

IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Feeling left out: Jeff Goldsmith writes about being left-handed in a right-handed world. /3A

Sting has stung: Farmington Hills police, with the cooperation of a city motel, are trying to nip prostitution in the bud. /3A

The big four-zero: Eagle Elementary blew out the candles on 40 years, but no huff or puff could tumble the school spirit accrued during that time. /14A

Splash back: The popular swimming pool at the Orchard Ridge campus of Oakland Community College will reopen next month. /18A

OPINION

Our heroes: These doers of good deeds deserve to bask in the limelight of media approval. /10A

COMMUNITY LIFE

Love offering: If Farmington Hills' Anne Merrill gets her way, H.D.R. Heartland will be a place for children and their single parents to heal themselves emotionally. /13A

Santa's resume: Since this is a tremendously busy time of year for Santa Claus, he wasn't able to write a column. But he was kind enough to share his resume with us. /13A

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Pass the popcorn: Find out what's premiering on area movie screens between Dec. 21 and 25. /1B

SPORTS

Ball goes up: Harrison hosted Waterford Mott in prep basketball Tuesday evening. /1C

Michigan bound: A former Farmington High football standout leaves the Yale gridiron for the U of M Medical School. /1C

AT HOME

Wonderful windows: Visit some area residences to see how the horizons are limitless for window designs. /Section D

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Heroes didn't hesitate to help

Two brave Farmington Hills men have citations from the city and the thanks of a woman after they prevented a carjacking outside a Kroger supermarket Sunday.

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

The "saw shucks" heroism of two Farmington Hills men has captured the attention of the public and officials here, proving that involved cit-

izens are the best protection against crime.

Jeff Partin, the 39-year-old father of four who saved a Hills woman from a carjacking, and, perhaps worse, sat modestly at Monday's

Farmington Hills City Council meeting where he was honored for his heroism.

Partin and Howard Mitchell, 52, were honored by the city council for their actions Sunday that saved a woman, 67, from harm and resulted in the arrest of a 16-year-old boy who had been fired last week from the Kroger store at the Mid-eleven mall on 11 Mile and Middlebelt.

Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi presented the two with civilian citations as their proud families looked on and cameras from several Detroit

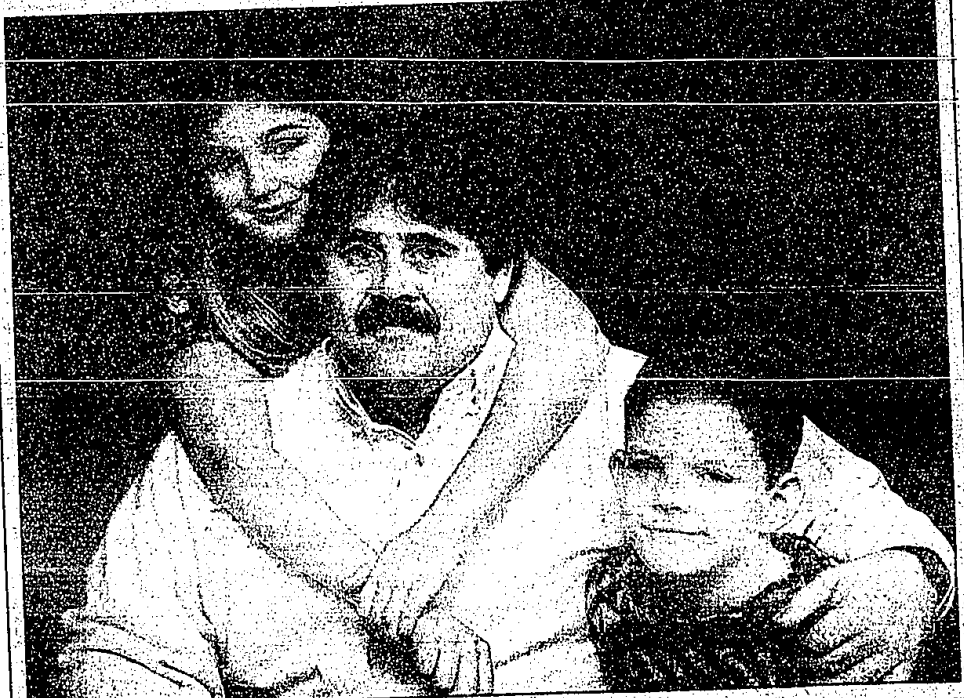
area TV stations captured it all on film.

"We're presenting you with this pin so that you'll be an ambassador for Farmington Hills," Vagnozzi said, and then corrected himself. "I think you've already been a good ambassador."

A trip to the store

Partin's heroism started simply enough with a trip to the grocery store Sunday morning at about

See HEROES, 4A



Home with the hero: Two of the Partin children, Amanda, 11, and Matt, 9, look pleased with their dad, Jeff Partin, who stopped a carjacking Sunday.

Hills fire marks first double-fatal since '78

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

In the bitter-cold Tuesday morning aftermath of the first multiple-fatality Farmington Hills fire since 1978, firefighters, friends and family of the two women who perished were looking for answers.

Louise Helen Bovair, 52, and her 21-year-old daughter Melissa Ann perished before help could arrive at the ranch-style house they shared on Quail Hollow Court in the Kendallwood subdivision north of 12 Mile west of Farmington in the early morning hours.

Ken Sutton, who was driving from a job at about 4:30 a.m., saw the fire, which destroyed the roof of the house, from 12 Mile Road.

"I tried to get into the subdivision

one way and couldn't get to the fire," said the Lake Orion man, who knocked on doors in hopes of calling 9-1-1. "I think a couple of the neighbors just thought I was crazy."

Sutton managed to find his way to the house, which sits on the arc of a cul-de-sac. He pounded on the front door to see if anyone was home, and thinking there was no one there, Sutton went to the neighbor's house.

"He knocked on the door and we called 9-1-1," said Theda Theyer. "We didn't see their van, so we didn't know if anyone was home."

Two Farmington Hills police officers arrived first, and within eight minutes, Hills firefighters from Station 4, including Capt. Richard Levine, were on the scene.

See FIRE, 2A



Fire is fatal: Farmington Hills police and firefighters look over what remains of a house on Quail Hollow Court. Two died in the Tuesday morning blaze.

Test scores show increases — so far

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

When it comes to math, Farmington Public School fourth- and seventh graders can be counted on. When it comes to reading, they go by the letter of excellence.

At least that's what the latest Michigan Educational Assessment Program test results appear to indicate.

MEAP reading and math scores improved district wide at both the fourth and seventh grade level.

School officials are not ready to split the slide rule or dictionary in triumph just yet. Fifth and eighth graders still have to take writing and science tests March 4-22. During that

MEAP RESULTS

same time, juniors have to take high school proficiency test for the first time in order to receive a state-endorsed diploma.

Results won't be known until August, said coordinator for assessment and special projects Carolyn Mahalak said.

Revamped writing and science tests are expected to be more rigorous, requiring essay answers and in-class experiments. As a result, they are expected to be more time-consuming to grade.

For a moment, though, districts, officials can at least luxuriate in the latest results.

"We took a lot of steps this last year and put

together a lot of strategies," said Judy White, assistant superintendent for Kindergarten through Grade 12 instruction. "We did a very comprehensive look at what we were going to do to improve overall achievement for all groups in the district."

Fourth graders achieving satisfactory scores — 75 percent or better — in math jumped from 75.5 percent in 1994 to 83.5 percent this year.

Seventh graders performing satisfactory in math increased to 77.4 percent this year. That's up from 63.5 percent last year.

Math scores have improved steadily in the past four years, which White attributes to a correlating curriculum.

See MEAP, 5A