly a kite



SHARON LEMKIN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

School project: Brandyn Thurman, a student at the Glastonbury School in Farmington Hills, assembles a box kite that will help him understand flight.

School puts pupils through their own paces

By DIANE GALE
STAFF WRITER

"Glastonbury was the answer to our prayers," according to Kay Saliccioli, parent of a student at the Farmington Hills private school.

She was looking for an alternative school for her daughter, Kathryn, a school that would be quiet, embody values and offer a small student-to-

teacher ratio.

"It was very difficult for her to concentrate in public schools based on the size of the classrooms," said Saliccioli, a West Bloomfield resident.

"Glastonbury has two strong rules: One is that they have to put forth their best effort and they must be kind to each other and those are

two things I find absolutely lacking from the public school system.

"I don't want to come off throwing stones at the public school system," she said. "I do feel parents who are considering alternatives will be very satisfied here. Children can be very bright or struggling, it doesn't matter. They're working at their own pace."

Teachers at Glastonbury personalize work to fit the needs of each student, according to Deborah Knapp, Glastonbury director and teacher. The school has three full-time teachers and one part-time instructor.

Public school teachers, on the

See GLASTONBURY, 3A

Hills officials to take on taxing problems in '94

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Despite a year of accomplishments in 1993, Farmington Hills officials will have another full plate in '94.

City manager Bill Costick will be going over the projects and the perils of paying for them in an uncertain tax year when he meets with the council for a goals session Feb. 5.

"As far as (state) revenue sharing goes, nobody knows what's going to happen," he said. "We could lose as much as \$1 million."

The big unknown of what the state's new tax mix will be has let slides up in the air for budget purposes and "caution" as the watchword in 1994, he said.

Even so, 1994 will be a year of tying up loose ends from projects begun last year and before.

Although the city has come up with the financing and an agreement to buy about 27 acres, including C wing of the Mercy Center for its senior programs and other uses, a policy on use and fees, if any, should be developed.

"We need a policy on who will use it, what we'll charge and what the name will be," Costick said. "We've already made a commitment to the symphony (Farmington Area Philharmonic Orchestra), to the community chorus, the artist's club and some others," he said.

Parks and recreation concerns will require a lot of action this year as well. Improvements at the Founders Sports Park and Woodland Hills Park, and consideration of a plan to build a multi-use indoor arena will be

dealt with.

The city will complete work on three baseball fields, three soccer fields and a concession/comfort station as the first phase in the park's development this year.

The city will put in nature trails at Woodland Hills this year as well, Costick said.

"We want to get some people from the Naturalist Club to help us decide where those trails are going," he said.

See TAXING, 3A

Hills police arrest 20 in gambling raid

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills police officers raided a large-scale floating dice game, arrested 20 people and confiscated more than \$85,000 in cash along with gambling paraphernalia and a pistol at 2 a.m. Wednesday at 31879 Kingswood Square in the Hunter's Ridge complex.

The raid followed a tip and surveillance by the Farmington Hills Police Department's undercover unit in recent days, Hills police Chief Bill Dwyer said.

After obtaining a search warrant from 47th District Court Judge Fred Harris, a task force of

15 Hills officers raided the apartment, which Dwyer said was not otherwise occupied, but was used exclusively for gambling. Of the 20 people arrested in the raid, 17 were ticketed for loitering in a place of illegal occupation, a 90-day misdemeanor.

Warrants on felony charges will be obtained for three people on felony gambling charges, Dwyer said. Some of the people arrested have since been arrested and convicted in other gambling at an address on Lake Park Drive in Farmington Hills, at which more than 30 people were arrested and more than \$80,000 was confiscated.

Dwyer praised the work of Sgt. Doug Anderson, Sgt. Gil Kohls and the department's undercover unit.

"These are some high rollers," Dwyer said of those arrested. "The were cutting the pot Las Vegas-style (about 10 percent)."

Dwyer said he expects the three arrested on felony charges to be arraigned next week.

The raid is the biggest for illegal gambling in Farmington Hills since October 1990 when Hills police busted an operation at the Comfort Inn on 12 Mile and Orchard Lake, arresting 15 men and confiscating \$14,000.