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IN THE PAPER
TODAY

Talkin' trash: Students at Wood Creek Elementary School had a strange visitor who combined rap music with a message — recycling. /3A

Insiders first: Inside candidates will get first crack at applying for chief executive before Oakland Community College trustees start an expensive national search. /3A

OPINION

Racist notes: We'd like to believe that this nasty business is entirely out of character with the school and the community. /10A

COMMUNITY LIFE

The feared word: Impotency is a problem many men fear and some don't even want to talk about. /13A

Guest column: Joseph Ajlouny, Farmington Hills author, would like to think he's true to his art. /13A

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



Curtain up! Meadow Brook Theatre's "Camping With Henry and Tom" provokes thought. /1B

SPORTS

Marathon match: North Farmington won the fifth and deciding game Monday to defeat neighboring Farmington in volleyball. /1C

Court encounter: Farmington Harrison's basketball team tried to stay unbeaten in the New Year Tuesday at North Farmington. /1C

INDEX

A&E 1B	Real estate 7F
At Home 1D	Lottery 2A
Classified F-H	Movies 8B
Crossword 8F	Obituaries 8A
Arts 6H	Opinions 10A, 11A
Employment 5G	Police fire 6A, 7A
Service guide 5H	Sports 1C
Pets 6H	Street Scene 10B

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Black student probed in threats



Farmington Hills police are saying little about the investigation into threats against African Americans at North Farmington High School last week. Police have a suspect, though, a black student.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills police say they have a suspect in what appeared to be racially motivated threats against African-American students at North Farmington High.

The suspect is a black student, Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer said. However, police are not ruling out that perhaps more than one person was involved in the incidents that occurred last week.

He said it's also premature to

dismiss that the threats were, in part, racially motivated.

"We're looking at a possible ethnic intimidation situation," Dwyer said.

"We've had other cases turn out where it was not ethnic intimidation. There's a possibility that this is not ethnic intimidation."

Death threats came in letters left in student lockers. The messages included profanities and racial invectives.

The latest threatening note was found Thursday at the Farmington Hills school.

Hills police have sent items to be examined by the Michigan State Police Crime Lab. Handwriting samples were also expected to be analyzed.

Police investigators worked on the case during the weekend. The incidents have generated considerable media attention, which hasn't helped, Dwyer said.

"People are hesitant to get involved because the attention this has received," Dwyer said.

A Farmington Hills African-American family was vandalized in what

See THREATS, 2A

Time for travel and relaxation



Calling it a career: Former Farmington Hills Police Inspector Tom Godwin contemplates retirement with wife Carolyn and collie dog Bill.

Pioneer cop leaves behind a legacy

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Tom Godwin didn't have the excuse that he didn't know what he was getting into when he became a police officer 38 years ago.

The Farmington Hills resident retired as inspector in charge of the Investigative Section of the Farmington Hills Police Department Jan. 2.

"My grandfather was the chief of

police in a small town in Alabama (Tallassee, near Montgomery)," said Godwin, 59. "My dad said my grandfather had a desk set up in the back of his butcher shop."

From those humble police beginnings, Godwin's family has produced several officers. Godwin's father John and brother John both retired from the Highland Park Police Department and his brother Bob retired from the Detroit department.

He has three uncles who have also served as officers.

Tom Godwin started his career with Highland Park, but joined the then Farmington Township department after eight years.

"When I started here, there were 20 officers and three civilians in the department," he said. "The department now numbers more than 100 uniformed (102, and 68 civilians)."

The township was a far cry from

the busy city that has replaced it, said the father of four. And police methods were a good deal more primitive, especially for a small department.

"We had one person to handle dispatch, scheduling and secretarial," he said. "When I would stop someone and wanted to check warrants from other departments, we

See COP, 4A

DDA flirts to arouse new business

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Businesses be ready: Farmington Downtown Development Authority is on the prowl.

DDA board members are preparing a list of potential businesses they want to swoon over, cajole and sweet talk their owners into moving here.

Will it be love at first sight? Hard to say but DDA members said it

won't be from a lack of effort.

Restaurants and destination stores top the general list. For the first time, though, DDA members named names of who they want to contact at Tuesday's meeting.

City Manager Frank Lauhoff mentioned Great Harvest and Bruegger's Bagel Factory. Any type restaurant run by a notable entrepreneur such as Mike Ilitch, John Glinopolis or Robert

Jacobs of Buddy's Pizzeria would work, too.

"I believe we have to get out and start talking to these folks and find out what they want," Lauhoff said.

"A lot of things we talked about take the personal touch. Those are the people we need to talk to."

Business recruitment will become a regular item on the agenda at its monthly meetings. In the meantime,

members said they'll network and make contacts.

DDA is subsidizing loans to offset relocation costs. The authority has put together a brochure and a letter promoting downtown selling points.

Restaurants should be top priority, said DDA board member Michele Jackacki.

"That should be 'A' on our list,"

See DDA, 2A

Note new numbers

Farmington Hills City Councilman Terry Sever would like to let the community know that he has new telephone numbers. Anyone wishing to phone Sever can reach him at home (477-0740), at work (478-1851) or through the Farmington Hills City Hall (478-9601).

Fiction for history

Substituting fiction for history will be explored in a free lecture by Dr. Mark Koch at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 24, at the Barnes and Noble Bookstore, 6880 Orchard Lake Road, north of 14 Mile Road.

Koch's talk — "Plots: The Literary Function of Conspiracy in Popular Culture" — is another in the series of "colleges in the Cafe" programs co-sponsored by Barnes and Noble and St. Mary's

FARMINGTON FOCUS

College at Orchard Lake.

Koch, chairman of the English Department at St. Mary's College, says that literature and movies such as Oliver Stone's film about the conspiracy behind the assassination of President John Kennedy "make for good reading or viewing."

Dedicated parents needed

The St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center of Farmington Hills is looking for dedicated parents living in Oakland, Wayne and Macomb counties to become foster or adoptive parents to children with special needs. Interested parents are invited to attend an ori-

entation at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 25, in the center's Foster Care Building, 24726 Inlander Road, between 12 Mile and Northwestern Highway, Farmington Hills. Information about qualifications and training will be provided.

For more information, call the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center at 626-3025.

Memory Lane

Memory Lane has moved! Farmington-area news from the past now may be found on the Observer's Editorial Page each Thursday.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48335; faxed to 477-9722; or dropped off at the newspaper office. For the computer literate, the Internet E-mail address is: packy@oconline.com.