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IN THE PAPER

TODAY

A bond issue?: Clarenceville school officials have taken the first steps in deciding whether to put a bond issue before voters next year. /2A

Commission foes: The race for Oakland County Commission seat in the 18th District (northern Farmington Hills) features two men named David. /3A

Think Goodfellows: The Farmington Goodfellows ask residents to think of them as they think of the area's needy during the holidays. /3A

'Zip, Zero, Zilch!': Drivers who are under 21 and drink will get no break under a new state law. /3A

Weapons discovered: The guns were easy to store in Farmington Hills, but not too tough to find for Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents. /6A

TASTE

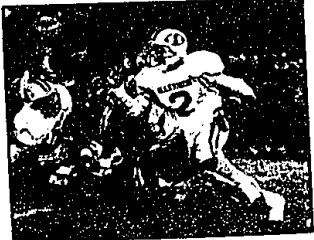
Venison: Local hunters are wild about venison. /1B
Wild game: Chef Milos Cihelha shares secrets in video series. /1B

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Retail 2000: Consumers call the shots in a view of retailing in the 21st century. /3B

JGA Style: Southfield-based retail architects say the future of merchandising is within entertainment and educational centers.

SPORTS



Grid showdown: Farmington Harrison and Oxford battled Friday in a football game between a pair of state-ranked powers. /1C

Hoop playoffs: Farmington Hills Mercy won its first-round game Thursday in the Catholic League girls basketball playoffs. /1C

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Bathroom dispute upsets family



Kelly Laderoot, a Harrison High student who is confined to a wheelchair, is embroiled in a dispute over how she uses the school's bathroom.

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A Farmington Hills couple want to help their wheelchair-bound daughter go to the bathroom at Harrison High. They're going to court to do it. Harrison senior Kelly Laderoot returned to school Friday with a court

order allowing her parents to assist her. She left school early after a reputed confrontation between her parents and school officials. "As far as we're concerned, she was harassed right out of the school," said her father Ralph Laderoot. A hearing is set for Monday before

Oakland County Circuit Judge Barry Howard over the matter.

She had been kept home since an incident on Oct. 24. Her father said his daughter was forced to use an automated Hoyer lift in the restroom.

Their daughter is frightened by the tripod lift, Ralph Laderoot said. "It's scary and I don't like it," said Kelly Laderoot, who suffers from cerebral palsy. "I'm afraid of falling out of the thing because it's not stable enough for me."

The dispute has been ongoing. Farmington Public Schools Special

Education Director Jan Richards said the issue boils down to what's best for both parties involved.

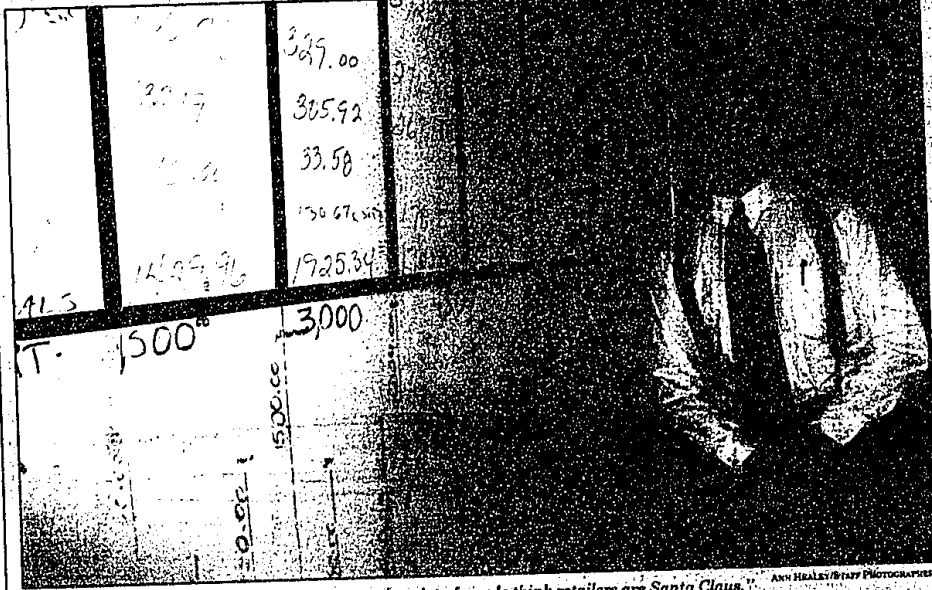
Two female aides normally helped her during bathroom breaks, but one was injured, Richards said.

Kelly Laderoot is 4-foot-11 and weighs 112, her father said.

"The two-man transfer is not functional anymore," Richards said. "It's just not safe because of some uniqueness within the inability of Kelly to help us bear her weight."

See DISPUTE, 4A.

He knows what makes people pay up



Collections manager: Don Padalis. "Unfortunately, a lot of people think retailers are Santa Claus."

Hills man takes credit when payment is due

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

When asked what line of work he was in, Don Padalis used to try to change the subject.

The Farmington Hills resident knew that people were likely going to cringe when they learned he managed a collections agency. He was the bad guy, the Grinch Who Stole Christmas.

But after 12 years in the business, the 37-year-old manager of Automated Collection Systems Inc. of

Southfield has come to terms with his job, and the industry has come to be more of an accepted part of the American business and consumer scene.

No, he's not stealing Christmas. He'll be busy in January trying to recover for retailers what they lost to people who don't pay their bills or tried to steal at Christmas.

"Unfortunately, a lot of people think retailers are Santa Claus," Padalis said. "Padalis doesn't come on strong.

He works in the spiffy Southfield offices of Automated that resemble a sales organization. And for good reason.

"Collections is more like sales, because that's what you're doing," he said.

Padalis, who is president of the Michigan Association of Collection Agencies, said collecting unpaid debts helps consumers who go pay their bills by keeping that loss from being passed on to consumers. Padalis' clients include retailers,

doctors, attorneys and other businesses.

The collection agency only comes into play when the business can't recover an unpaid bill on its own.

"The collection agency sends out a letter within 10 days calling the person's attention to the unpaid debt, followed by a phone call. In most cases, it's just an oversight," he said. "It's more of an embarrassment."

See CREDIT, 4A

Lawsuit against dentist dismissed

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

When he received the news, Dr. Alan Bredin jumped up and down.

A negligence lawsuit filed by the estate of Jacqueline Ponke against the Farmington dentist was dismissed by Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Rudy Nichols Wednesday.

The suit charged that Bredin failed to protect Jacqueline Ponke, 35, when

she was bludgeoned to death by her husband in the dentist's office on Freedom Road Jan. 8.

Not so, Nichols said. Bredin was relieved.

"I was preparing myself for the worst and I was pretending it wasn't bothering me," Bredin said. "The happiness was quite profound."

"I didn't want to go to trial. I'm happy it's over with."

Bredin and a patient witnessed the

brutal slaying when Jacqueline Ponke was struck 40 times with a claw hammer.

Bredin said he tried to stop Raymond Ponke but was thrown off. He and a patient then fled to a home nearby and called police.

Prior to the murder, Bredin planned an escape route and took precautions for his employees after



Dr. Alan Bredin

See LAWSUIT, 2A

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Red Cross blood drive

An American Red Cross blood drive will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 6, at the Universalist Unitarian Church of Farmington, 26301 Halsted Road, a half mile north of Grand River.

For an appointment, call 478-7272, or just drop in on Saturday.

About that trash

In case you were wondering . . . trash, recycled materials and yard waste will be picked up on Veterans Day, Friday, Nov. 11, in Farmington and Farmington Hills.

But trash and other items will not be collected on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, Nov. 24, in the Farmington area. Thursday's collection will be picked up on Friday, and Friday's on Saturday.

Memory Lane

From the Oct. 28, 1954 edition of the Farmington Enterprise:

Three cars were reported stolen from owners on Wellington Drive in Woodcreek Farms. Samuel Turner, a trustee on the Farmington Township Board of Education since 1949, announced his resignation at a special meeting. He gave no reason for the resignation.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21896 Farmington Road, Farmington 48306, faxed to 477-9722 or dropped off at the newspaper office.