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IN THE PAPER TODAY

Clean bill: Farmington officials decided to get an environmental cleanup after three underground storage tanks were removed. /A3

COMMUNITY LIFE

Looking back: A Farmington Hills woman finds joy in a detailed Victorian dollhouse. /B1

SPORTS

Grid showcase: Former Farmington Harrison lineman Francis Gojcaj was one of the stars in the annual High School All-Star Football Game Saturday. /C1

AT HOME

Adventures in housework: New and popular appliances help you do your chores around the house in style. /D6

ENTERTAINMENT

Movies: Local filmmakers "Make Believe" with a thriller featuring local talent in familiar settings. /E1

Theater: Professional actors work with talented teens to present Music Theatre of Michigan's production of "Carousel." /E1

REAL ESTATE

Keeping busy: With the economy in high gear, many people are looking for architects. /F1

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3 parking lot holdups linked?



A man with a gun robbed people in parking lots in Farmington Hills and Bloomfield Township three times since Saturday. Similar suspect descriptions have police studying whether it's the same suspect.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR AND BILLY TATO
STAFF WRITERS

Police are investigating whether a gunman who robbed two women in a

Bloomfield Township parking lot Tuesday morning was also responsible for two armed holdups in Farmington Hills since Saturday.

Kirt Bowden said two women were walking back to their cars from a building on Telegraph Road, near Square Lake Road, when a black man walked up to one of the women, pulled out an automatic handgun and mumbled something the woman couldn't understand.

The woman, from Haslett, Mich., screamed and told him to take anything he wanted but to leave her alone, Bowden said.

The other woman, a Farmington Hills resident, was approaching her car when she heard the scream. She turned around, screamed, dropped her own purse and started running toward an office building. She then backtracked, and ran to the Flagstar Bank with the Haslett woman, where they called police.

The suspect, a 6-foot, 170-pound

Please see HOLDUPS, A8

Balloon swoon



PHOTOS BY KENYA HINA



Kids stuff: Visitors of all ages enjoyed Family Day at Heritage Park Sunday, hosted by the city of Farmington Hills. Above, Ryan Nash, 2, of Farmington Hills chases balloons. At far left, Gleb Velikanova, 4, Betty Kazakina and Nataline Velikanova, 6, even had fun in the rain. Near left, Cristina Jacobson, 4, of Farmington Hills pets a tiger salamander.

Arson probed in Elks blaze

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills fire officials have not ruled out arson as the cause in a blaze that gutted a favorite meeting place.

The Farmington Elks building on Orchard Lake Road between Nine and 10 Mile sustained \$500,000 damage after a fire Sunday afternoon. The blaze is under investigation, a Hills fire inspector said.

Investigators are suspicious because of the time and extent of the blaze when firefighters arrived. Flames were already coming through the roof when crews from stations 2, 3 and 6 arrived a minute after the fire was called in at 2:29 p.m.

Some 45 Farmington Hills firefighters from four stations battled the blaze for two hours. One firefighter was treated for smoke inhalation.

"Usually fires that big are noticed real quick," said Larry Henderson, Hills fire prevention officer.

Other aspects lead fire inspectors to question the cause.

Gas and electric service were shut off, ruling out an ignition through a spark or other accident. There also appear to be multiple sources of origin that are not connected, said Rich Marinucci, Hills fire chief.

Please see FIRE, A6

Scotty a softie?

Wings' coach signs on for charity

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

The queue of memorabilia-clutching Detroit Red Wing fans waiting Saturday to shake Scotty Bowman's hand and get his autograph extended well outside of the 10 Mile Road Bean & Bagel restaurant.

But the legendary hockey coach didn't seem to mind.

It was a good cause that brought Bowman out to both Farmington Hills locations of the Bean & Bagel, owned by Bowman's friend Charlie Kays. Bowman signed 600 autographs at each site, at \$10 a pop, with all \$12,000 of the proceeds going to William Beaumont Hospital Foundation's newly formed Fund for Closed Head Injuries. Red Wing defenseman Vladimir Konstantinov and team masseur Sergei Mnatsakanov remain in the hospital after suffering critical head injuries in a June 13 limousine accident. Both men recently emerged from their comas.

"There's not much we can do to help the two men in the hospital," said the very-private

Bowman, asked about why he agreed to do the sessions. "But this (fund-raiser) is something that's going to help everybody. We knew we'd get great support from the Detroit community and Charlie did a great job organizing this."

According to Scotty, there were no problems with the fans who came up to the table. Just in case, Farmington Hills police Sgt. Craig Summers was on hand during Saturday's appearance - followed by one on Sunday, at Kays's Bean & Bagel at 12 Mile-Farmington.

"Everybody's been real happy to help out," Bowman said. "It was a chance to give back a little bit. That's why I did this, for charity."

Carol Kotulis, director of development for the Beaumont Foundation, was grateful and appreciative of Bowman's efforts. But she also stressed that Beaumont had nothing to do with the Bean & Bagel appearance.

"This is a wonderful thing he's doing,"

Please see BOWMAN, A5



STAFF PHOTO BY DEAN MITCHELL

Smilin' Scotty: Red Wings Coach Scotty Bowman autographs a jersey for charity Saturday at Bean & Bagel in Farmington Hills.

Family maintains hope despite poor prognosis for teen

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Injured Farmington High School student Melissa Garr's chances for recovery from brain injury are apparently a longshot, according to extensive neurological tests conducted Sunday at University of Michigan Medical Centers in Ann Arbor.

"They believe only the brain stem is functioning, there is minimal brain activity," said Farmington Hills Fire Chief Richard Marinucci, who had been updated about the 16-year-old's condition by her father, Hills fire Lt. Michael Garr.

"He (Lt. Garr) is still maintaining hope that this is the one in a hundred that turns around. . . . But certainly, the signs are not that encouraging right now. We're praying for the best."

Melissa, who was injured in a freakish poolside accident July 23, while baby-sitting children at Farmington Glen Aquatic Center, was tested by a neurosurgeon after the medication maintaining her coma had worn off - enabling the tests to be conducted.

Marinucci said the brain stem, the only portion where activity was found, controls basic life functions, such as breathing.

One slight encouragement was that her pneumonia had cleared up over the past week.

Melissa sustained a closed head injury, and fractured skull, after a 18-foot-long seemingly healthy tree limb fell about 40 feet and struck her on the head. The force knocked her to the cement deck surrounding the swimming pool.

She went into full cardiac arrest, but the quick action of two lifeguards at the pool restored breathing and heart rate until paramedics arrived.

Push the button

Pedestrians might want to look for those intersection buttons that lengthen the available time they have to walk across the street, such as at the busy crossing of Farmington Road-Grand River.

One hit of the button, said Farmington city manager Frank Lauhoff, means at least another 10-15 seconds to get to the other side.

The issue was brought up by resident Nancy Randolph at Tuesday morning's Farmington Downtown Development Authority meeting. Randolph lamented being from the old school, merely waiting for the illuminated green hand signal.

Apparently, pedestrians have to be more proactive these days. "I always waited for the

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hand sign to cross," she said.

Shiawassee slowdown

The signs are already up. Beginning Monday, Shiawassee will be closed to through traffic at Grand River, to allow for a Michigan Department of Transportation road-widening project that is expected to be completed by the end of September.

Besides the addition of a lane to the north side of Grand River, thus allowing for a center left-hand-turn lane, traffic and pedestrian signals will be added.

Getting it straight

The shadow on a map makes all the difference. And we used a map to identify that the A&W drive-in restaurant on Grand River just east of 9 Mile was in Farmington Hills in a recent story.

According to a Farmington Hills street index city map, the spot is not shaded and therefore located in Farmington Hills. But that shading is wrong.

After the story ran, Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff pointed out that, in fact, that spot just east of Hawthorne Street at Grand River is actually part of Farmington.

Two other maps - a City of Farmington map and a Farmington Hills master land use map - confirm that the restaurant is actually Farmington, not Farmington Hills.